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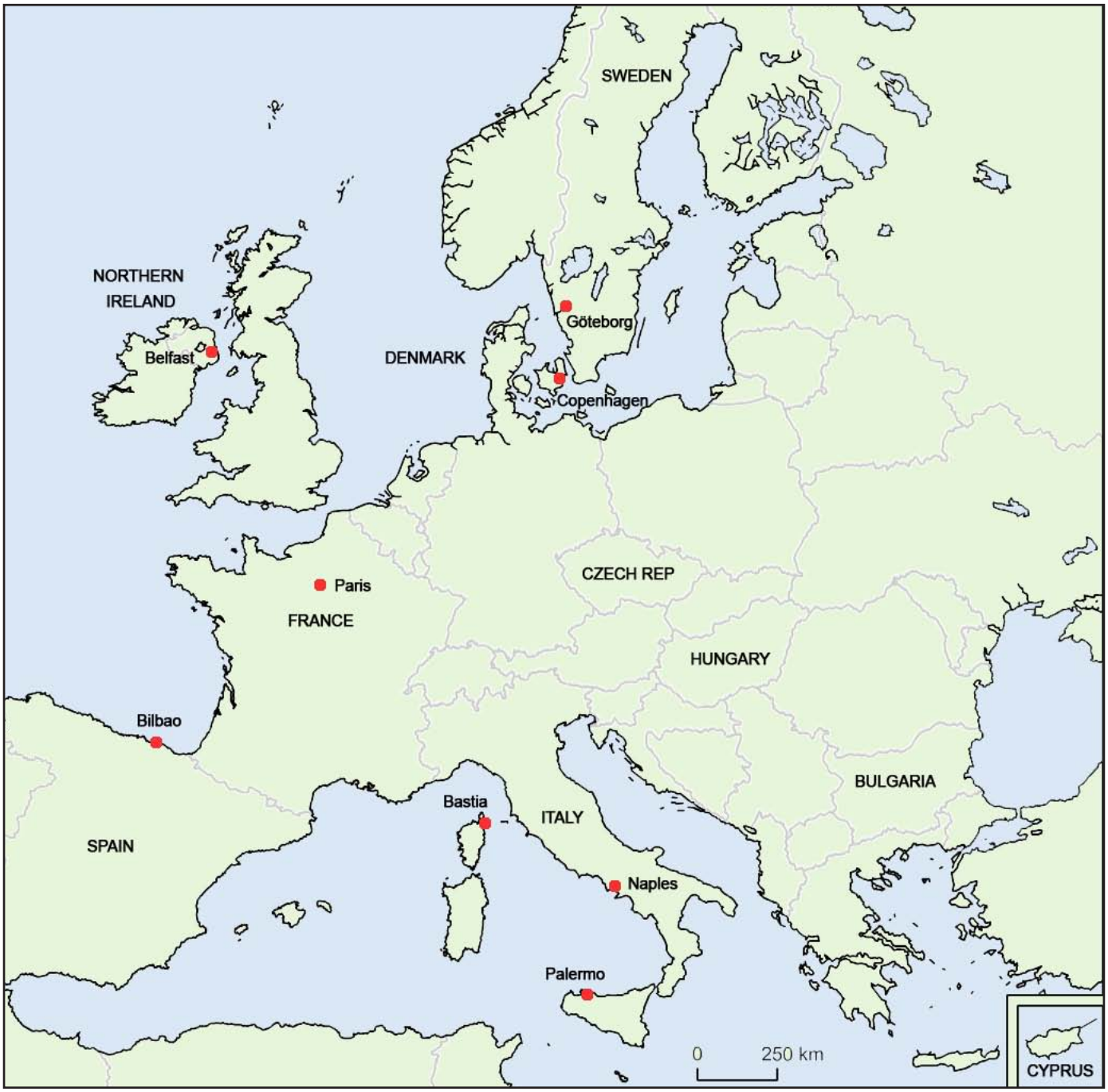

European Union
Risks faced by journalists

May 2008
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Europe
Risks faced by journalists

There is genuine press freedom within the European Union. No state has ordered the murder or imprisonment of a journalist and state censorship is a thing of the past. Media express a diversity of opinion and a pluralism of ideas is generally assured. But the situation is not perfect for all that. There is a need for vigilance in the light of media concentration, which is excessive in some countries and the recurring question of boosting protection of sources well illustrates the flaws which persist in European laws. Journalists can still be forced to reveal their sources, either through investigation or being placed in custody in some cases. The European Parliament has on several occasions proposed that legislation in individual states be brought in line with that of countries most favourable to free expression.

One less-often aired concern about press freedom in Europe, relates to threats and actual attacks on journalists: murder attempts by non-governmental groups, assaults and harassment of families. These extremely serious incidents do still happen within the European Union.

Reporters Without Borders has for the first time investigated these most disturbing incidents in the heart of Europe. In Denmark, it is Islamic fundamentalists who make death threats against journalists and cartoonists in the name of religion. In Spain, the terrorist organisation ETA continues to issue serious threats against journalists, many of whom are forced to work under police protection or to flee the Basque country. In France, journalists run risks reporting in the suburbs of the big cities. Thefts of equipment and sometimes violent assaults are frequent. Several cities are viewed as high risk by media which have to take elaborate precautions before sending out a reporting team. In Italy, journalists who expose the criminal activities of the mafia run the risk of ruthless reprisals. Murder attempts, assaults and threats are frequent in Sicily and Calabria. In Northern Ireland, delinquents, often from loyalist paramilitary groups, have no hesitation in making death threats against journalists who investigate their activities. A bullet was recently sent to a TV station along with the name and address of a journalist.

