

# CCPJ reporter

Newsletter of the Canadian Committee to Protect Journalists

1996 – Issue 1

## Hangings imperial Nigeria

By Kristina Stockwood

The hanging of Nigerian author Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other Ogoni activists on November 10, 1995, shocked the world. Supporters, including his son Ken Wiwa, hoped that once the death sentence was passed it would be rescinded at the 11th hour.

But an international campaign to save Saro-Wiwa failed, reconfirming the Nigerian military rulers' disregard for world opinion and humanitarian concerns.

In a recent interview with the CCPJ, Ken Wiwa said, "The murder of the Ogoni Nine really brought it home for people who watched this issue reach its horrible end." Wiwa said the target of the struggle has now changed from obtaining freedom for the Ogoni Nine to trying to get other activists, including journalists, out of



STEVE BELL / THE GUARDIAN

Nigeria. Wiwa works for the London-based Ogoni Foundation to promote democracy in Nigeria.

Ken Wiwa disapproves of the international community's failure to enforce stronger sanctions against Nigeria, particularly against the oil industry, which sustains the

dictatorship of General Sani Abacha. He condemned Royal Dutch/Shell in particular, saying, "It's clear that Shell is inextricably linked with the regime. Whatever work we do will be undone by the vast resources of Shell."

The CCPJ has copies of documents showing the military cracked down on protests against oil drilling in Ogoniland in part at the request of Shell. Ken Saro-Wiwa's brother, Dr. Owens Wiwa, who went into hiding after his brother was incarcerated, says Shell tried to influence him.

"They said they could obtain my brother's freedom if I would say there was no devastation in Ogoniland," Owens Wiwa told the CCPJ in an interview in January. "I was also asked to stop the international campaign." Wiwa and the Ogoni refused Shell's offer.

— suite à la page 3

— continued on page 6

**REPRESSION CONTINUES:**  
*At least six journalists are imprisoned in Nigeria, four of whom were sentenced to 15 years before Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight others were hanged in November.*

## Panafrika, un journal dans un pays déchiré

par Antoine Kaburahe, rédacteur en chef

Mai 1993, la démocratisation bat son plein, les partis politiques naissent comme des champignons, la liberté d'expression est proclamée. Jusque-là seuls les journaux gouvernementaux avaient le droit d'exister. Avec un groupe de jeu-

nes journalistes nous nous sommes engouffrés dans la brèche ouverte par la démocratisation. Notre devise c'était l'indépendance à l'égard des partis politiques qui voulaient mettre dans leur giron

### inside

China	2
Thank you	3
1995 review	4
Visits granted	6
Canadian focus	7
Reader survey	7
IFEX news	8



## CCPJ reporter

Newsletter of  
the Canadian Committee  
to Protect Journalists

1996, Issue #1 (7)

**The Canadian Committee to Protect Journalists** is an independent, non-profit association of journalists, writers, producers, editors and publishers promoting freedom of expression.

CCPJ membership costs \$25. For a tax-creditable donation of \$50 or more, the membership fee is waived.

CCPJ administers a Clearing House for the International Freedom of Expression Exchange (IFEX), which operates an Action Alert Network and globally disseminates information to organizations and individuals.

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Printed by union labour  
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# China tops long-term prison list

by Olena Wawryshyn

Xi Yang, a Beijing correspondent for the Hong Kong daily *Ming Pao*, is serving a 12-year prison sentence for espionage in China. One of the "crimes" for which he received this harsh punishment was publishing information about interest rate movements at the People's Bank of China.

A report about the interest rates and the bank's international gold transaction plans, the other "secret" revealed by Xi, was provided to him by a bank official. Yet, the authorities arrested Xi in September 1993, and six months later charged him with "stealing and espionage of state secrets." According to the Writers in Prison Committee of International PEN, as of May 1995 at least 47 writers were detained in China and Tibet — making China the country with the most writers in long-term imprisonment.

