

Silencing Journalists in India



Rajesh Mishra Sai Reddy Sandeep Kothari
Narendra Dabholkar Chandrika Rai
Karun Misra Naveen Gupta Rajdev Ranjan
Shantanu Bhowmik Sudip Datta Bhowmik
Javeed Ahmed Mir Lingaram Kodopi
Fazal Wahab Sudhir Dhawale Prahlad Goala
Shaharier Kabir Dilip Mohapatra
Deepak Jasiwal Sheikh Anwar
Arun Narayan Dekate Naveen Soorinje
Jitendra Singh Jaikhlong Brahma
Kamran Yousuf Baltej Pannu
Nemi Chand Jain Prabhat Singh
Vinod Verma Ashok Sodhi
Asiya Jeelani Indra Mohan Hakasam
Surinder Singh Parmanand Goyal
Santanu Saikia Hemant Yadav
Akshay Singh Rajesh Verma Somaru NagMVN Shankar
Santosh Yadav Parvaz Mohammed Sultan Veeraboina Yadagiri
Rajesh Mishra Gauri Lankesh Vikas Ranjan
Kishore Dave Akhilesh Pratap Dharmendra Singh
Chaitali Santra Vijay Pratap Singh Jagjit Saikia
Jyotirmoy Dey Dwijamani Singh Umesh Rajput Sushil Pathak
Mohammed Muslimuddin Rakesh Sharma Hem Chandra Pandey
Tarun Kumar Acharya Jagendra (Joginder) Singh

Silencing Journalists in India

Bonnie Smith
Aditi Saxena

HUMAN RIGHTS LAW NETWORK

- To protect fundamental human rights, increase access to basic resources for the marginalised communities, and eliminate discrimination.
- To create a justice delivery system that is accessible, accountable, transparent, efficient and affordable, and works for the underprivileged. Raise the level of pro bono legal expertise for the poor to make the work uniformly competent as well as compassionate.
- Professionally train a new generation of public interest lawyers and paralegals who are comfortable in the world of law as well as in social movements, and who learn from social movements to refine legal concepts and strategies.

Silencing Journalists in India

April 2018

© Socio Legal Information Centre*

ISBN No.

Compilation, Editing & Proofreading: Bonnie Smith, Aditi Saxena

Design

Printed at

Published by Human Rights Law Network
(Division of Socio-Legal Information Centre)
576, Masjid Road, Jangpura
New Delhi - 110014
Phone No: +91-11-24374501

Disclaimer

Text has been compiled from various sources for the purpose of this book. Photographs used are from those available on the internet through a generic search.

*Any section of this volume may be reproduced without prior permission of HRLN for public interest purposes with appropriate acknowledgment.

INTRODUCTION

Change is what is needed in India in order to protect both the physical interests and well-being of journalists, as well as, to protect the sanctity and meaning of freedom of expression for the people of India. Change is difficult in every association, and this is apparent in the relationship between a government and her citizens, one which is riddled with suspect characteristics and qualities that give rise to unjust and horrific actions. These are actions which violate constitutional freedoms based on a desire to silence the media in India.

Positive change could represent an united and collective effort to realize free expression, communication and transparent access to information. However, change can only be successful and achievable, if there is an unanimous agreement by those empowered to effect a transformation. History should and will judge us based on our actions. For India, the judgment can be less harsh, perhaps because there are so many global distractions and competing threats facing members of the media.

In China, journalists and lawyers have been jailed or tortured presumably based on their subversion against the Communist Party. In America, journalists will argue that they too are under threat. The comparison to the threat of potential change to libel laws or the U.S. President's criticism of American journalists for spreading "fake news," doesn't at all compare to the level of threat Indian journalists face every day. The extent of atrocities experienced by journalists in India, can only be characterized as catastrophic. All these incidents have taken place under the watchful eye of the Indian government.

According to the Index released by reporters without borders in 2017, India is ranked 136 in the world press freedom index among a list of 180 countries.

Presumably, in defence of their action or inaction, the Indian government may argue that the current constraints on Indian media are predicated on the necessity for strong government control and

influence in an effort to protect and provide consistent benefit to all people. However, these protections and influences are not impactful, if there is an inconsistent appreciation for them from the masses of people they claim to serve. Historically, it is said that concentration of power leads to corruption, and degenerate democracies devolve to panem et circenses.

According to the data by committee to protect journalists, an independent, non profit organization that promote press freedom worldwide. 75 journalist have been killed in India since 1992. This compilation by HRLN from various sources is dedicated to all those journalist who lost their live for doing their job.

Uttar Pradesh (UP) accounted for more than 70 percent of the total recorded attacks on journalists in India in 2014, according to national crime records. In 2015, there were two recorded deaths in the state. There have been no convictions in any of the murders, including that of Jagendra Singh (see case study above). Today UP accounts for 72% of all attacks and Bihar comes second, and not a single person was arrested in these states for attacks on journalists.

OVERARCHING GOVERNING LAW



Journalists, have a fundamental right to carry on their occupation under Art. 19(1)(g); they have also a right to attend proceedings in court under Art. 19(1)(d); and the right to freedom of speech and expression guaranteed by Art. 19(1) (a) includes their right to publish as journalists, a faithful report of the proceedings that they have witnessed and heard in court. The freedom of speech and expression also includes the freedom of press.

REFERENCED VIOLATIVE LAWS

- Special Powers Act of 1974
- Information Technologies Act (IT Act) - section 67 (publishing or transmitting obscene material in electronic form) and 67(A)
- IT Act - Section 66A punishes any sender of electronic communication deemed to be “grossly offensive,” of “menacing character,” or “for the purpose of causing annoyance or inconvenience”
- Indian Penal Code (IPC) - Section 292 (publication of obscene or scurrilous matter)

- IPC – Sedition, under section 124A, outlaws expression that can cause “hatred or contempt, or excites or attempts to excite disaffection,” toward the government. The 1923 Official Secrets Act empowers authorities to censor security-related articles and prosecute members of the press.
- IPC - Section 153A criminalizes language “promoting enmity” between groups
- IPC - Section 295A outlaws any speech “intended to outrage religious feelings”
- IPC - Waging war against the state under sections 121 and 121A
- Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) - Alleged involvement with a terrorist group under sections 17, 20, and 39
- The Whistleblowers Protection Act was signed into law in May 2014, almost four years after it was first introduced, but analysts raised concerns about its limitations and enforceability. Later media reports suggested that the government planned to amend the law to create exceptions protecting information related to national security.
- Gagging the media from reporting on judicial proceedings is an extraordinary remedy that can be granted only in exceptional cases and the postponement orders can be passed only with regard to “criminal trials.” The Supreme Court in *Sahara v. SEBI* (2012) where the court held that media coverage could be “postponed” by the High Court, under their contempt powers, during the course of a trial to prevent prejudice to the accused. Such an order of postponement has to be passed, only when other alternative measures such as change of venue or postponement of trial are not available. In passing such orders of postponement, courts have to keep in mind the principle of proportionality and the test of necessity. The applicant who seeks an order of postponement of publicity must displace the presumption of open justice and only in such cases, the higher courts shall pass the orders of postponement under Article 129/Article 215 of the Constitution. Such orders of postponement of publicity shall be passed for a limited period and subject to the courts evaluating in each case the necessity to pass such orders not only in the context of administration of justice but also in the context of

the rights of the individuals to be protected from prejudicial publicity or mis-information, in other words, where the court is satisfied that the Article 21 rights of a person are offended. There is no general law for courts to postpone publicity, either prior to adjudication or during adjudication, as it would depend on the

facts of each case.

JOURNALISTS ARRESTED



Cases dating back to 2001 are captured on this document's timeline of allegedly unlawful arrests of journalists. These arrests of journalists progressed significantly over the previous two decades. The sample of case studies which follow, represent the level of consistent corruption and abuse of law, carried out by the government or agents of the government, in their effort

to quiet the media.



Name: Sudhir Dhawale

Age: 42 (at time of the incident)

Place of Incident: Wardha district of Maharashtra

Date of Incident: 2 January 2011

Reason: Dhawale, a Mumbai-based activist and journalist, wrote about human rights violations against Dalits in the Marathi-language *Vidrohi*, a monthly he founded and edited. Police arrested Dhawale when he had traveled to attend a Dalit meeting, and charged him with sedition under section 124A of the Indian penal code, waging war against the state under sections 121 and 121A under the Indian penal code, and alleged involvement with a terrorist group under sections 17, 20, and 39 of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act.

Sections 124 and 121 of the penal code carry a potential death penalty. Police said a Maoist insurgent in custody had accused Dhawale of involvement in the banned organisation's war against the state in tribal areas of India. Police searched Dhawale's home on January 3, 2011, and seized books and a computer.