Journalists have also been targets of violence in the past few years in Sweden, Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Cyprus.

It is impossible to provide an exhaustive list of these cases, but there have been hundreds of cases of serious threats, assaults and direct intimidation throughout Europe.

France:
Ever more no-go areas in the suburbs

In France, journalists are often manhandled, assaulted, threatened and beaten while trying to do their job. Until a few years ago it was in Corsica that most media staff fell victim to violence. Overnight on 4-5 September 2003, the empty car of Christine Clerc, special correspondent for the daily *Le Figaro*, was riddled with bullets in Tolla, southern Corsica a few days after she wrote a column headlined "Put out the fire and clear off!" in which she condemned a car bombing against the police in the same city. At that time a list of journalists seen as undesirable in the island were circulated within the nationalist movements. Verbal harassments, insults and threats were common. More recently journalists were jostled during demonstrations in Bastia against the privatisation of the ferry operator SNCM. Two cameramen working for *France Televisions* and Olivier Laban-Mattei, a photographer with *Agence France-Presse* (*AFP*), were brutally beaten at the end of September 2005. Jean-Marc Plantade, financial editor of the Parisien newspaper, received telephone death threats against himself and his family after publishing an article headlined "Scandal at the SNCM" on 17 October 2005 in which he exposed alleged fraud by staff handling money on board the company's ships.

French journalists also came in for brutal assaults from stewards working for the extreme-right Front National at the start of the 2000s. A crew from *Canal +* television was beaten up by stewards during a press conference given by its leader Jean-Marie Le Pen in Saint-Cloud on 26 April 2002. Four days later, it was the turn of Jean-Luc Thomas, correspondent in Nice for *I-television* and

Canal+ to be held for one and a half hours at the Front National departmental offices where he was insulted and made to hand over his footage. The journalist laid a complaint for abduction, false imprisonment and hostage-taking, but the case was dropped on the grounds that he had suffered only "slight" harm.

Today journalists are exposed to physical reprisals when they cover unrest in the suburbs. As far back as 2003, Vincent Kelner, of public channel *France 2*, was brutally punched and kicked by two men while reporting at Créteil, in Val-de-Marne at the scene of a shooting in which a young man had been killed. The journalist, who suffered concussion, laid a complaint and his company joined the case. Police arrested a suspect. A few months later, in March 2004, sound engineer Jérôme Florenville, cameraman Jean-Yves Charpin, and journalist Hervé Bouchaud, working for the programme "90 Minutes" on privately-owned *Canal+* television were assaulted by members of a Koranic school where they were reporting in Grisy-Suisnes, in Seine-et-Marne. The journalists had for six months been investigating the missionary Muslim Tabligh movement. While his colleagues were only slightly hurt, Florenville, who was beaten with a pick handle, was taken to hospital with multiple fractures to his nose and eye socket. The journalists and *Canal +* made official complaints.

But the situation has taken an even more disturbing turn since the November 2005 riots. Scores of photographers, cameramen and reporters have been physically assaulted. A team from *France 2* television was attacked by dozens of youths in Aulnay-sous-Bois, in the Parisian region overnight on 2-3 November 2005. They had to abandon their vehicle, which was then overturned and torched. Journalist with *France 3* television, Mady Diawara, was struck in the face by a stone while reporting on the end of Ramadan in Montfermeil, Seine-Saint-Denis on 4 November. The following day, a Korean journalist with national public KBS television, Mihye Kim, was assaulted by five yours in Aubervilliers, after completing interviews with residents near a warehouse which had been torched the previous evening.

French journalists during rioting at Villiers-le-Bel, in November 2007

Luc Bronner, working for the newspaper *Le Monde*, was beaten by a group of youths, who advised him to "clear off" after he told them he was a journalist in Villiers-Le-Bel, Val d'Oise in November 2007. The following day a crew working for *France 3* had its equipment stolen and cameraman Noé Salemn was hit in the face, neck, knee and kidneys and was dragged several metres before letting go of his camera. Two journalists on LaTeleLibre.fr were also injured in attacks.

Bertrand Schneider, agency head for *Le Parisien* in the Essonne, explains that the written press is less visible and therefore less exposed to risk. That has not prevented him from taking care that the newspaper's offices are not identifiable as such from the street. There are no signs and no logo. "We are cautious. We know that there are some particularly aggressive groups of youths whom we want to avoid. In the daytime, I can go without any problems to the Tarterets [Corbeil-Essonnes district] or to the Pyramides [Evry], but at night I am much more careful."

Journalist Cécile Chevallier, was assaulted on 21 March 2006 while working for the Seine-et-Marne edition of *Le Parisien* during protests against the First Employment Contract (CPE), making it easier to fire workers under the age of 26. She was attacked as she was taking photos in front of a secondary school in Savigny-le-Temple where youths were setting fire to dustbins. "I hid my camera well under my coat, took two or three photos and then left. But several guys jumped on me and beat me. They took the keys to my car and my handbag. During this time, other youths, who appeared to be pupils, with backpacks on their backs, took my photo with their mobile phones.