Most of these writers and journalists are hardly known in the West. Nobel Prize nominee Wei Jingsheng, who recently received a 14-year sentence, is perhaps an exception. "For some reason, people seemed to know the names of the Soviet dissidents in the old days when there was the Soviet Union," says Jan Wong, the *Globe and Mail's* China correspondent for six years. "People knew their names, but the Chinese dissidents have been much slower to make an impact on the West."

One reason for their lack of prominence stems from the fact that few western reporters are in China. Canadian media have only about three reporters in Beijing.

Journalists based there face obstacles limiting what gets out. When Wong was reporting from Beijing during the late 1980s and early 1990s, "you had to go through officials for every interview. I could not leave Beijing and go anywhere else without permission in advance," she says. "Often permission was denied."

To get a story, Wong often ignored the rules for interviews and contacted people directly. For the

most part, she obeyed the travel restrictions because she did not want to get expelled. "There are areas in China where I was never able to go," she says.

Despite such restrictions, Wong was freer than local Chinese journalists. According to Wong, in China journalists have a dual role: to put propaganda in the newspapers, and to investigate what is really going on in the country and write internal reports for the top leadership.

Some journalists present independent viewpoints, at risk of their jobs and personal safety. One, Gao Yu, was sentenced in 1994 to six years in prison for "leaking state



COURTESY REJ

Chinese dissident Gao Yu (left) and Canadian reporter Jan Wong.

secrets." She was working as a freelancer for several newspapers in China and Hong Kong. Gao's articles, which allegedly revealed classified information, were news and analysis pieces with information already publicly available.

Some dissident journalists in China start unofficial publications such as student papers and human rights journals. Two such magazines, *Tielu (Iron Currents)* and *Pioneers*, were published around the time of the 1989 Tiananmen Square demonstrations. Journalists associated with these magazines have been imprisoned.

Speaking to foreign journalists is another way the Chinese get their stories out. Wong says many dissidents felt that Western exposure gives them protection. "So they would often take a lot of risks to see us," she says.

Two people Wong about whom

wrote ended up in labour camps, partly for the crime of meeting her and other reporters. "They told me at the time that they wanted to be in the paper," says Wong. "They did not ask for anonymity and they posed for pictures ... it's a real risk; these are very, very brave people."

Trade, as well as publicity and pressure from the West, generally helps dissident Chinese journalists, Wong thinks. "When you trade, people in China get cell phones and fax machines and television — cable television — and all of this flow of information only weakens the totalitarian regime and it strengthens those who are fighting for freedom and democracy."



KRISTINA STOCKWOOD / CCPJ

Wong says the Canadian government is right to not link trade and human rights. Dissidents want the contacts, she says. But she does disagree with Ottawa's apparent policy of barely mentioning human rights for fear of offending the Chinese government.

Wong believes that from a moral standpoint the Canadian government should strongly criticize the Chinese government's human rights record. "People who are free and who have freedom of speech have a duty to speak up," she says. "We shouldn't just enjoy our freedoms for ourselves."

Journalists also play a pivotal role, says Wong. As journalists "we don't have to do anything but report what happened and people tend to have a very strong reaction. The Chinese actions speak for themselves and I think just reporting the news is our best role."

# Panafrika, un journal dans un pays déchiré

— suite de la page 1  
les journaux. Dans la liesse de la liberté, les journaux naissaient également... comme des champignons.

## La fin d'une illusion

Juin 1993, premières élections démocratiques. Le Burundi étonne les observateurs par la régularité de son scrutin. Le Président sortant, candidat de l'ancien parti unique au pouvoir depuis plus de 30 ans, est battu à la surprise générale. Le Major Pierre Buyoya cède sa place à Melchior Ndadaye. Pour la première fois, un Hutu accède à la magistrature suprême.