Dhawale's supporters said he was detained because he was a critic of a state-supported, anti-Maoist militia active in Chhattisgarh state, a center of the violence between Maoists and the government. In a documentary on the case, Darshana Dhawale, the journalist's wife, stated that the police had accused her husband of supporting the Maoists in his writings. The makers of the film-titled "*Sudhir Dhawale: Dissent = Sedition?*"- also interviewed Teltumbde, who said *Vidrohi* covered the Maoists but did not support them.

Current Status: On January 20, 2011, police also accused Dhawale of hanging Maoist posters in Gondia district in December 2010. Dhawale's wife said the journalist was in Mumbai, not Gondia, at

the time. No formal charges were filed against Dhawale, and that case against him was soon dropped. Shortly after proceedings began in 2011, a court in Maharashtra state withdrew the sedition charges against Dhawale, but kept the other charges. Dhawale was denied bail in March 2012. His trial was ongoing in late 2013. He was imprisoned in a Kanpur jail in Maharashtra state. After 40 months of imprisonment, Gondia's sessions court acquitted Dhawale of all charges after the police failed to produce substantial evidence against

him.



Name: Lingaram Kodopi

Age: 25

Place of Incident: Dantewada district

Date of Incident: 10 September 2011

Reason: Police said they arrested Kodopi as he was accepting a bribe from a representative of a steel company wanting to operate in a Maoist insurgent-controlled area. The journalist denied the accusation and said the police had targeted him because he had refused to work for them under a program to recruit tribal youths to defeat the insurgents.

Police accused Kodopi of being a “Maoist associate.” He was charged with anti-state activities under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, the Chhattisgarh Public Security Act, and the Indian penal code. Local human rights activists and journalists said authorities wanted to prevent Kodopi from publicizing the role of police in recent violence in the state.

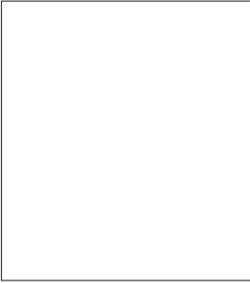
In April 2011, the journalist had documented the destruction of houses during an anti-Maoist police operation in three Dantewada district villages and “recorded on video precise narrations of police atrocities.” Himanshu Kumar, a local human rights activist, told the Indian Express that Kodopi had evidence of government involvement in the burning of three villages.

Kodopi told journalists he had fled police harassment in 2010 to study journalism and work as a freelancer in New Delhi. While he was there, Dantewada police accused him of being a senior Maoist commander and masterminding an attack against a politician in Chhattisgarh.

Kodopi denied the accusations at a press conference in Delhi, and he was not taken into custody at the time. Police in Dantewada would not explain whether Kodopi was believed to be a low-level Maoist “associate,” as alleged in the 2011 case, or a senior commander, as they said in 2010. “We are still ascertaining his role,” District Police Superintendent Ankit Garg told Tehelka.

Current Status: He had not been brought to trial by late year, and the total penalties he faced were not clear. Kodopi had not received bail by October 2012 and the journalist was reportedly subjected to torture while in prison. On 7 February 2014, The Supreme Court of India ruled Kodopi “deserved to be enlarged on bail during the pendency of [his] trial on furnishing personal securities in the sum of Rs. 50,000/- with two sureties each of the like amount, to the satisfaction of the Trial Court” in addition to conditions.¹

¹ Supreme Court of India, Criminal Appeal document at <https://indiankanoon.org/doc/34894212/>



Name: Sheikh Anwar

Age: unknown

Place of Incident: (unconfirmed) Kota

Date of Incident: 18 June 2012

Reason: Police arrested Sheikh Anwar for allegedly procuring weapons and ammunition for Naxals in Chattisgarh. Sheikh Anwar was arrested along with an alleged Naxal, and his wife was arrested as well. According to police, Anwar works as a journalist in the Naxal region of Kota, and he along with another individual from Andhra Pradesh had “procured the rounds” from police and paramilitary forces in order to supply them to the Naxals. ²

Current Status: unknown

² Journalist Arrested IN MEDIA WATCH BRIEFS |18/06/2012 from The Hoot at <http://www.thehoot.org/media-watch-briefs/journalist-arrested-6018>



Name: Naveen Soorinje

Age: 28

Place of Incident: Mangalore

Date of Incident: 7 November 2012

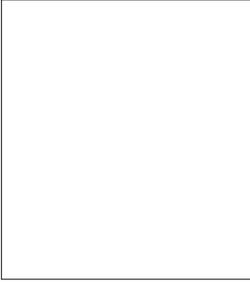
Reason: Naveen Soorinje, a Mangalore journalist, was arrested for recording the July 28, 2012 home stay attack on video for his channel and broadcasting outlet.

He was booked on more than a dozen charges, including rioting and assault. The high court denied him bail and subsequently, journalists in Bangalore campaigned for his release. Soorinje has denied taking part in the attack.

His news report accused police of responding slowly to his repeated calls reporting the assault, and of “chatting” with the assailants once they did arrive. Human rights activists have broadly accused police in Karnataka of allowing attacks against women as a supposed form of “moral policing,”³

Current Status: A Mangalore court denied Soorinje’s request for bail on 27 November 2012, however on 31 October 2013, a Karnataka state cabinet meeting decided to revoke all cases against Naveen Soorinje.

³ Charges dropped IN MEDIA WATCH BRIEFS |31/01/2013 from The Hoot at <http://www.thehoot.org/media-watch-briefs/charges-dropped-6579>



Name: Jaikhlong Brahma

Age: unknown

Place of Incident: Kokrajhar

Date of Incident: 2 September 2014

Reason: Brahma, a correspondent for the Guwahati-based privately owned news channel News Live, was arrested and held by police for six days for questioning.

Police accused Brahma of having links with a faction of the National Democratic front of Bodoland (NDFB) separatist group, and seized the journalist's laptop and two cell phones from his home. Police accused Brahma of providing information to the extremists about the movement of security forces, and "voluntarily [doing] the work of promoting and knowingly facilitating the violent acts of this banned organization...which compromises the national security and integrity," cited a media report.

Current Status: Brahma was denied bail on September 8, and is being held at Kokrajhar jail. Formal charges were not immediately filed, according to reports.

He was at risk of being detained for 12 months without charge or trial under the National Security Act. He faces possible anti-state charges over accusations that he promoted an outlawed separatist group after interviewing its commander, according to news reports.

Brahma has denied the allegations against him. The Journalists' Union of Assam said the allegations against Brahma were false and came as a result of tension between local journalists and police.



Name: Santanu (Shantanu) Saikia

Age: unknown

Place of Incident: unknown

Date of Incident: 20 February 2015

Reason: Former journalist and present operator of the news website Indianpetro.com, Santanu Saikia along with businessman Prayas Jain, were arrested by Delhi Police in connection with the probe into the alleged leak of petroleum ministry documents to corporates, suspecting that the two could have been among the alleged recipients of the stolen documents.⁴

Current Status: In April 2015, Delhi court rejected the accused Shantanu Saikia's bail application which was opposed by the Crime Branch of Delhi Police, saying that incriminating documents had been recovered from him.

⁴ Journalist arrested in leaks case IN MEDIA WATCH BRIEFS |20/02/2015 from The Hoot at <http://www.thehoot.org/media-watch-briefs/journalist-arrested-in-leaks-case-8107>



Name: Santosh Yadav

Age: unknown

Place of Incident: Chhattisgarh

Date of Incident: 29 September 2015

Reason: The freelance journalist, who is based in Bastar district, contributes reports and photos to several local, privately owned dailies including Dainik Navbharat, Patrika, and Dainik Chhattisgarh. He reported on alleged human rights abuses by the police against tribal communities in the region.

Yadav also helps connect members of his community whose relatives are facing arrest to legal aid groups. Police arrested Yadav on what his colleagues said were fabricated charges brought in connection with his reporting on alleged human rights abuses by local authorities.

Police charged Yadav with rioting, criminal conspiracy, and attempted murder. He was also charged with “associating with a terrorist organization” and “supporting and aiding terrorist groups” under the Chhattisgarh Special Public Security Act, according to the independent news website Scroll.in.

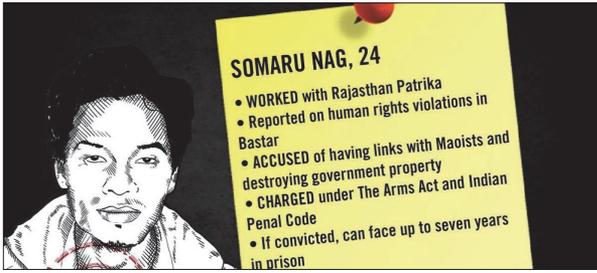
Charges under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, a counterterrorism law, have also been brought against Yadav. Police said Yadav had links to Maoists rebels and had participated in violence between police and Maoists on August 21, 2015. Yadav’s colleagues and his lawyer say the journalist is innocent.

It was reported that Yadav was forced to sign a blank paper that the police have described in court and to the lawyer as a confession.

Current Status: In October 2015, Yadav was placed in pre-trial custody, according to news reports. In a protest that month, hundreds of journalists called on police to substantiate the allegations

against him and asked why the police had waited several days before disclosing that he had been arrested.