They called me a 'filthy journalist bitch' before driving off in my car," she said. Chevallier reported the incident but none of her assailants was caught. "I went back to Savigny-le-Temple a week later. I was frightened but I refused to accept that there were any no-go areas for me," she said. The incident has changed how she works: "I never imagined something like that could happen to me. Now I often have a knot of fear in my stomach. The other day, I had to cover a fire at the Tartarets. I went but I didn't feel very good about it". She is convinced that these kinds of assaults and threats will only increase: "before when we went to these areas in the 1990s, we were well received. Today, it's a question of territory. We are lumped in with everything that they see as foreign to the housing estates".

Following this assault, *Le Parisien*'s management has tightened up its advice to journalists, urging them to be careful and advising them not to go alone to the deprived housing estates and to try to do their reports as much as possible in the morning, rather than later in the day. Journalists often work with the help of mediators or fixers, from organisations which are based in the housing estates.

Bénédicte Agoudetsé, a journalist on *Le Parisien* in the Val d'Oise, covers the troubled area of Sarcelles, Villiers-le-Bel and Garges-les-Gonesses. She was sent to a troubled neighbourhood in an urban development zone (ZAC) at Villiers-le-Bel the day after a major police operation on 18 February 2008 when 35 people had been arrested on suspicion of involvement in rioting. "My boss wanted me to do a colour piece. I didn't really want to but I went anyway. I found myself in the ZAC at dusk, around 6.30pm. I parked my car and quickly took a few photos. In the distance I could see some youths in front of a building. Then my flash went off. I headed for my car and heard people running up behind me. A few moments later, I was seized around the waist and I realised they were after my camera. I fought back a little and then I raised my head and saw they were all hooded. Out of fear, I let go of it and they then left. I was very frightened. They may well have been armed", Agoudetsé added. The young journalist had been attacked previously while driving at the Barrage de Pierrefitte, an area where residents recommend that 'you don't stop at red traffic lights at night'. "These are not very serious incidents, but they mount up and that gets to you", she told Reporters Without Borders.

She has been back once to the ZAC at Villiers-le-Bel since. She did it but with "fear in the stomach". She also believes the situation is getting worse. "During the 2007 riots, there were 200 journalists there. Government vehicles everywhere. The residents felt like they were in a zoo," she recalled. The interview is interrupted by a call from Agoudetsé's boss: "It's kicking off in Sarcelles. Secondary school kids are breaking windows in protest at the abolition of jobs in the state education system. I've go to get over there".

The case of Robert Redeker is very different. The philosophy professor wrote a column carried by the daily *Le Figaro* on 19 September 2006, headlined "What should the free world do in the face of Islamist intimidation?" Its publication brought an immediate ban on distribution of the paper in Egypt and Tunisia. Death threats forced Redeker to sell his house and to live under police protection. He also had to suspend his teaching. A young Moroccan was arrested in Libya at the start of 2007 and he admitted to calling for the professor to be killed on an Islamist website. Another person is to go on trial in France in May for making death threats against the professor. Redeker continues to live under permanent police protection. He also travels with a police escort when he goes to present papers abroad. "Threats made on the Internet are lasting and permanently updated. That is the distinctive feature of the media. I have been threatened with death, solely by email," Redeker told Reporters Without Borders.

ITALY:
Reprisals from the mafia

In Italy, threats emanate from the mafia, or rather the mafias who operate in the south of the country: the Camorra in Naples, the 'ndrangheta in Calabria, Cosa Nostra in Sicily and Sacra Corona Unita in Puglia. At least ten journalists work under police protection. Calabria and Sicily are the two most dangerous regions for those who venture to criticise

mafia chiefs. There have been hundreds of cases of threats, anonymous letters, slashed tyres, and scratched cars. All journalists who write about the mafia, have at one time or another received a message, a signal warning them they are being watched.

Lirio Abbate, correspondent for *Ansa* in Palermo

The case of Lirio Abbate, 38, correspondent in Palermo for the news agency *Ansa*, is typical. Police responsible for protecting him surprised two men in the process of placing a home-made car bomb under his vehicle on the night of 2 September 2007. This murder attempt came a few days after he returned to Palermo and after several months of threats following the publication of his book "I Complici" (The complicit) dealing with connivance between the political world and the mafia.

In his Palermo office, Abbate begins by switching on the television and setting the volume at a high level. Only then does he begin talking, in a soft voice. He is under permanent police protection, two bodyguards accompanying him everywhere he goes and posted outside his house at night. They protect him and his family, whom Abbate chooses not to talk about. "Of course, the presence of bodyguards makes my work more difficult. I have to find other ways of getting information. I can no longer go out in the street alone as I did before and meet people discretely. But I prefer to be protected," he explains.

Abbate is very exposed, partly because he works for *Ansa*, a news agency, meaning that his work is picked up by all the country's media. He is a journalist, but also a source of information for all his colleagues working on organised crime. Then, in October 2007, a mafia boss, Leoluca Bagarella, threatened him publicly during a trial. "I have been more worried since this case. Bagarella sent a message to his accomplices giving my name in open court. He has been in prison since 1995 and since I work for an agency, my articles are not by-lined. How did he know that it was me who had written any particular article? I don't want to leave Sicily, but I may have to do so," said Abbate.