Et puis, il y a eu cette tentative de coup d'état quatre mois plus tard. Le Président démocratiquement élu est assassiné. Dans tout le pays, les paysans hutus se vengent sur les Tutsis dont «les frères militaires tutsis ont assassiné le Président». Des milliers de paysans tutsis périront sans savoir pourquoi. Uniquement à cause de leur ethnie. Dans les régions peuplées à majorité par les Hutus, les Tutsis sont exterminés. L'inverse est aussi vrai.

## La presse partisane

La tragédie d'octobre va affecter la presse. Les journaux vont se ranger. Pendant quelques mois, avant l'assassinat du Président et les massacres, la presse au Burundi avait suscité beaucoup d'espoir. Désormais, les journaux, selon l'appartenance ethnique des rédacteurs, vont rivaliser pour montrer

la barbarie «des autres». La globalisation, la diabolisation, la diffamation seront les instruments de cette presse de rancoeur.

*Panafrika* n'a pas été épargné. Pendant trois mois il a fallu lutter, éviter que le journal dérape. Je me souviens de l'aveu d'un de mes collègues qui me disait: «Je dois maintenant me faire violence pour écrire un papier objectif». Il avait perdu presque tous les siens dans les massacres.

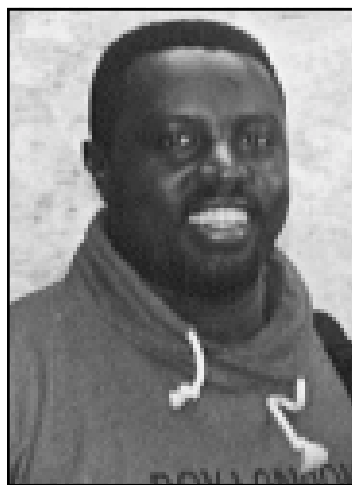
Chaque article était pour beaucoup de mes confrères un combat contre le sentiment, le ressentiment.

## L'espoir

La neutralité de *Panafrika* a valu au journal d'être taxé de «peureux» voire de «traître». Dans l'intégrisme ethnique l'objectivité était considérée comme une naïveté. Nous avons vu notre lectorat chuter, les lecteurs se précipitant vers les journaux extrémistes par ailleurs financés par les partis politiques et d'autres lobbies. Nous nous sommes accrochés à la neutralité, à l'objectivité.

L'éthique a sauvé le journal. Et, au moment où *Panafrika* connaissait de graves problèmes financiers, un soutien financier de Reporters sans frontières est venu nous remettre en selle.

Lors de la mise en place du Conseil national de la communication, j'ai eu l'honneur d'être désigné membre de cette institution chargée de veiller sur la promotion de la presse et le respect de la loi.



KRISTINA STOCKWOOD / CCPJ

Antoine Kaburahe était de passage au CCPJ au mois de novembre lors d'une visite organisée par le Centre international des droits de la personne et du développement démocratique.

Mais l'encouragement qui m'a le plus marqué est le témoignage d'un lecteur anonyme rencontré devant un kiosque à journaux. Il venait d'acheter *Panafrika* et un autre journal franchement extrémiste. Je lui ai demandé pourquoi il achetait ces deux journaux. Il m'a dit en riant: «J'achète *Panafrika* pour m'informer et l'autre pour mes fantasmes».

C'est sûr que plusieurs journaux burundais ne survivront pas à la fin de la crise politico-ethnique. Entre les fantasmes et l'information, *Panafrika* a choisi une voie pour la survie: l'information.

*Antoine Kaburahe is founder and editor-in-chief of Panafrika, an independent newspaper in Bujumbura, Burundi. With a staff of both Hutus and Tutsis, Panafrika's independent journalism leads the fight against hate media in Burundi.*

**LUTTER  
POUR  
DEMEURER  
NEUTRE:  
*Panafrika est  
pratiquement  
le seul journal  
indépendant  
au Burundi lu  
par les Hutus  
et les Tutsis.***

## Thanks to Our Supporters

With 400 individual, corporate, and foundation donors, there are so many people to thank for supporting the CCPJ in 1995. On behalf of the staff, volunteers and volunteer Board of Directors, thank you to everyone who helped us last year, including:

*Brockville Recorder and Times, Cal-*

*gary Herald, Canadian Media Guild, Canada Newswire, CHUM Charitable Foundation, CTV Television Network, Dascon Investments Limited, Davies Charitable Foundation, Edmonton Journal, Global Television Network, Hollinger Inc., INCO Limited, Kitchener Waterloo-Record, Montreal Gazette, Ottawa News-*

*paper Guild, Pacific Press Limited, Power Broadcasting Inc., Readers Digest Foundation of Canada, Lloyd Robertson, Sisters of St. Joseph of Hamilton, Southern Ontario Newspaper Guild, Stockwood, Spies and Campbell, Telemedia Inc., Toronto Sun, Ursuline Sisters of Bruno, Douglas Ward, Westcom TV Group Inc.*

## YEAR IN REVIEW:

# Threats to Canadian journalists increase

It was an unprecedented year for attacks on Canadian journalists and against freedom of expression in this country. Canadian journalists faced threats to their livelihoods and even to their lives in 1995.

On August 1, Ottawa sportscaster Brian Smith was shot in the head by an assailant who told police he was "angry at the media" and wished to harm a media personality. Smith died the following day in hospital.

Smith was shot as he left CJOH-TV after the dinner-hour newscast. The confessed killer, Jeffrey Arenburg, waited in the station's parking lot, and shot the first person he recognized as a media personality. The *Halifax Chronicle Herald* reported that the man was convicted three years ago of assaulting a radio station employee in Bridgewater, N.S.

Freelance reporter Robert Monastesse, who was investigating drug dealing and a turf war between rival motorcycle gangs in Montreal, was shot in both legs in February.

The CCPJ is concerned that members of the media are at risk because they work in the public eye and are often blamed for events they report on. We called for an investigation into the circumstances of Jeffrey Arenburg's history of violence against the media.

In addition to physical attacks, journalists in Canada faced attacks by courts and governments.

### Judicial front

In Hull, Que., television cameraman Stephane Beaudoin was cited for contempt of court and jailed for a week for refusing to reveal a source. Although Beaudoin was subsequently fired after it was revealed he had fabricated parts of his story, a dangerous precedent had been set. In Canada, journalists have no statutory right to protect the confidentiality of their sources, and the courts have refused to recognize anything more than a rather weak privilege.



PERU CONFERENCE PHOTOS

### EXCHANGING WORLDVIEWS:

Last June, CCPJ board member Robert Carty (above) discussed freedom of expression with a Peruvian general (right).

The panel was part of a conference organized by the Instituto Prensa y Sociedad (IPYS), headed by former CCPJ staffer Kela Leon.



In London, Ont., freelance journalist Joseph Couture was harassed by members of the London Police during his investigation into their alleged child pornography probe, Project Guardian. Couture has taped evidence by some young men he interviewed for the CBC radio program *Ideas* who say they were questioned by the police and berated for participating in the show.

London Police Chief Julian Fantino has repeatedly threatened Couture, both in the media and in letters to the CCPJ. The chief has also stymied attempts to investigate the behaviour of his force, while Couture continues to be

plagued by police surveillance and impediments to his investigations.

### Ominous bill

At the end of 1995, Ontario Premier Mike Harris introduced changes to provincial and municipal access to information legislation in a controversial omnibus bill. The legislation severely impairs journalists' ability to scrutinize government functions. Government agencies are now empowered to dismiss information requests as "frivolous and vexatious." Institutions are also allowed to charge fees for requests, and to charge different amounts depending on who is

### ANTI-MEDIA RECORD:

**The man who confessed to killing Ottawa sportscaster Brian Smith reportedly had been convicted of assaulting a Nova Scotia radio station employee three years earlier.**



# ease in 1995

making the request and what type of information is requested.