Ajay Yadav, the superintendent of Bastar district police, told journalists he did not consider Yadav a journalist. According to a July 27, 2016 report, Yadav claimed that inmates in the Jagdalpur jail, where he is being held, were threatening his life. He said “a person named Vicky” was planning to attack him. He expressed apprehensions that he might be killed inside the jail. After 17 months in prison, the Supreme Court granted bail to the journalist.



Name: Somaru Nag

Age: unknown

Place of Incident: Darbha town

Date of Incident: 16 July 2015

Reason: Plainclothes police arrested Nag at his family's mobile phone shop on the outskirts of Darbha town. The family was told of his arrest three days later.

Police accused Nag of collaborating with a group of villagers, who on June 26 allegedly set fire to equipment being used to build roads in Chote Kadma. Police said the villagers were Maoists or Maoist sympathizers. Many of those who participated in damaging the equipment fled, and it is unclear how many individuals were arrested. Nag was charged under the Arms Act and he was also charged with banditry under Section 395, arson under Section 435, and criminal conspiracy under Section 120B of the Indian penal code.

Nag worked as a stringer for the daily Patrika for three years and frequently covered rural issues including development and access to water and electricity in the region. Reported statements said they were not aware of any specific reports that could have been the reason for Nag's arrest, but police in the region frequently target journalists who they believe could serve as informants on Maoist operations.

Presumably, Nag could have been targeted because he was "a very vocal journalist" and one of the only tribal journalists working in the vicinity and authorities could have been motivated to pre-emptively silence any reporting on intensifying security operations in the region.

Hundreds of journalists in the state protested Santosh Yadav and Nag's imprisonment in early October 2015 and called on police to substantiate the allegations against them. The Delhi Union of Journalists called for the release of Yadav and Nag and an "end to victimization of journalists in conflict areas where they are caught between the conflicting demands of rebel groups and state forces." Nag belongs to the indigenous community known as Adivasis.

These tribal communities are often caught between Maoists and security forces. Reportedly, police frequently make arbitrary arrests and pressure members of tribal communities to work as informants.

Current Status: Nag's family visited him at Jagdalpur jail and said he had been severely beaten while in custody. Nag was acquitted and released 21 July 2016.⁵

⁵ As court releases Bastar journalist for lack of evidence, another alleges threat to his life in jail. Reported by Scroll.in at <https://scroll.in/article/812626/as-court-releases-bastar-journalist-for-lack-of-evidence-another-alleges-threat-to-his-life-in-jail>



Name: Surinder Singh

Age: unknown

Place of Incident: Punjab

Date of Incident: October 2015

Reason: Singh, who hosts a Punjabi-language news program on YouTube, was arrested on anti-terror charges relating to a complaint filed against him in June 1988. Singh's news program "Talking Punjab" has more than 13,000 YouTube subscribers. It features local news, including reports on drug abuse, the government's alleged failure to compensate farmers affected by a pesticide that caused crop damage, and critical reports on the judiciary.

Singh was active on social media and has more than 22,000 followers on his Facebook page, "Surinder Singh - Talking Punjab." Singh had commented on the recent political violence against Sikhs that broke out across much of the country.

Current Status: Singh had a court hearing which was scheduled to take place on December 17, 2015. Singh is being held at the central jail in Ambala, in the neighboring state of Haryana. Singh was acquitted by TADA court on 7 September 2016 and released from jail.⁶

⁶ at <https://sikhsiyasat.net/2016/09/08/journalist-surinder-singh-talking-punjab-acquitted-tada-court-released-ambala-jail/>



Name: Baltej Pannu

Age: unknown

Place of Incident: Punjab

Date of Incident: 27 November 2015

Reason: Baltej Pannu, a Canadian freelance journalist and presenter for several Punjabi-language radio shows, was arrested over rape allegations in the Indian state of Punjab, where he has been working for the past five years.

Pannu had been critical in his reports of the state government, run by former Chief Minister Parkash Singh Badal, which he claims had failed to curb rampant drug abuse in Punjab.

Several of the radio shows he had presented air internationally, including in the Greater Toronto area in Canada, and California, in the U.S. Pannu had also been interviewed as a political analyst by Punjabi diaspora radio stations and posts critical commentary on social media about politics and drug problems in the state. His Facebook page has more than 34,000 followers.

Pannu recently posted on social media that he had been threatened for his critical comments against the government. Badal and his family members hold key positions in the state government. Pannu has claimed members of the ruling party have close links to drug traffickers and organized crime. The Badals have denied such accusations.

In a legal complaint filed on November 25, 2015, Pannu allegedly forced a woman to have sex with him against her wishes over several months and then refused to marry her. The alleged sexual assaults happened about five years ago.

Pannu was charged with rape under section 376 of India's penal code; cheating and dishonestly inducing delivery of property under

section 420; and criminal intimidation under section 506. Pannu denies the allegations.

Current Status: The Punjabi-Canadian journalist was granted bail by the Punjab and Haryana High Court in February 2016.



Name: Prabhat Singh

Age: unknown

Place of Incident: Chhattisgarh

Date of Incident: 23 March 2016

Reason: Singh was arrested for sending an allegedly obscene message over a Whatsapp group, as well as a collaborative charge of cheating and extortion.

The WhatsApp message read: “Patraakaar suraksha kanoon se keval unhen parhez hai jo already mama ki ***** mein baithe hai (Only those who are already sitting in mama’s ***** have a problem with the journalists’ protection law).

“Mama” is a term used commonly by journalists in the region to refer to a top police officer in the Bastar range.⁷

Current Status: The Chhattisgarh High Court admitted the bail applications for Prabhat Singh and Deepak Jaiswal and the cases were expected to come up for hearing a week following.

Thereafter, Singh’s lawyer said he would move for bail in the sessions court in the latest case, after the Chief Judicial Magistrate (CJM) rejected the first plea, the Congress party described the arrest as “an attempt to silence journalists.” At a court appearance, Prabhat Singh alleged that he had been “assaulted by policemen in custody.”⁸

⁷ Four months, 22 assaults on the press BY THE HOOT | IN MEDIA FREEDOM | 03/05/2016 at <http://www.thehoot.org/free-speech/media-freedom/four-months-22-assaults-on-the-press-9338>

⁸ Chhattisgarh: Journalist arrested for allegedly taking a dig at a cop on WhatsApp The Indian Express at <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/latest-journalist-arrest-in-chhattisgarh-is-for-a-whatsapp-dig-at-a-cop/>



Name: Deepak Jaiswal

Age: 32

Place of Incident: Dantewada

Date of Incident: 30 March 2016

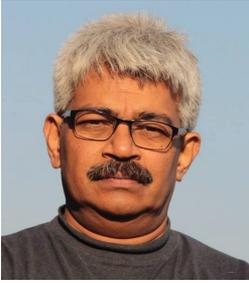
Reason: Deepak Jaiswal, the Dantewada bureau chief of daily newspaper Dainik Dainandini, was arrested after he went to the police station to inquire about Singh's arrest. Police charged him along with Singh, for cheating and extortion, as well as, on charges of trespass, extortion and obstruction of the duty of a public servant in a case in Geedam district of Dantewada for allegedly clicking photographs of school students without permission and extorting money from the school authorities.⁹

The SP claimed that Jaiswal was not a journalist as per the record with directorate of public relations office but runs a hotel at Geedam bus stand. According to Dantewada-based journalists, Jaiswal was working with a Hindi daily 'Dainandini' in the past.¹⁰

Current Status: Singh's March 2016 bail application was rejected. No further status information is available.

⁹ Journalist arrested in Dantewada IN MEDIA WATCH BRIEFS |26/03/2016 from The Hoot at <http://www.thehoot.org/media-watch-briefs/journalist-arrested-in-dantewada-9259>.

¹⁰ Another journalist held in Chhattisgarh's Bastar PTI | Mar 27, 2016, 12.16 PM IST from The Times of India at <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/raipur/Another-journalist-held-in-Chhattisgarhs-Bastar/articleshow/51569980.cms>



Name: Vinod Verma

Age: unknown

Place of Incident: New Delhi

Date of Incident: 27 October 2017

Reason: Journalist Vinod Verma, formerly with the BBC and with Amar Ujala, was picked up from his home in the early hours by the Chhattisgarh police (in plain clothes) and UP police and taken to the Indirapuram police station in Ghaziabad. The police seized his laptop and confirmed charges of extortion, intimidation, and publishing sexually explicit material. He is believed to be in possession of a CD implicating a Chhattisgarh minister.

Verma told journalists that although he did possess a copy of the alleged sex video, he was being framed. Verma's lawyer said that the allegations were in retaliation for Verma's past work as part of a fact-finding team appointed by the Editors Guild of India in 2016 to investigate threats against journalists.¹¹

Current Status: Verma was taken to Raipur city in Chhattisgarh state following his arrest. On November 13, a local court rejected his bail application and remanded him to judicial custody until November 27. His custody was later extended until December 11. The journalist was granted bail after a two month stay and released.