For him, as well as the other journalists interviewed in Sicily, there has been no improvement in the situation. The tough period of political murders at the start of the 1990s seems to be over, but the mafia is taking ever greater interest in journalists. "In the past ten or 15 years, the mafia leaders have changed. They are no longer farmers, men of the land. Today they are doctors, politicians and they are well-educated. They know how important news is and how it can be manipulated. Violence is only one means of applying pressure. Journalists can also be corrupted and bought", says Abbate.

The journalist in Palermo explains that the risk does not lie in solely talking about the mafia. "Giving someone's name and saying that he is in the mafia is not dangerous. On the contrary, very often, it's felt to be flattering. But if a journalist takes apart his activities, explains how the mafia member manages his business and gets rich, then he feels threatened."

Abbate is extremely careful about where he can go and the people to whom he talks. Even the cafés he patronises are not chosen by chance. When he leaves his office, always accompanied by his two bodyguards – one a few metres ahead of him, the other a few metres behind – he walks for several minutes before entering a café. He never sets foot in the one at the foot of his office. "It belongs to the mafia," he says, smiling.

Writer and journalist Roberto Saviano, 28, author of the book "Gomorra" is in a similar situation. He has been under police protection since October 2006 as a result of threats he received since his investigation appeared into the Neapolitan mafia, the Camorra.

Nino Amadore, who has also written a book about mafia activities "The Grey Zone", has

had his car scratched several times and his tyres slashed just after his book was launched. "These are not very serious incidents, but they are signals as much as anything. When in 1990, I wrote about mafia activities within Messina University for the daily *La Sicilia*, I used to sleep with a knife next to my bed. Now I live in a working class neighbourhood of Palermo and sometimes I tell myself that something could happen to me," he said.

The journalist, now Palermo correspondent for the financial daily *Il Sole 24* Ore, says he does not go in for self-censorship, but the pressure is very acute. "One day, at the start of the 1990s, my father, who is a farmer, asked me, "When are you going to stop writing that? You can go to Milan or somewhere else but we have to stay here. A short time after that, people came and chopped down his new olive trees, to frighten us".

Amadore says the situation is even more serious in the countryside where the mafia is everywhere. Giuseppe Maniaci is the director of a small local TV channel, *Telejato*, in Partinico (about 50 kms west of Palermo). The town is the fiefdom of the Vitale family, a well known mafia clan in Sicily. "We produce a lot of anti-mafia news. In just a few years, we have had 40 tyres slashed and cars scratched, we have been received intimidating letters and threatening phone calls", says Maniaci. More seriously, at the end of January 2008, the director of *Telejato* was physically attacked by a young member of the Vitale family, aged barely 16, and one of his henchmen. "We had been doing reports for several years on illegal building controlled by the mafia. Finally, the municipal council ordered these buildings to be pulled down. Soon afterwards, I crossed paths by chance with the Vitale son, Michele. He tried to strangle me with my tie, and then he jammed my leg in the door of my car. Then he and his friend beat me up". Since then, Giuseppe Maniaci has had an escort of two police officers. When he wants to visit the neighbouring district of Corleone, he has to inform the local police, who accompany him.

Maniaci smokes three packets of cigarettes a day – "if the mafia don't kill me, the cigarettes will", he says – and works with his family. His wife Patrizia helps him, as does his son aged 20, Giovanni, and his 23-year-old daughter, Letizia. The youngest, Simona, is only 14. "But she already knows how to handle a camera", her father says. After the attack, we had a family meeting to discuss whether to continue. The children told me it was their turn to deal with the television and that I should have a rest".

Giuseppe Maniaci and his family, all of whom work for *Telejato*

But for Giuseppe Maniaci, there is no question of keeping quiet: "Yes we are afraid. Who said we were not afraid? But now it is more dangerous for me to stop than to continue. If I stop, I will no longer have any protection. And the mafia never forgets".

At Corleone (60 kms south of Palermo), Dino Paternostro works in medical administration, but he is also a journalist, and contributes unpaid to various media in the region. "My work as a journalist springs from my civil commitment. I am exposed because I have no media office to protect me. But I want to inculcate the culture of speaking out in a region which is under the reign of silence and *omerta*", Paternostro explains. Since 1991, when the offices of his newspaper *Città Nuove* were torched, he has done historical research about the mafia which culminated in the publication of a book entitled "I Corleonesi". In it he explores how the city's mafia bosses carry out internal "coups" to put themselves in power.

At 4am on 28 January 2006, police knocked on his door to tell him that his car was on fire. Since then he has received several silent phone calls in the middle of the night. His granddaughter, aged six, believes that the car caught fire on its own. Like her, the 11,500 residents of Corleone will not be looking for other explanations or asking for anyone to be

made accountable. An investigation is officially under way. "Since the mafia is implicated, it won't get anywhere. Everyone knows that," says Paternostro, somewhat bitterly.

In Calabria, journalists are possibly even more vulnerable to pressure. The media is less powerful than in Sicily, less well structured and the 'ndrangheta, the local mafia, more low-key and more difficult to figure out. There are fewer books about it than the neighbouring Cosa Nostra. Concetta Guido, a contributor to the daily *Calabria*, says local journalists are sometimes forced to go in for self-censorship, often leaving it to the special correspondents of major national media to carry out investigations into organised crime. "Taking on the realities of the mafia of the 'ndrangheta is a dangerous luxury for local journalists", she explains.