To fight the Omnibus Bill, the CCPJ co-ordinated the formation of the Media Alliance for Access to Government Information, comprised of some 12 groups including PEN Canada and Article 19. The Alliance held a press conference at the provincial legislature in Decem-



ber but was denied access to public hearings on the bill in January.

The CCPJ continued to work with journalists in the developing world in 1995, with projects funded by the Canadian International Development Agency in Malawi, Cambodia and Peru.

In July, the CCPJ, in conjunction with the International Federation of Journalists, organized a conference in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, that brought journalists and government officials together in an attempt to reach a common understanding and end the violence that has erupted in that emerging democracy.

The CCPJ operates a Journalists in Distress Fund to aid journalists internationally, and also regularly appeals to the Canadian government to grant asylum to journalists who have fled their countries due to repercussions for their work. In 1995, we assisted journalists fleeing Kenya, Iran, Nigeria, Sudan and Croatia.

## Letters for survival

We'd like to thank our core of members who tirelessly crank out letters of protest to government officials who violate press freedoms. By doing this, you let these governments know that Canada is watching. At the same time, many other letters are being sent through the IFEX Clearing House. The effect of a "fax barrage" can be significant. Of course, we need more letter writers, so give us a call and we'll put you on the list.

Members of the CCPJ occasionally provide us with valuable information about attacks on colleagues with whom they have worked internationally. In May, the CCPJ reported that Andre Sibomana, editor-in-chief of the Rwandan newspaper *Kinyamateka*, had received death threats from a member of the security force and had gone into hiding or "disappeared." Due partly to lobbying by the CCPJ and its members, Sibomana came out of hiding a few days later, reporting that letters calling for his protection sent to the Rwandan government and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR) had ensured his survival.

## 61 murders

At the IFEX Clearing House we recorded a total of 61 murders of writers and members of the media in 1995 from reports by member organizations of IFEX world-wide. This is half of the 123 media deaths we reported in 1994, when an estimated two-thirds of the indigenous journalism community in Rwanda was wiped out in fighting.

Even though fewer journalists were killed for their work in 1995, the Clearing House circulated virtually the same number of alerts, updates, and press releases in 1995 (1,309) as in '94 (1,440). This sug-



ISOBEL HARRY

**BANGLADESHI WRITER:** Nasrin Xxxxxxx visited Toronto in xxxxxx to speak about her exile from home after threats regarding her books. **needs name, data**

gests that while murders were down, freedom of expression violations continue at the same pace.

The coming year is poised to be the most exciting year in CCPJ history. Training projects in Cambodia and Malawi will continue, and IFEX will start an outreach program to find new member organizations in the developing world.

On May 10-12 the CCPJ will host the fifth annual general meeting of the IFEX community here in Toronto. Special events will be arranged and open to CCPJ members and the media

And as usual, the CCPJ's annual general meeting will be held in June. I look forward to seeing you then.

**Wayne Sharpe**  
**Executive Director**

**PLAYING HOST:**  
**In May, the CCPJ will host an international meeting of the IFEX community in Toronto.**

# Nigeria imperiled

— continued from page one

Shell Canada does not use Nigerian oil, but 78 percent of its profits go directly to its parent, Royal Dutch Shell. The CCPJ has urged the Canadian government to lead the world in imposing oil sanctions. (Canada was commended for taking a leading role in condemning Nigeria at the Commonwealth meeting in November.) The CCPJ also approached the Metro Toronto Council and the East York Council to reject tenders from Shell.

Owens Wiwa reported that on Ogoni Day this year, January 4, the army shot and killed several of the 10,000 peaceful demonstrators in Bori, the capital of Ogoni. Many were arrested, and women and young girls raped.

“Ogoni is like a huge prison,” he said. “The army is in there with tanks on every road.” He noted that foreign correspondents are banned from Ogoni and those who sneak in face arrest. Paul Adams, a *Financial Times* of London journalist, was arrested in Ogoniland and detained for a week in January.