¹¹ Journalist arrested in NCR IN MEDIA WATCH BRIEFS |27/10/2017 from The Hoot at <http://www.thehoot.org/media-watch-briefs/journalist-arrested-in-ncr-10357>



Name: Kamran Yousuf

Age: unknown

Place of Incident: Jammu

Date of Incident: 5 September 2017

Reason: Kamran Yousuf, a freelance photojournalist in the state of Jammu and Kashmir, was arrested by India's National Investigative Agency. He has not been formally charged, but media reports stated that he was accused of pelting stones.

Current Status: A court in New Delhi, where Yousuf is being held, extended his custody on September 16 by three days. He was later remanded to judicial custody on September 19 for one month. Authorities have since extended his jail term multiple times, and Yousuf remains imprisoned till date.

JOURNALISTS MURDERED

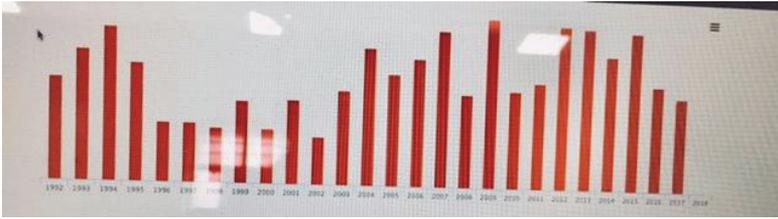


As aforementioned, suppression of expression amongst journalists in India reached new heights with devastating and incomprehensible violent acts which ended the lives of many journalists, while they were carrying out their duties to simply research and deliver the news. Murder, under any legal standard, is never an acceptable action or recourse to resolve dissatisfaction or protest of a matter. The loss of innocent lives continues to plague victims' families, victims' supporters and the freedom of expression in India and “such violence is encouraged by a prevailing climate of impunity, with most past murders remaining unsolved and other acts of violence going unpunished.”¹²

Around the world, journalists have been murdered in increasing numbers over the past decades. In 2004, 53 journalists and 15 media assistants were killed and the deadly statistics continued to rise in 2005 when 63 journalists and 5 media assistants were killed. By 2010 56 journalists had been killed in the first eight and a half months of the year; 63 in total for the year ending 2017.¹³

¹² Freedom of the Press: Report on India at <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press/2015/india>

¹³ Press freedom in 2005 IN MEDIA FREEDOM |06/01/2006 by The Hoot at <http://www.thehoot.org/free-speech/media-freedom/press-freedom-in-2005-1898>



Specific to India, there have been 75 journalists murdered since 1992. The majority of these attacks have occurred in smaller and more rural areas of the country. Journalists working in these rural sectors have been divided into two categories. Those “who live and work in smaller towns and the others characterized as those who come from cities like Delhi and Mumbai to work for large news outlets; with the former being the most vulnerable as they often have to earn money from other sources to supplement their income as they lack job security and proper training.”¹⁴ This makes them more susceptible to be victimized. These incidents are chronicled back to 2003 up to the present day, in the following case studies.

¹⁴ Dangerous Pursuit, CPJ Report at <https://cpj.org/reports/2016/08/dangerous-pursuit-in-india-corruption-journalists-killed-impunity-Chapter-1-Jagendra-Singh.php>



Name: Fazal Wahab

Age: unknown

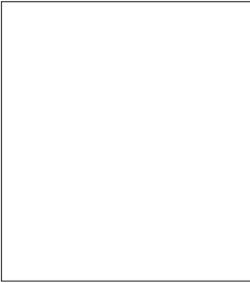
Place of Incident: Near the resort town of Mingora in the North Western Frontier Province of Pakistan, bordering Afghanistan

Date of Incident: 21 January 2003

Reason: Freelance writer Fazal Wahab was shot dead while sitting at a roadside shop in Manglawar Bazar. Among Wahab's most controversial works was the book Mullah Ka Kirdar (The Mullah's Role), which analyzed the Islamic clergy's involvement in politics. He had also recently completed a manuscript about Osama bin Laden and the Taliban.¹⁵

Current Status: No status information available.

¹⁵ Gag the Press: Draconian Laws in Pakistan BY Ahmad Naem Khan| IN MEDIA FREE-DOM |13/04/2003 from The Hoot at <http://www.thehoot.org/free-speech/media-freedom/gag-the-press-draconian-laws-in-pakistan-735>



Name: Parvaz Mohammed Sultan

Age: 36

Place of Incident: Srinagar (the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir State)

Date of Incident: 31 January 2003

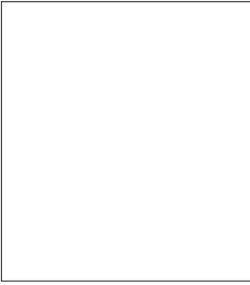
Reason: Parvaz Mohammed Sultan, editor of the independent newswire service News and Feature Alliance (NAFA). The journalist was known as an independent journalist who contributed investigative stories and columns.

Sultan was shot dead by an unidentified gunman. Two men entered Sultan's office at around 5:30 p.m., after a brief conversation with Sultan, one of the men shot him in the head.

The killer allegedly used a pistol with a silencer. No one stopped the assailants from leaving the premises, which is located in the press enclave of central Srinagar.

Though Sultan was rushed to the hospital, doctors declared the journalist dead within minutes of his arrival.

Current Status: Police blamed the murder on militant groups but have not yet conducted a thorough investigation. No group claimed responsibility for Sultan's murder, and many of the leading militant organizations, including Hizb-ul Mujahideen, condemned the murder, as did the All Parties Hurriyat Conference, the main separatist alliance.



Name: Indra Mohan Hakasam

Age: unknown

Place of Incident: Golpara, Assam

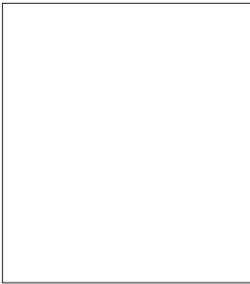
Date of Incident: 24 June 2003

Reason: Hakasam, a correspondent with the Assam-language daily Amar Assam, was abducted at gunpoint from his home in Golpara by members of the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA), an insurgent group in the mountainous northeastern province waging a separatist guerrilla war with India.

State intelligence officials accused Hakasam of having contacts with the ULFA that were “too good” and claimed that ULFA field operatives would often deposit extorted money at Hakasam’s house for safekeeping. Local sources say that Hakasam may have had a disagreement with the ULFA relating to extortion money, which could have ultimately led to his death.

Current Status: Since no body has been found and the ULFA has not officially claimed responsibility for Hakasam’s disappearance and alleged death, police have not closed the case. However, on February 20, 2004, eight months after his disappearance, ULFA sources told police officials that Hakasam had died of unspecified “illnesses.” In fact, local police believe that lower-level UFLA members killed

Hakasam long before, possibly on the day of his abduction.



Name: Parmanand Goyal

Age: unknown

Place of Incident: Kaithal, Haryana (north of the capital, Delhi)

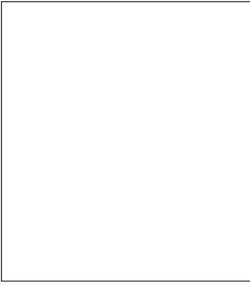
Date of Incident: 18 September 2003

Reason: Parmanand Goyal, a journalist with the daily Punjab Kesari, was shot and killed by three unidentified assailants at his home. Goyal's son Naveen Rinku answered the door at Goyal's home, where three men asked to speak with his father.

Rinku told Goyal about the visitors and asked the men to wait in the backyard. Goyal's son claims to have heard the men threatening his father to stop writing about a local political figure and the police. Soon after, Goyal was found wounded in the backyard, and his assailants fled the scene.

Goyal was rushed to the hospital but was pronounced dead on arrival. The investigation presented that Goyal had been arrested on corruption charges the previous May and was released on bail earlier in the month of his death. His family claims that the charges against him were false.

Current Status: unknown



Name: Asiya Jeelani

Age: unknown

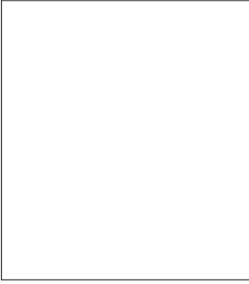
Place of Incident: Kashmir

Date of Incident: 20 April 2004

Reason: Asiya Jeelani was a freelance journalist who contributed to local newspapers, and a human rights activist who worked with several nongovernmental organizations. Local sources said she was helping a local umbrella organization, the Coalition of Civil Society, prepare an account of its monitoring activity, and may have been reporting on the election herself.

Jeelani died en route to the hospital after a van carrying an elections monitoring team detonated an explosive device on a rural road in northern Kashmir. The driver of the van was also killed in the blast. After the explosion, the coalition called off its monitoring activities, citing the danger involved.