Spain:
Basque country at high risk

In a Basque society which is dynamic and forward-looking, journalists have, sometimes for many years, faced intimidation from the terrorist organisation Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA - Basque country and freedom).

Gorka Landaburu, director of the *EIG* agency and *Cambio 16*

In a hotel in Saint Sabastien, Gorka Landaburu, director of the *EIG* agency and *Cambio 16*, gives an outline of the years since 2000, the most dangerous period for journalists. "Pressure worsened at that time because of assassinations, particularly of journalists. On 7 May 2000, José Luis Lopez de Lacalle, of *El Mundo*, was gunned down in a hail of bullets. One year later, I was also the victim of a murder attempt. I was badly injured in a parcel bomb blast. I lost several fingers and the sight in my left eye", said Landaburu.

"The current situation is difficult to describe. ETA's violation of its truce is worrying. Journalists are again becoming targets", he said. A colleague on the Madrid daily *El Pais*, talks, on condition of anonymity, of his weariness towards violence: "The past years have been tough. The problem is the general climate, an edgy feeling which makes our work hard. I am tired of it all. It has gone on for so long now".

Even though not all media are subjected to ETA pressure with the same intensity, all the journalists who spoke to Reporters Without Borders in Spain's Basque Country felt the climate of hostility. Threatening letters after publication of a particular article, releases lambasting a journalist or a media, broadcasting of black lists of "enemy" media, rallies of pro-independence militants in front of media "hostile" to ETA, obstruction of reporting by vindictive sympathisers, throwing of petrol bombs, attacks against tutors, posters pasted up in the streets, giving the names of journalists with their addresses and telephone numbers and so on: The list is long of the range of harassment suffered by journalists who do not share ETA's views.

Calling ETA's use of violence "terrorism", publishing details of the private lives of its leaders or not calling its imprisoned members "political prisoners" are just a few of the reasons that can lead to reprisals against journalists, who are then referred to as "belligerents", "pawns of Madrid" or "journalist-police".

This climate has forced many of them to live under police protection and to place entire media offices under protection. The interior councillor for the autonomous Basque government, Xavier Balza, said that around 40 journalists are currently under police protection in the Basque country, around a dozen of them on an individual basis. Other media and journalists have opted for private protection, in coordination with the autonomous government. Others have undergone special safety training offered by security forces.

Landaburu refers to his current existence as a "life of semi-freedom", since he has had to change all his routines, give up innocent family outings, alter his itinerary and move about with bodyguards. Another correspondent on a national daily calls the security measures with which he has to surround himself "humiliating". One journalist in the Bilbao region describes as significant the impact on her in terms of "access to sources of information and general working conditions." She said, "There is a risk of giving more weight to sources of information which are not too tough towards terrorism and to avoid those which are opposed to it, because that can be dangerous." Journalists on occasion cover demonstrations with their bodyguards posted a few steps behind them.

Some of them refuse guards, saying that "the best protection is discretion and caution". Almost all of them rely on anonymity and systematically turn down invitations to take part in TV or radio debates. They say that, "ETA does not go after difficult targets. If you make it complicated for them, there is not much chance they will target you."

They also try to stay calm in a stressful climate. "Being under protection reminds you constantly of the threat. I have some colleagues who are obsessed by it," confided a correspondent on a national newspaper. Others refuse to give way to ETA's "education in fear"

It is generally agreed that protecting one's family is the first priority. Many journalists refuse to leave the Basque Country because of threats but will not accept risks to their families. It is common for partners and children to live outside the region. One journalist said she would go discreetly with her bodyguard to her daughter's school to check that everything was alright.

Sometimes it is the security forces that threaten the freedom of journalists. Oscar Beltran, specialist in terrorism for *El Correo*, wrote an article at the end of 2007 revealing that a member of the Basque police force had warned an ETA member that he was about to be arrested. The autonomous government then tried to identify the journalist's source of information. On the day of Beltran's arrest, the prosecutor called for a list of phone calls he had received to be supplied to the police, which was done. On the other hand, said the journalist, no investigation was carried out to identify the police officer who had tipped off the ETA member. For Beltran, "The message was clear. The autonomous government does not want the press to talk about the Basque police and wants to control all information about the autonomous police force."

Dialogue is impossible between threatened journalists and media termed as pro-ETA. Those living under threat accuse newspapers like *Berria* (formerly *Egunkaria*, shut down in 2003) and *Gara* of not just publishing the organisation's press releases but also of writing columns exposing journalists to ETA's anger. They point to the example of a column by-lined with the pseudonym of Maïté Soroa and headlined "The malicious press critic".

After the ETA truce was broken with the murder on 7 March 2008, of the former local socialist councillor Isaias Carrasco, scepticism is the order of the day. Weakened by arrests and considered to be "at its last gasp", ETA can, say some local observers, commit new murders to convince the authorities and public opinion that it is still a force to be reckoned with.

Northern Ireland:
The danger from paramilitary groups

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Martin O'Hagan, investigative journalist murdered in Lurgan, near Belfast in 2001

Threats of death and violence remain against several investigative journalists in Northern Ireland, despite the peace process of recent years and the formation of a power-sharing regional government in 2007 by formerly sworn enemies from the Unionist and Republican movements.