The crackdown against the press in Nigeria has escalated since

the hangings, with journalists being arrested weekly and newspapers being closed down or torched. *Tell* magazine was seized twice in December and has since been publishing underground. Four *Tell* reporters were arrested in mid-December.

At least six writers and journalists remain in jail, some without charge, and are at risk of being executed. Four others, tried by military tribunals, were sentenced to 15 years in jail, after trials that fell far short of international legal standards. One of them, Christine Anyanwu, was awarded a prize by Reporters sans frontières-Fondation de France in December.

## CCPJ actions

The Committee to Protect Journalists reported that in December, *The Guardian* was the target of arson and police besieged *AM News*. Then police assaulted and briefly detained four photojournalists, and a Lagos vendor was arrested for having “unpatriotic magazines.” On New Year’s eve, the office of the Independent Communications Network, publishers of *The News* and *Tempo*, was firebombed.

The Writers in Prison Committee of International PEN adds that novelist Mohammed Sule is believed to have been held incommunicado since February 1995 in connection with a documentary he was researching.

The CCPJ has called on the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detentions to investigate the circumstances of the journalists in jail in Nigeria and the hanging of the Ogoni activists.

The CCPJ has also been working with the Canadian government to strengthen Canada’s policy on Nigeria. Nigerian Nobel laureate author Wole Soyinka, who is currently living in Britain, spoke about human rights in Nigeria at a January event co-sponsored by the CCPJ.

The CCPJ welcomed several Nigerian visitors to Canada in January, including Olisa Agbakoba of the Civil Liberties Organization, a Nigerian human rights group. His visit was co-ordinated by the Inter-Church Coalition on Africa, one of the many groups with which the CCPJ has been working on Nigeria.

CCPJ president Arnold Amber participated in a seminar on human rights in Nigeria in January at Ryerson Polytechnic Institute.



KRISTINA STOCKWOOD / CCPJ

KEN WIWA, son of executed Nigerian writer and human rights leader Ken Saro-Wiwa, visited Toronto last spring.

## Grant brings journalists to Canada

by Ilona Biro

When Burundian journalist Antoine Kaburahe visited the CCPJ office recently, he flipped through the IFEX binder containing the names of journalists detained or killed on the job. While reading through the alerts, he came across the name of a friend killed while reporting on the crisis in Rwanda. He already knew of the death, but had no idea that an organization like IFEX had not only documented it, but was working to protect journalists around the world.

Kaburahe and three other foreign journalists were in Canada last November as part of a month-long program sponsored by the International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development and the Canadian Association of Jour-

nalists. They visited the CBC, the *Toronto Star*, the Ontario legislature, the House of Parliament, and journalism classes at Carleton and Concordia Universities.

At the CCPJ, the four journalists spoke about problems in their countries. Ana María Mejía Rusconi of the Lima newspaper *Ex-preso*, said journalists in the more remote parts of Peru are at great risk of being called terrorists. Her newspaper is frequently called over-critical of the army.

Pravit Rojaphruk who works for *The Nation* in Bangkok, operates with some freedom, but a key issue – the monarch and succession to the Thai throne – cannot be discussed openly in the media. Also, Thailand’s rapidly growing media suffers from a shortage of trained journalists.

In Burundi, a national committee on communication is developing a code of media ethics, as well as laws against hate crimes and incitement to violence in the media. Kaburahe, who sits on the committee, believes the new legislation will be essential for the development of democratic society.

Rina Saeed Khan cites religious extremism and intolerance as major problems facing Pakistani media. Muslim militants have harassed journalists so much that Khan’s editors have instructed reporters to avoid writing anything about religion. In addition, journalists can be threatened with Pakistan’s infamous blasphemy law. Khan says a journalist’s best protection is a cellular phone and someone to call in an emergency.

**CANADIAN EXPERIENCE:**  
**A grant from the International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development enabled four journalists to visit Canada.**

# Freedom of expression localized

by Moira MacDonald

The shooting of Brian Smith. Publication bans. Libel laws. Non-Freedom of Information. De-pressed yet?