Current Status: unknown



Name: Veeraboina Yadagiri

Age: 35

Place of Incident: Medak (southern Andhra Pradesh State)

Date of Incident: 21 February 2004

Reason: Yadagiri, a veteran journalist and staff correspondent for the local, Telugu-language daily Andhra Prabha, was stabbed to death near his home. Local journalists allege Yadagiri was murdered in reprisal for his articles investigating the illegal sale of home-brewed liquor, known locally as toddy.

It is alleged that on the night of 21 February 2004, Yadagiri was invited to a meeting with several people involved in the toddy trade. After the meeting, Yadagiri was accompanied home by at least three of the men who had been present, along with Siddaram Reddy, another local journalist and friend of Yadagiri.

Lakshminarayana Goud, one of those accompanying Yadagiri, stabbed him multiple times before fleeing the scene.

Current Status: Local police arrested four suspects and charged them with involvement in the murder. Lakshminarayana Goud was charged, along with Sirimalle Srinivas, Venkatesh Chauhan, and Nagi Reddy (who is not related to Siddaram Reddy). It has been reported that the state government of Andhra Pradesh condemned the murder and gave money and land to Yadagiri's family as compensation for their loss.

However, local police have accused Siddaram Reddy of being the true culprit in the murder and have arrested and charged him with involvement.



Name: Dilip Mohapatra

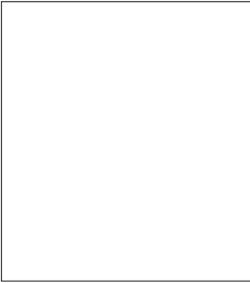
Age: unknown

Place of Incident: Bhagirathipur, Odisha

Date of Incident: 8 November 2004

Reason: Mohapatra, editor of the Oriya-language newspaper Aji Kagoj, disappeared 8 November 2004. His body was discovered the next day on the side of the NH-42 national highway near the village of Bhagirathipur in the eastern state of Odisha (which at the time was known as Orissa) with his hands and legs tied and with a head wound. Local journalists confirmed the murder but knew of no specific motive.

Current Status: Status information is unknown.



Name: Prahlad Goala

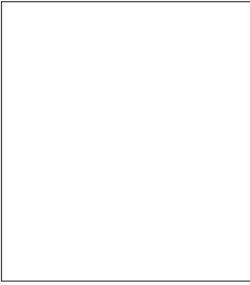
Age: 32

Place of Incident: Golaghat (in northeastern state of Assam)

Date of Incident: 6 January 2006

Reason: Goala was riding a motorcycle near his home when he was apparently rammed by a truck. When police arrived at the scene, they found Goala had been stabbed several times. Goala was murdered after writing a series of articles on corruption in the Assamese-language daily *Asomiya Khabar* that linked local forestry service officials to timber smuggling. Reportedly, the journalist received threats from the forest warden soon after his articles on corruption in the forestry service appeared.

Current Status: Police arrested forest warden Zamman Jinnah in connection with the death and he was later released on bail. Two other suspects, who were not forestry service employees, were also taken into custody.



Name: Arun Narayan Dekate

Age: unknown

Place of Incident: Nagpur

Date of Incident: 8 June 2006 (death on 10 June 2006)

Reason: Dekate was a reporter with the Marathi-language daily Tarun Bharat.

On 8th of June, up to four unidentified men attacked Dekate as he was riding with a friend on a motorcycle. He was pounded with rocks and died from his injuries in a hospital in Nagpur two days later. Dekate had recently written articles about illegal gambling in Takalghat village, about 19 miles (30 kilometers) from Nagpur. The journalist also cooperated with police from the nearest town, Bori, in their illegal gambling investigations, which had apparently resulted in several arrests.

Current Status: unknown



Name: Ashok Sodhi

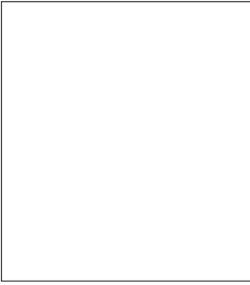
Age: unknown

Place of Incident: Samba

Date of Incident: 11 May 2008

Reason: Sodhi, got his start as a print journalist before becoming a photographer, eventually rising to the position of chief photographer with the local English-language daily Excelsior. Sodhi was killed in crossfire in Samba, close to the border with Pakistan. Suspected militants holding several hostages exchanged fire with security forces. Three militants, one soldier, and three other civilians were killed in the battle, which lasted several hours.

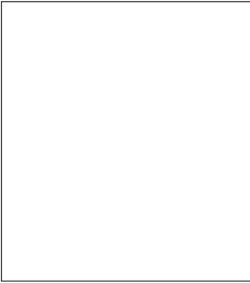
Current Status: unknown



Name: Javeed Ahmed Mir
Age: unknown
Place of Incident: Srinagar
Date of Incident: 13 August 2008

Reason: Javeed Ahmed Mir was a cameraman for local news television station Channel 9. Security forces shot the journalist in the head killing him while he was covering protests during a spate of violence in the northern Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir.

Current Status: By spring 2016, no investigation had been conducted into the shooting. According to an independent investigation by the human rights group, the People's Union for Democratic Rights, when Mir's family tried to file a First Information Report, police said four witnesses would be needed to corroborate their account that security forces had opened fire on the journalist.



Name: Mohammed Muslimuddin

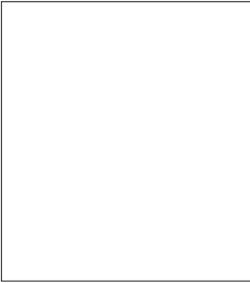
Age: unknown

Place of Incident: Barpukhuri
(northeastern Assam state)

Date of Incident: 1 April 2008

Reason: Mohammed Muslimuddin, a correspondent with the daily Asoniya Pratidin, was targeted for writing on criminal activities, including the illegal drug trade, in the weeks leading up to his murder. His reporting implicated local influential figures and politicians. About six assailants armed with “sharp weapons” attacked near his residence. He died of multiple injuries to the head, chest, stomach, and back en route to hospital.

Current Status: Three suspects – Qutubur Rahman, Mohammed Tuta Miyan and Mohammed Joynul Haque have been arrested in connection with Muslimuddin’s murder, however a nexus of a bigger criminal gang and powerful people in the area were behind the attack, is suspected.



Name: Vikas Ranjan

Age: unknown

Place of Incident: Rosera (Samastipur district of northern Bihar state)

Date of Incident: 25 November 2008

Reason: Ranjan, a correspondent for the Hindi-language daily Hindustan, was shot by three men on motorbikes who fired several shots at Ranjan as he left his office for the evening. The journalist was declared dead on arrival at the local hospital. Ranjan wrote about crime and corruption, as a part-time correspondent for Hindustan, and that he had been receiving threats for some time. Three of his recent reports on counterfeit merchandise and stolen goods trafficking had sparked official inquiries.

Current Status: Two unnamed people and two alleged conspirators, Hariom Lal and Vinod Deo, along with an alleged shooter named Pinku Kumar, were suspected of being involved in the killing. A month following the journalist's murder, police arrested Krishna Yadav, allegedly the hired killer.

In 2009, Lal and Deo filed a petition before the Patna High Court seeking bail, in which they said there were only allegations that they had conspired to kill the journalist by paying a 'supari' (contract) to the alleged gunman. In April 2010, the Patna High Court rejected their plea and ordered them into custody.



Name: Jagjit Saikia

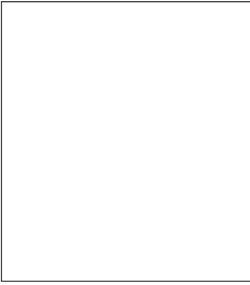
Age: unknown

Place of Incident: Kokrajhar (northeastern state of Assam)

Date of Incident: 20 November 2008

Reason: Saikia worked as a district correspondent for the vernacular daily Amar Asom. In proximity to his office, unidentified assailants shot Saikia at least five times in the chest at point-blank range. Saikia frequently wrote about rivalries between armed groups and political organizations fighting over control of Kokrajhar and neighboring western districts of Assam that have a predominantly ethnic Bodo population.

Current Status: unknown



Name: Vijay Pratap Singh

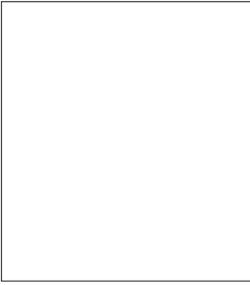
Age: 36

Place of Incident: Allahabad

Date of Incident: 20 July 2010

Reason: Singh, a senior correspondent for the English daily Indian Express, died of injuries suffered in a 12th July 2018 bombing. Singh was interviewing Nand Gopal Gupta, state minister for institutional finance, when explosives concealed in a moped outside the minister's home were detonated.

Current Status: Police in Uttar Pradesh had arrested two members of the local Samajwadi Party in the attack. The motive was said to be political and business rivalries. Police said they were unable to trace the owner of the second-hand moped used in the bombing. In February 2011, Delhi police and a special task force from Uttar Pradesh arrested Samajwadi Party Member of Legislative Assembly Vijay Mishra in connection with the bombing.