Journalists working in the province say the level of protection the police and government provide for those under threat is generally poor or even non-existent. They feel that the ongoing threats, the lack of effective official protection, and the failure to prosecute those responsible have helped to create an atmosphere of impunity among paramilitaries seeking to intimidate the media and stifle probes into their criminal activities. The killers of investigative journalist Martin O'Hagan, murdered in 2001, have still not been arrested.

The impact on press freedom is inevitable as it fosters self-censorship among those journalists who are targeted and also among others who might wish to expose the unsavoury remnants of the long sectarian conflict.

Overall, the peace process has led to a gradual reduction in the number of threats made against media staff. Today, there are thought to be fewer than 10 Northern Ireland journalists working under an active threat. A few years ago, the figure was almost double. And at the height of "the Troubles" more than 20 years ago, there were too many threats to be counted.

These days, they come chiefly from gangs that have sprung from Protestant Loyalist paramilitary groups, such as the Ulster Defence Association, that are in favour of keeping strong links with the United Kingdom. These gangs operate in fiefdoms, often involved in drug dealing and extortion/protection rackets, and occasionally fighting turf wars. Dissident Republican splinter groups of the Irish Republican Army (IRA) - which has given up its weapons in compliance with the peace process - also intimidate journalists.

In September 2007, a bullet was sent in the post to a Belfast TV station, accompanied by a note with the name, address and car number plate of Robin Livingstone, editor of the Andersonstown News, a local newspaper chiefly read by the mainly-Catholic, nationalist and Republican community. The threat was made by a group calling itself the Red Hand Defenders. Livingstone's newspaper had been investigating criminal activities by Loyalist gangs and threats made against Catholic families in the Stoneyford area of County Antrim. Livingstone vows to continue publishing such reports, which he calls "hard-hitting but fair", but recognises that these threats have a "chilling" effect on press freedom. He says some people continue to intimidate and attack journalists to try to derail the peace process. He says he has been threatened six times in his 22 years in journalism. But the latest was the most worrying, since he now has a young family to protect.

He admits that he has been disappointed by the reaction of the authorities. He has not been given any protection. "I'd prefer it if someone took an interest in this," said Livingstone. "The [UK government's] Northern Ireland Office has shown no interest at all. And apart from the initial visit to warn me of the threat, the Police Service of Northern Ireland [PSNI] has offered me no protection. No one has approached me to advise me on personal safety."

Jeremy Dear, General Secretary of the National Union of Journalists (NUJ), said after the threats against Livingstone last September, "It is vital that the PSNI act to protect those under threat and that politicians from all parties deliver a clear message in defence of media freedom and the right of journalists to work free from such threats."

Jim Campbell, 65, a veteran investigative reporter, formerly Northern Ireland editor of the Sunday World and now semi-retired, remains the target of threats - the latest one earlier this year. One of his contacts in the Loyalist community sent him a photograph he had found on the Internet, showing Campbell with a gun target drawn on his forehead. His contact informed the police and the image disappeared from the Web. "I think it was just done to annoy me," said Campbell, who has lost count of the threats he has received over the years. He has survived a kidnapping, being beaten up by soldiers, bombings and a murder attempt, in 1984, which left him with a bullet lodged in his spine. He continues to write regularly for the Sunday World, often exposing criminal activities. He believes that a "Loyalist thug" was behind this latest threat.

"The Internet has revolutionised death threats," he said. "You used to get a phone call

or a letter containing abuse and threats. Now they can post it on the Web for widespread impact." Campbell is convinced that the threats have a very damaging effect on press freedom, particularly among journalists living in "neutral" territory, who are more vulnerable and lack the "psychological protection of a supportive community". He considers, however, that there has been a "slight decline" in the number of threats made against the media.

Another Sunday World journalist, who asked for anonymity, was told by police in 2006 that he was the target of a threat from a paramilitary group. He asked for police protection under the government's Key Persons Protection Scheme for prominent individuals deemed to be "at risk". His request was rejected by the Northern Ireland Office (NIO), which said that journalists did not qualify for this protection. Officials backtracked after local journalists protested, and said that the authorities could, in theory, provide protection to journalists under the programme. Nevertheless, this has not happened, because it seems they regard the level of risk as insufficiently high.

As for the 2001 murder of Martin O'Hagan - a Sunday World journalist killed after receiving several threats over his investigative work into paramilitary groups and their alleged links with the security services - Kevin Cooper, former chairman of the Belfast NUJ branch, said, "The unsolved murder of a journalist leaves question marks hanging over the level of protection of freedom of expression in Northern Ireland and over how seriously the authorities take threats to journalists. At the time of Martin's murder, they said they would 'leave no stone unturned' in their determination to bring the killers to justice."

The police investigation into O'Hagan's murder has stalled. At the end of 2006, officers said they had identified eight suspects, but lacked evidence against them. Two new investigations were launched in 2007, one internal to the security forces, which will look at new evidence, and one by the region's police ombudsman.

Neither the PSNI nor the NIO would comment on individual cases of threats against journalists, but a PSNI spokesman told Reporters Without Borders, "We would inform any person if we felt their life was in danger. We would give advice on personal security, but would not disclose any details for security reasons. Our level of involvement would depend on the particular situation, on a case-by-case basis."