From its inception the CCPJ has advocated the right of journalists to report free from intimidation, censorship and injury worldwide. While the image of a journalist under fire seems more associated with countries beyond Canada's borders, the importance of protecting our human rights here at home is no less important. In some cases, it's just as pressing. Consider a few examples.

Burrowed within Ontario's Harris government's controversial omnibus bill lie new restrictions on access to information. Both the provincial and municipal Access to Information and Protection of Privacy acts were changed to include clauses allowing government institutions to dismiss requests deemed to be "frivolous and/or vexatious." As well, the privacy commission will no longer be required to hear every appeal.

Publication bans appear to be increasing. The ban on reporting prior to Paul Bernardo's murder trial was probably the most publicized and controversial one in a

long time. But what about all the others that seem to get slapped easily on less-publicized cases? Remember the *Globe and Mail* story a few years ago that said "there's a trial going on but we're not allowed to tell you where it is or who's involved." More than lawyers should take a stand on this.

Brian Smith's murder rocked many of us, particularly Smith's Ottawa-area colleagues. They wondered how they could possibly protect themselves from such an incident. Plans are in the works at Ottawa's CHEZ Radio to set up a Neighborhood Watch-style program for local broadcasters. Through this informal network, media outlets would help one another stay alert to potential security problems that they may not realize they share.

## Louder voice needed

While this is a more practical aspect of Canadian freedom of expression issues, it demonstrates the need for us to start taking our own issues as seriously as we do the rest of the world's.

The CCPJ has spoken out on several Canadian issues in the past but our voice needs to be louder. What's to be done?

Enter the CCPJ's spanking new Canadian Issues Sub-Committee. The sub-committee aims to develop policy on pressing freedom of expression issues within Canada as well as guidelines for how to respond to other issues as they arise.

The only problem with the sub-committee is it doesn't exist yet. That's where you, the CCPJ membership, come in. We need ideas and bodies. We would like your thoughts on what the CCPJ should develop policy on.

As a relatively young organization there is a limit on how much we can do. What issues are most important to you? Perhaps you could provide some anecdotes of incidents in your work where you found your right to report curtailed.

For more active souls able to commit a couple of hours a month, we would like to set up a small group in Toronto to pull all these ideas together and help develop policy on a few key issues and guidelines on how to handle the rest.

So there's your assignment. Put your thinking caps on and turn those personal gripes into constructive action. We look forward to hearing from you soon!

**BRINGING IT HOME: CCPJ members have a great opportunity to participate in founding an action group on freedom of expression issues in Canada.**

Letters can be sent to: Moira MacDonald, c/o The Toronto Sun, 333 King Street East, Toronto, Ont. M5A 3X5 – or fax letters to 416-361-1250.

# Reporter survey: more, please

Respondents to a survey about the *CCPJ Reporter* told us they would like more stories from the Middle East, Asia, India, Indonesia, Europe, Southern Africa, Morocco, Mexico and the Western Sahara. Surprisingly, three of the six answering the question "Are there regions or countries you would like to read more about?" answered Canada or the United States.

Of the 21 people who returned the newsletter survey, 15 indicated that freedom of expression issues and stories about people interested in them most. Twelve said CCPJ's projects were of interest, and seven

favoured IFEX community news.

Respondents want to read more about ethics, the names and circumstances of journalists who are killed or convicted for contempt of court, countries where press freedom has been won, how stories are handled under repressive governments, and reporters' tales from conflict areas such as Chiapas, Haiti, Peru and Bosnia.

Ten respondents said the *Reporter's* current three issues per year was sufficient, while seven said they would like to receive it more frequently. Three respondents said they were happy with the current length and format, while two sug-

gested increasing it from eight to 12 pages.

Expansion might please the seven who said they read the newsletter cover to cover; 14 said they read a couple of articles per issue.

Other ideas include contributions from francophone journalists, quarterly updates on each case the CCPJ takes up, making the *Reporter* a monthly, a subscription fee to cover costs, and in-depth coverage of trouble spots.