Name: Hem Chandra Pandey (Hemant Pandey)

Age: unknown

Place of Incident: Andhra Pradesh

Date of Incident: 2 July 2010

Reason: Pandey, who contributed to Hindi-language newspapers *Nai Dunia*, *Dainik Jagaran*, and *Rastriya Sahara*, was killed in a shootout between Maoists and state police in Andhra Pradesh. Also killed was Cherukuri Rajkumar, known as Azad, a leader of the banned Communist Party of India (Maoist), who had been arranging peace talks between Maoists and the central government.

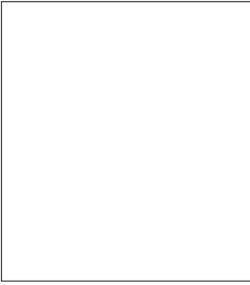
Pandey and Azad were meeting for an interview at the time of the incident. Following the murders, speculation arose, alleging that the two men had been set up by the police. The police claimed that Pandey was Azad's colleague. A press release attributed in the press to the Communist Party's north regional bureau said the reporter was a member, although party leaders called him a journalist in local news reports.

The Maoist party issued a statement on July 4 stating that Pandey was only a journalist and was not a member of the group, and raised questions about the authenticity of the previous statement.

The group added that Pandey was killed by the police in an effort to eliminate any witnesses in the killing. Police have maintained that it was an encounter killing.

Current Status: Based on "serious doubts about the circumstances" of Pandey's death, a demand was made for an independent inquiry. In April 2011, the Supreme Court of India ordered an investigation by the Central Bureau of Investigation into the killing of Pandey and Azad. The court was hearing a petition filed by the journalist's wife, Babita Pandey, and social activist Swami Agnivesh, who claimed this

was a “fake encounter killing.” In a final report submitted to the Supreme Court a year later, the bureau said that the killing was a “real” encounter. Pandey’s wife has continued legal efforts to attain justice for her husband’s murder.



Name: Sushil Pathak

Age: unknown

Place of Incident: Bilaspur, Chhattisgarh

Date of Incident: 20 December 2010

Reason: Sushil Pathak, a senior journalist with Dainik Bhaskar and general secretary of the Bilaspur Press Club, was shot four times and killed by an unidentified gunman, when he was returning home from a late shift at work.

Pathak covered several sensitive high-risk areas, including corruption and politics. A social media post claimed Pathak was killed after reporting on allegations of illegal mining in the area. Reportedly, Pathak had investigated a multi-billion dollar coal scam and other sensitive political stories. Police initially said that Pathak may have been killed because of real estate interests.

Current Status: Following public protests, Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Raman Singh agreed to calls for an inquiry by the Central Bureau of Investigation. The bureau began its investigation in the case in September 2011. After Pathak's wife and members of the Bilaspur Press Club filed a motion in the Bilaspur High Court, the court ordered the Central Bureau of Investigation to file a response within three weeks. In August 2015, the high court ordered the bureau to complete the investigation in 12 weeks.

Name: Umesh Rajput

Age: 33

Place of Incident: Chhura Village (on the outskirts of Raipur district in the central Indian state of Chhattisgarh)

Date of Incident: 23 January 2011

Reason: Umesh Rajput, a reporter with the Hindi-language daily *Nai Dunia*, was shot dead outside his home. Umesh Rajput had a reputation for exposing corruption and reporting on the exploitation of tribal communities in Chhattisgarh for several newspapers. He was so preoccupied with visiting people in villages to report on their problems that he had little time for day-to-day family obligations. In the lead up to his death, Umesh Rajput was covering sensitive stories.

One report, on apparent medical negligence at a government-run clinic, had seen him receive threats. Another involved reporting on a candidate standing against an incumbent member of the state's legislative assembly and on allegations that the incumbent's son was involved in an illegal gambling business. On the evening of his death, it is reported that the journalist heard someone calling for him outside his home. As he slid aside the curtain to his front door, he was shot dead and the two assailants fled on motorcycles. A note recovered at the scene of the murder read in Hindi, "Khabar chaapna band nahi karoge toh mare jaoge," (If you don't stop publishing news, you will die).¹⁶

Current Status: The case was finally handed to the Central Bureau of Investigation, but Rajput's family is still awaiting justice. More than five years following his death, the investigation into his murder has been marked by delays and key evidence has gone missing. There have been no arrests.

¹⁶ Dangerous Pursuit - In search of justice for Umesh Rajput. CPJ Report at <https://cpj.org/reports/2016/08/dangerous-pursuit-india-corruption-journalists-killed-impunity-Chapter-2-Umesh-Rajput.php>



Name: Jyotirmoy Dey

Age: unknown

Place of Incident: Powai

Date of Incident: 11 June 2011

Reason: Dey, a special investigations editor for Middy, was known for his hard-hitting coverage of Mumbai's crime world. Dey had covered crime in Mumbai for 22 years and had written two books, *Zero Dial: The Dangerous World of Informers and Khallas*.

Dey was shot five times in the head and chest as he drove his motorcycle past multiple other men on motorcycles while traveling in the Mumbai suburb. Investigators believed reputed crime boss Chhota Rajan ordered the killing. Police said the motive for the killing was not immediately clear, although colleagues told reporters they believed Dey had been targeted for his reporting.

Current Status: In November 2011, a journalist named Jigna Vora was arrested in connection with the murder for allegedly playing a part in the conspiracy to kill Dey, according to reports. In June 2015, a special court of the Maharashtra Control of Organized Crime Act charged 10 suspects, including Vora and an alleged criminal known as Chhota Rajan or Rajendra Sadashiv Nikalje.

Rajan was deported from Bali to India in November 2015. In January 2016, officers from the Central Bureau of Investigation questioned Rajan about the killing of Dey. Vora denied the allegation, according to reports. It is undetermined if Rajan and the other suspects also denied the charges.



Name: Dwijamani Singh

Age: 36

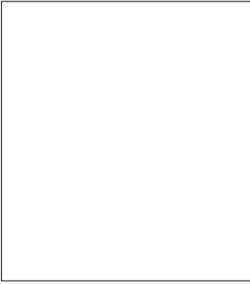
Place of Incident: Imphal

Date of Incident: 23 December 2012

Reason: Singh was a cameraman working for the news division of the satellite-distributed Prime News channel that covers northeast India. The journalist was shot in the chest by police while he was covering a protest in Imphal, the capital of Manipur state. Singh died at hospital later the same day.

Current Status: In December 2012, the All Manipur Working Journalists' Union and the state government signed a memorandum of understanding in connection to the death of Singh, according to news accounts. The memorandum called for the immediate suspension of the police officers allegedly involved in the shooting, pending investigation; for financial assistance to be provided to the cameraman's family; and for the creation of media policies to address the welfare of journalists, including those reporting in conflict situations.

That same week, the state government suspended officers ASI K Romendro Singh and Kh Naba-kumar Singh, pending a departmental investigation. The state government announced Rs. 500,000 (US \$7,400) compensation to the family.



Name: Rajesh Mishra

Age: unknown

Place of Incident: Rewa

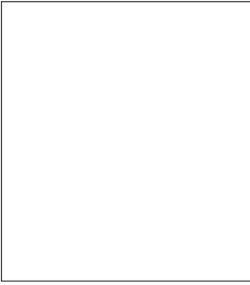
Date of Incident: 1 March 2012

Reason: Mishra, was a journalist for the local Hindi-language weekly Media Raj, and had written articles on alleged financial irregularities in local schools. Two assailants hit Mishra on the head with an iron rod while he was at a public tea stall in the town of Rewa in the central state of Madhya Pradesh. The journalist died at a local hospital. The incident followed reported threats Mishra had received the week prior.

Current Status: Police arrested at least four men for carrying out the murder, including Rajneesh Banerjee, who owned the schools Mishra was covering and a rival Hindi-language weekly, Vindhya Bharat. Vindhya Bharat Editor Anil Tripathi and two other employees were also arrested. It is alleged that Banerjee and his associates had retaliated against Mishra in connection with his reports.

Banerjee was convicted of murder by a court in Rewa and sentenced to life imprisonment under section 120B of the Indian Penal Code. At an appeal hearing in January 2015, the Madhya Pradesh High Court granted bail to Banerjee. In its decision, the court said that the main evidence against him was two letters written by Mishra, in which the journalist said he feared Banerjee would kill him. The judges said this was insufficient evidence. In April 2016, Banerjee reportedly said that his conviction was suspended and he had been granted bail.

“I was in my office at that time [when Mishra was killed], yet I was convicted.” His co-accused, Tripathi, was acquitted.