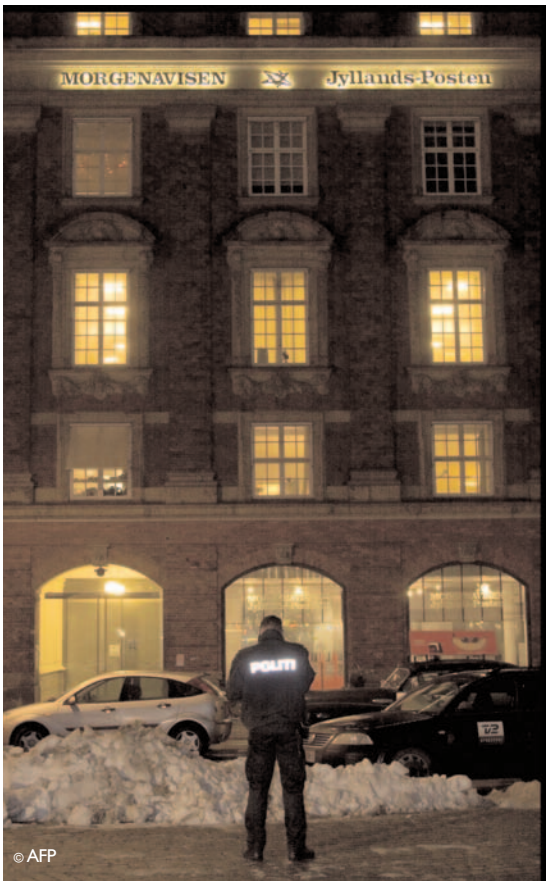
The NIO said, "Journalists, like any person who is concerned about their personal safety, should take their concerns in the first instance to the local PSNI areas commander. They can also apply to the Limited Home Protection Scheme (previously known as the Key Persons Protection Scheme.)."

Denmark and Sweden:
The sensitive question of islam

A leading Danish daily newspaper, *Politiken*, carried an article in September 2005 about the difficulties experienced by writer Kare Bluitgen in finding artists prepared to illustrate a book on the Prophet Mohammed. They all feared brutal reprisals following the murder in the Netherlands in November 2004 of film-maker Theo van Gogh.
The cultural editor of the conservative Danish daily *Jyllands-Posten*, Flemming Rose, then launched an appeal to a cartoonists' association asking them to draw the Prophet Mohammed. Twelve of them responded to the challenge.

In an interview with *Newsweek* in February 2006, Flemming Rose explained that the *Jyllands-Posten* initiative was above all aimed at breaking self-censorship surrounding the question of Islam. He denied having had a negative and satirical approach to the religion. "I asked them to draw Mohammed as they saw him. I in no way asked them to produce a caricature or to poke fun at him".
The 12 cartoonists were first published in the 30 September 2005 edition of *Jyllands-Posten* under the headline "The faces of Mohammed". The most controversial of them was drawn by Kurt Westergaard and showed the prophet wearing a turban in the shape of a bomb, with a lighted fuse. The turban also bore the Muslim profession of faith. A few days later the Islamic Society of

Denmark demanded that *Jyllands-Posten* apologise and withdraw the cartoons. It also unsuccessfully took the paper to court. On 19 October 2005, a delegation of ambassadors from Muslim countries asked to see Danish Prime Minister, Anders Fogh Rasmussen. He refused to see them on the grounds that he could not give an opinion on the cartoons without influencing *Jyllands-Posten*'s editorial line. He maintained this position for several weeks on the basis of the secular defence of press freedom.



Police protect the offices of *Jyllands-Posten* in Denmark

By the end of 2005, Jyllands-Posten received the first death threats and the 12 cartoonists were placed under police protection. The newspaper's offices had to be evacuated twice because of bomb alerts. This was followed by often violent demonstrations in almost every part of the Arab and Muslim world.

A total of almost 150 newspapers in 50 countries published the cartoons, either to condemn them, or in support of press freedom. Some faced legal proceedings after dong so. No media was convicted in Europe for publishing them.

The turban cartoon is the one which prompted the fiercest reactions

Danish intelligence on 11 February 2008, uncovered a murder plot against Kurt Westergaard, who drew the turban cartoon. He has since been forced to live under the protection of the Danish Secret Services (PET), changing his residence every two weeks. In an interview with *Le Monde* on 4 April 2008, he said he was "depressed at being a fugitive in my own country". At 73, he continues to draw cartoons for *Jyllands-Posten*, but remains marked by the death threats he has received and the security surrounding him, probably for many more months. Kurt Westergaard describes himself as an atheist and denies being racist. He recently objected to the use of the cartoon in an anti-Islam film, Fitna, made by Dutch extreme right deputy, Geert Wilders, and posted on the Internet.

The plot to murder Kurt Westergaard shocked the entire Danish press, even though many journalists did not initially support the initiative by *Jyllands-Posten*, they all considered that the murder attempt unacceptable. Virtually every Danish newspaper responded by publishing the Kurt Westergaard cartoon in their 13 February 2008 editions.

The Mohammed cartoons case has not changed working habits for the vast majority of Danish journalists and cartoonists. Even though the death threats received by *Jyllands-Posten* in 2005 and 2006 were taken very seriously, they did not have any repercussions for the work of newspapers. Self-censorship which many feared would result from the Islam issue has not happened. The Danish press remains highly committed to free

expression and the cartoons affair has rather had the effect of strengthening this unanimously shared conviction.