And three respondents said they would be interested in writing for the *Reporter*. Bravo!

– compiled by Diane Slawych

## World Wide Wire

Are you wired?

Then browse through the CCPJ's new World Wide Web site at <http://www.web.apc.org/ccpj>.

Special thanks for help in setting it up to Tom Kavanagh, Jeffrey Kofman & Sean Kozey.

# IFEX Community NEWS

## Positive developments

After another year of unremitting attacks on freedom of expression, IFEX is building on the positive by embarking on more joint initiatives. It is launching an exciting outreach program, and looking closely at the effectiveness of its work.

### Joint actions

IFEX was founded in 1992 as a co-operative venture to maximize the effectiveness of freedom of expression campaigning worldwide.

Over the past year, the IFEX network collaborated on asylum cases and launched joint appeals and declarations drawing international attention to grave freedom of expression violations in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Building on its proposal to the May 1995 IFEX annual meeting, the Committee to Protect Journalists gathered the signatures of 17 groups on a statement calling on all parties in the Algerian conflict to end the slaughter of journalists.

In June, PEN American Center and several IFEX members marked the first anniversary of the brutal crackdown on the independent press in Indonesia with a co-ordinated appeal. In November, 19 organizations called attention to attacks against independent journalists in Cuba.

As well, the CCPJ, PEN Canada, International PEN and more than 20 members of the IFEX community issued a joint statement to the Commonwealth Heads of Govern-

ment Meeting, urging action to unequivocally condemn freedom of expression abuses in Nigeria.

### Outreach program

In the fall, IFEX launched its Developing Countries Outreach Program to support organizations in the developing world by helping them link

Fax and electronic mail technologies are increasingly accessible, and even Internet access – restricted to the United States and Europe for years – is expanding in the South.



up with the international freedom of expression community. At the root of the program is IFEX's desire to diversify its membership, and to support and learn from the important work done by groups in the South.

The Outreach Program will support at least 20 groups with equipment, and training in human rights documentation and communications technology over two years. The quick and free flow of information is essential to development and crucial to effective freedom of expression work.

Communications technologies are, therefore, at the heart of the Outreach Program, as every day more and more barriers to international communication are removed.

### IFEX survey

In January of this year, IFEX looked inward, with a survey to users of the Action Alert Network. The survey elicited valuable feedback on the network's role in facilitating effective action – IFEX's *raison d'être*. We learned how organizations, associations, educational institutions and individuals use IFEX material to take varied forms of action, ranging from protest letters, to public awareness campaigns, media outreach, documentation and education.

### Success stories

Throughout the year, the IFEX Clearing House heard how international action, quickly mobilized through our service, made a difference.

The Institute for Press and Society in Peru said a courtroom source had seen IFEX alerts in the hands of judges responsible for trying some journalists, and that protest letters from Reporters sans frontières and the CCPJ were read aloud – then ruled out of order – during the trial of detained journalist Alfonso Castiglione Mendoza. Although Castiglione was eventually convicted, IPYS felt the letters showed that international attention was focused on the trials of unjustly detained journalists in Peru.

In thanking the IFEX community for its actions on Cambodia, the Human Rights Task Force in Cambodia said appeals had received coverage in the local Khmer and English-language press.

For the CCPJ, the IFEX network helped make London, Ont., police take seriously concerns about their harassment of journalist Joseph Couture. In a letter to the CCPJ, Eleanor Brown, editor of the Toronto biweekly *Xtra!*, said the CCPJ's actions had "changed the tenor of coverage of London" and "made many people sit up and notice."

Positive stories are heartening. However, the true value of such feedback lies in building on it to improve what we do. The CCPJ, IFEX and its member groups are constantly being challenged to seek new ways of working and to adapt our campaign techniques in the face of an ever-changing pattern of abuses.

– Isabelle Patenaude

International Freedom of Expression eXchange