Name: Chaitali Santra

Age: unknown

Place of Incident: South Baksara

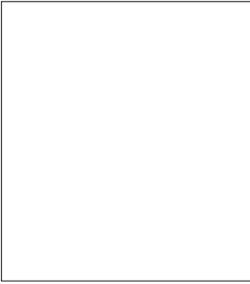
Date of Incident: 26 September 2012

Reason: Santra, a freelance contributor to the Delhi-based weekly *Julm se Jang*, died after opening a parcel bomb containing an explosive device. A courier service had delivered the package to her South Baksara home in the Howrah District of West Bengal state. Her husband was also injured in the explosion.

Family members told local journalists that Santra had made several enemies and had received threatening phone calls. She was also a member of a local human rights organization and had advocated for a neighbor who was a victim of domestic violence.

Current Status: In October 2012, police arrested three suspects named Abhishek Roy, Bishwajit Majhi, and Shubhankar Das, in connection with the case, according to reports. Police said that the alleged mastermind, Debashish Dey, was arrested a day later in Ratnagiri, Maharashtra, and remanded in custody. Dey allegedly hired Das to kill the journalist because of evidence she had given against him in a marital dispute case.¹⁷

¹⁷ Journalists and Media Workers Killed in India. Committee to Protect Journalists data at [https://cpj.org/data/killed/#-\(status-'Killed'-motiveConfirmed-\('-Confirmed'\)-motiveUnconfirmed-\('-Unconfirmed'\)-type-\('-Journalist-'Media'*20Worker\)-cc_fips-\('-IN\)-start_year-'1992-end_year-'2018-group_by-'year](https://cpj.org/data/killed/#-(status-'Killed'-motiveConfirmed-('-Confirmed')-motiveUnconfirmed-('-Unconfirmed')-type-('-Journalist-'Media'*20Worker)-cc_fips-('-IN)-start_year-'1992-end_year-'2018-group_by-'year)



Name: Chandrika Rai

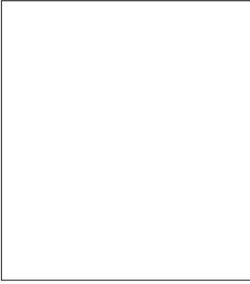
Age: 42

Place of Incident: Umaria (a town in Madhya Pradesh state in central India)

Date of Incident: 18 February 2012

Reason: Rai worked for the Hindi-language daily Navbharat and The Hitavada, an English-language daily. Rai, his wife, and their two teenage children were found bludgeoned to death in their home. The journalist had been investigating illegal mining in Umaria, which lies in a prominent coal-mining region of the country.

Current Status: Six people were arrested in connection with the murder, according to news reports. A Madhya Pradesh Special Task Force police official alleged that Rai had blackmailed the members of a gang responsible for a recent kidnapping, and was murdered by the kidnapers. Rai's family disputed this claim and said the police investigation "has not been to our satisfaction." Madhya Pradesh Congress chief Kantilal Bhuria accused the state government of protecting powerful people associated with the mining mafia and said there was "something amiss" in the case and urged authorities to hand the case over to the Central Bureau of Investigation.



Name: Narendra Dabholkar

Age: unknown

Place of Incident: Pune

Date of Incident: 20 August 2013

Reason: Dabholkar was the editor of a weekly Marathi-language print magazine called Sadhana, which promotes scientific thought and covers topics including caste, politics, and religion. Over the years, Dabholkar had angered many Indians with his lectures and writings, which propagated rationalism and scientific thinking in a country where superstitious beliefs are still rampant. Dabholkar was also a prominent campaigner against religious superstition, had also spent several years writing in support of legislation to ban fraudulent and exploitative superstitious practices.

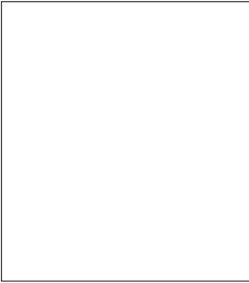
A few days before his murder, the Maharashtra state government said it would introduce a controversial anti-superstition bill. Dabholkar had received threats in the days before his murder. While the journalist was taking an early-morning walk, two unidentified gunmen on motorcycles shot Dabholkar in his neck and back, killing him. The gunmen fled the scene.

Current Status: In August 2013, Pune police arrested two alleged arms dealers, Manish Nagori and Vilas Khandelwal, on charges of extortion, reports said. The pair, who were later named as suspects in the journalist's murder, were released on bail because of a lack of evidence.

However, because the men face charges in other cases, they remain in jail. Both have denied any role in the murder, and Nagori said that investigating authorities offered him money to accept involvement in the murder. Authorities denied these allegations. In May 2014 the Maharashtra state government handed the case to the Central Bureau of Investigation. Investigations were delayed for a year

because of staff shortages at the agency. In July and August 2015, the bureau wrote to the state government to request that more officers be assigned to the case. Also in In July 2015, relatives of Dabholkar filed a writ petition at the Bombay High Court seeking court monitoring of the investigation.

In December 2015, the Central Bureau of Investigation informed the Bombay High Court that it had identified two suspects and handed the names to the court, but the names were kept confidential from the public. In 2016, the bureau questioned several members of the hard-line Hindu group Sanatan Sanstha, which is believed to be behind the killing. The Sanatan Sanstha denies any role in the murder however, forensic analysis of the bullet cartridges found at the scene of Dabholkar's killing and that of writers and rationalists Govind Pansare and MM Kalburgi suggest a common set of killers.



Name: Rajesh Verma

Age: unknown

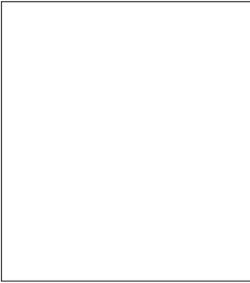
Place of Incident: Muzaffarnagar, Uttar Pradesh

Date of Incident: 7 September 2013

Reason: Verma, a part-time stringer for the TV news channel IBN 7, had worked for the station for about five years. Previously, Verma had also worked as a fixer for the Global Post. Unidentified assailants fatally shot Rajesh Verma in the chest while he was covering confrontations between Hindus and Muslims in the small city of Muzaffarnagar.

Current Status: Indian prime minister Manmohan Singh met with Verma's family and told them the culprits would be held responsible. Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav announced financial support of Rs. 1,500,000 for Verma's family. In February 2016, a Special Investigation Team set up to look at cases related to the Muzaffarnagar riots filed a closure report in Verma's case.

The report, which was filed in the court of the Chief Judicial Magistrate Narendra Kumar, said that the accused remain unidentified.



Name: Rakesh Sharma

Age: 50

Place of Incident: Etawah, Uttar Pradesh

Date of Incident: 23 August 2013

Reason: Sharma a senior reporter for a Hindi-language daily Aaj, specialized in crime reporting in the region. After receiving a call from an unknown number, Sharma left his home and was shot by unidentified assailants on a motorcycle. Reportedly, under the ruling Samajwadi Party there had been a rise in mafia and criminal activity in the state, and suggestions were raised that Sharma may have been targeted for his critical reporting against local politicians.

Current Status: Police said they were investigating the attack. Investigators said the killing may have been prompted by “personal enmity,” but did not offer further details. Colleagues dismiss this claim saying police had not substantiated their theory or offered any evidence to back it up, and said they believed Sharma had been targeted by a local gambling mafia for a critical report he had published on illegal gambling operations. Local journalists criticized Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav for what they perceived as a lack of security for journalists working in the minister’s own district.



Name: Sai Reddy

Age: 51

Place of Incident: Bijapur District (in the central state of Chhattisgarh)

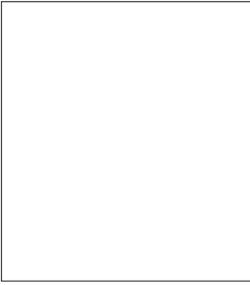
Date of Incident: 6 December 2013

Reason: Reddy was a reporter for the Hindi-language newspaper *Deshbandhu*. As he was leaving a marketplace in Basaguda village in Bijapur district, he was beaten and stabbed by an assailant. The journalist sustained severe head and neck injuries, and died as he was being transported to a local hospital.

In recent years, Reddy had been threatened by Maoists and his house was set on fire, which forced him to flee to a neighboring state. He was allowed to return home after issuing an apology to the Maoists. Reddy had also been harassed by the police around the same time. In March 2008, he was arrested and accused of being linked to the Maoists. He denied the allegations and was later released on bail.

Current Status: Police said they believed Reddy was attacked by a group of Maoist insurgents with sharp weapons. In the days following Reddy's murder, Maoists claimed responsibility. In their statement, the Maoists accused Reddy of being a police informer, but did not substantiate their claims.

Four months after the murder, the highest decision-making body of the Maoist party released a statement about the killing. In an April 2014 press statement, the body said there was a "misunderstanding" between members and the party leadership, which led to the killing. The statement by the party said that a decision was taken to kill Sai Reddy for his "anti-people" writing. When police arrested Reddy in 2008 on suspicion of being a Maoist, the party changed its perception of him. This was not conveyed to local members, who killed him, the statement said.