For Toger Seidenfaden, editor of *Politiken*, it is not simply the defence of press freedom that is at stake. He believes that the competition organised by *Jyllands Posten* is an example of populist stigmatising of ethnic minorities, and particularly of the Muslim community (Muslims number 200-300,000 in a population of 5.4 million). Anti-Islam rhetoric is very much a feature of life in Denmark, which is marked by a political and religious conservatism.
Jyllands-Posten editor, Carsten Juste, has expressed his regrets about the cartoons, saying that the newspaper never intended to hurt Muslims. But Juste also believes that the Muslim minority in Denmark should accept insult, ridicule and humiliation, along with everyone else in the context of a modern and democratic society.

Threats and violence against journalist in Sweden have been on the increase recently. Nearly two-thirds of editors said they had received threats in 2006. In a few cases, they had decided on self-censorship by not publishing articles. And at least one journalist stopped his investigative work for fear of reprisals, once he became a father. In the face of this situation, the leading journalists' union released a handbook for the media on how to deal with such threats.

Local newspaper, *Nerikes Allehanda* published a sketch by Lars Vilks in August 2007, representing the prophet Mohammed in the shape of a "roundabout dog" (a highly popular artistic creation in Sweden, particularly in the middle of roundabouts). The drawing was to illustrate an editorial on self-censorship and freedom of religion. Several art galleries had previously refused to show the works of Lars Vilks, for fear of violent reaction. After it was published, Swedish police stepped up security around the headquarters of *Nerikes Allehanda* and some staff, who had received threats, were made to accept bodyguards. Lars Vilks has himself been threatened on several occasions.

Elsewhere, in March 2008, photographers and reporters were assaulted while covering a murder in the suburbs of Göteborg. One was surrounded and beaten by some 15 youths from the neighbourhood as he was taking photo, forcing him to abandon his equipment. A crew from national public television also had equipment damaged.

The new members: Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, Czech Republic, Cyprus

The new member states of the European Union have not all escaped this kind of violence. Often committed by mafia-type criminal gangs or ultranationalists, they have continued, in varying degrees, after joining the EU.

In Bulgaria, for example, two men threatened to throw acid at Maria Nikolaeva after they got round the security measures at her paper, *Politika*, on 9 February 2007 on the day she and a colleague Assen Yordanovhad published an article headlined, "The campaign against Strandja" – about a plan to build a block of flats at Bulgaria's largest protected site – the natural park of Strandja, on the Black Sea. The two men turned up in her office and told her, "You know very well that you don't write things like that. And you know what happens to prying journalists; they have acid thrown at them."

Anna Zarkova was disfigured in an acid attack in 1998

Despite a tragic precedent - Anna Zarkova was disfigured in an acid attack in 1998 after exposing human trafficking - the *Politika* journalists published her investigation in full the following week. But the edition could not be sold in Burgas (the administrative centre of the Strandja region), because all copies were bought up at the depot by an unknown buyer. Four thugs assaulted the co-author of the article Assen Yordanov in the same city in December 2007, kicking and punching him, but the journalist, son of a famous Bulgarian

poet, managed to fight back and drive off his assailants.

In neighbouring Romania, local free expression organisations record almost one case a month of attacks on journalists. In one such case, American journalist Chuck Todaro was cut on his hand during an altercation in December 2007 while he was reporting in a small village in the Moldavian region of Romania. Another journalist, Mihai Braha, had an ear cut in an assault in the small town of Marasesti. Then, in May 2007, Romanian president, Traian Basescu, roughly snatched a mobile phone from a journalist who was filming him. The journalist later got her phone back and found that the head of state, who had not switched off the phone, had called him a "dirty gypsy".

In Hungary, Iren Karman, who was reporting on control of the oil industry by gangsters and general corruption in the country, was left unconscious with serious head injuries when she was beaten up by two thugs on the banks of the Danube, on 22 June 2007. She was found the following morning by a fisherman and taken to hospital in Budapest. She had received several threats during the previous winter, both by email and telephone. An investigation was opened into the assault.

In the Czech Republic, Tomas Nemecek, aged 30, editor of the weekly *Respekt*, needed hospital treatment after he was kicked and beaten about the head and sprayed with tear gas by two thugs as he left a shop near his home in Prague on 17 January 2004. His assailants did not utter a word throughout the attack and stole nothing from him. The journalist and his colleagues believed the attack was most likely linked to reports published in the magazine. Deputy editor, Marek Svehla, told Reporters Without Borders at the time that the assault was "obviously pre-meditated and directed at the newspaper". He believed that it could be connected to a series of articles that appeared at the start of January 2004 about a criminal gang at large in Most and Litvinov, in the north of Bohemia, and police failure to tackled them. The newspaper received threats during his period and on 18 January one of *Respekt*'s journalists who asked for anonymity, received a phone call from a gang member threatening to attack him if he wrote a particular article.

Three bombs exploded in front of the premises of the daily *Kibris*, in northern Nicosia in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (which only Turkey recognises) overnight on 6-7 May 2004 without causing any casualties. The daily's editor, Basaran Duzgun, said he suspected paramilitary groups and ultranationalists could have been behind the attack on the paper, which had backed a United Nations plan to reunify the island, partitioned since the 1974 invasion by the Turkish army. Basaran Duzgun said that journalists on *Kibris*, as well as their families, had received frequent threats in the months preceding the 24 April 2004 referendum on reunification of the island.