Name: Jitendra Singh

Age: 42

Place of Incident: Jharkhand

Date of Incident: 27 April 2013

Reason: Singh, a part-time reporter for a local Hindi daily Prabhat Khabhar, was shot dead in Khunti district while he and two friends were visiting a construction site on the Pasrabeda-Khatanga route. Local citizens told news media that a group of 10 to 12 Maoists had gunned him down and that Singh's friends were able to escape. A letter found in Singh's pocket said he had been killed because he was carrying out government work without the PLFI's permission.

Singh also ran a construction business in the area. The letter, which was allegedly signed by members of the People's Liberation Front of India (PLFI), a breakaway Maoist faction, said: "No one can work in the area without approval of the PLFI." Singh had written about activities of the rebels for the past 16 years.

Current Status: The superintendent of police of Khunti district, said police were investigating the murder.



Name: Nemi Chand Jain

Age: 43

Place of Incident: Chhattisgarh

Date of Incident: 12 February 2013

Reason: Jain was a veteran freelance reporter, who had worked in the field for more than 20 years. He worked for Hindi-language dailies including Hari Bhoomi, Nai Duniya, and Dainik Bhaskar. Jain's body was found the morning after he had left his home to visit a weekly market in Nama village in Sukma district. He had been stabbed to death.

Reportedly, Jain had not been on good terms with local police, due to the journalist's frequent coverage of false complaints filed by local police against villagers. Colleagues denied the possibility that Jain may have been a police informant, and instead said that Jain's social activism may have led to his murder.

A week before his death, Jain had been instrumental in helping free an individual allegedly held by Maoists, and it is theorized that this may have angered the Maoists. Another colleague theorized that there was the possibility that Jain may have been pressured by the police to provide information and was murdered when he did not comply. And a third theory reported that local criminals could be responsible for Jain's murder since a few days before his death, the reporter had exposed tin smuggling in the region, which led to a violent confrontation between the journalist and family members of an alleged smuggler.

However, almost two months after Jain's murder, news accounts reported that a local Maoist group had claimed responsibility for the attack, but did not offer a motive or further details.

Current Status: Immediately after Jain's death, police said they

suspected Maoists were responsible for the murder and said pamphlets at the scene said Jain was killed because he was a police informer. Police did not comment on allegations that he was an informer. A spokesperson for the Maoist group's central committee, the highest decision-making body of the group, said a misunderstanding between the junior members and the leadership led to the killing.

Police announced a reward for information on the killing, according to news accounts. Three suspects, who police said were Maoists, have been arrested after police received a tip. On 25 December 2013, police arrested Banjami Sanna, and on 24 July 2014, Sukma police arrested Santosh Mandavi and Mangdu Sodi.



Name: MVN Shankar

Age: unknown

Place of Incident: Andhra Pradesh,

Date of Incident: 26 November 2014

Reason: Shankar was a senior journalist for the Telugu-language daily Andhra Prabha, who, according to news reports, had frequently reported on the “oil mafia,” a common term for criminals who intercept shipments of kerosene oil and gas and thin it down with much cheaper oil.

Shankar had also written about corruption in the rice mill trade shortly before his death and had also written a series of stories on allegations of corruption in the public distribution system throughout his career. While returning home after filing a report, the journalist was beaten by unidentified assailants with iron rods. Shankar died later at a hospital. Reports surfaced alleging Shankar was killed for his coverage of a group that had engaged in the illegal sale on the black market of rationed essential items, including kerosene oil, for the poor, which was supplied through the country’s food security system known as the Public Distribution System.

Current Status: The Minister for Agriculture, P. Pulla Rao, condemned the murder and ordered an investigation. A day later, Nimmakayala China Rajappa, the Andhra Pradesh home minister, directed police to form a special team to investigate the case and promised Shankar’s family that justice would be served.

In April 2016, the superintendent of police for Guntur, confirmed a suspect had been charged in connection with the murder, but did not provide further details.



Name: Tarun Kumar Acharya
Age: unknown
Place of Incident: Odisha
Date of Incident: 27 May 2014

Reason: Acharya, a stringer for Kanak TV, a local Odiya-language TV channel, and a reporter for Sambad, a local Odiya-language newspaper, was found with his throat slit and injuries to his chest. Immediately following the murder, Kanak TV Editor-in-Chief Soumya Ranjan Patnaik said that he was not aware of any threats made against the journalist.

Subsequent reports said Acharya had been threatened with death by the owner of a cashew processing plant in Khallikote, after the journalist published a report alleging child labour practices at the plant and that the journalist was in possession of footage showing child labourers working under hazardous conditions.

Current Status: June 8, 2014, police arrested Shyam Sundar Prusty, the owner of the cashew processing plant, and an alleged accomplice, N Ramesh Reddy, the owner of a local light and sound unit, in connection with the murder. Police cited a pre-existing personal enmity between Acharya and Prusty, but said that Prusty had seen Acharya's reporting on child labour at his facility as an attempt to damage his business.

Singh accused Prusty of ordering Acharya's murder, paying three friends 50,000 rupees, and providing them with three new SIM cards. Police said Prusty confessed to the murder but it is not clear if Prusty has been actually charged.

In October 2014, police also arrested Sibaram Nayak, a journalist who works for the Odisha-based Eastern Media group, according to news reports. Police accused Nayak of speaking to Prusty on the

phone before and after the murder. Sub-Divisional Police Officer Alekh Chandra Pahi confirmed Nayak's arrest, but did not provide further details regarding Nayak's role in the murder, saying the investigation was still in progress. Nayak was charged under sections 302 and 120(b) of the Indian Penal Code for murder and criminal conspiracy respectively. He denied any involvement in the murder.

Nayak, Prusty, Reddy, and a fourth suspect, Suresh Chandra Sahu, are in custody but a fifth suspect, named as Nrusingha Panda, absconded, according to police and reports published in February 2015. Gupta Mohakud, Superintendent of Police in Ganjam district, said in a news report "[Panda] is staying outside Odisha and we have not been able to obtain a mobile trail for him. But the trial process in the case will proceed and a senior lawyer, Santosh Kumar, has been appointed as a Special Public Prosecutor in the case."



Name: Akshay Singh

Age: unknown

Place of Incident: Madhya Pradesh

Date of Incident: 4 July 2015

Reason: Akshay Singh, an investigative reporter for the prominent India Today Group, was working on one of the country's largest corruption scandals, Vyapam, and was part of the investigations team for the popular channel AajTak in Delhi when he unexpectedly died during an interview. Preliminary reports suggested the reporter died of a heart attack, but in July 2015, a chief minister relented to pressure that the case be examined as part of a wider investigation into the Vyapam scandal that Akshay Singh had been reporting on.

In part, because of his profile, Singh's case was moved to the Central Bureau of Investigation relatively quickly. Investigative reports started to appear of witnesses and suspects allegedly connected to the scam, dying in freak accidents, apparent suicides, or after complaining of chest pain. A court-appointed special investigation team found on June 26, 2015 that at least 23 of these deaths were "unnatural."¹⁸

Current Status: Two years after his death, there has been little visible progress in Akshay Singh's case. It remains unclear whether Akshay Singh was murdered or died of natural causes. CPJ has classified his case as 'unconfirmed'.

¹⁸ Dangerous Pursuit. Reported in The Hoot at <http://www.thehoot.org/free-speech/media-freedom/dangerous-pursuit-9610>



Name: Jagendra (Joginder) Singh

Age: 46

Place of Incident: Shahjahanpur, Uttar Pradesh

Date of Incident: June 2015

Reason: His father proclaimed his son's nickname was "nidar"- in Hindi, meaning fearless. Freelance journalist Jagendra Singh, was alive, when he was doused in gasoline and set on fire. Before dying a week later from his extensive burn injuries, Jagendra Singh cried out, "They could have arrested me. Why did they have to beat me and set me on fire?" Jagendra Singh fearlessly accused a police officer of setting him on fire. Local police disputed his account and tried to downplay his journalistic credentials.

Current Status: State police has filed the closure report in the case stating lack of evidence.



Name: Sandeep Kothari

Age: 40

Place of Incident: Wardha District

Date of Incident: 19 or 20 June 2015

Reason: Kothari was a freelance reporter for multiple Hindi-language dailies, including Nai Duniya. Kothari's body was found burned and beaten, dumped near railroad tracks in Maharashtra state's Wardha district on June 20. Kothari was abducted by assailants a day earlier in the neighboring state of Madhya Pradesh, where he was based. Before taking him away in their vehicle, assailants beat Kothari and his friend, who was with him at the time. The friend was left injured at the scene.

The journalist's family said he could have been killed in connection with his coverage of illegal sand mining in the region. Kothari had written about illegal mining for the past five years and that he had recently faced jail time in connection with several criminal cases filed against him in alleged retribution as he had written critically about the activities of manganese and sand mining networks operating in the state.

Police denied that Kothari was killed in connection with his journalistic work and said they believed he had been killed by business rivals. Another theory surfaced alleging the journalist may also have been killed in connection with a court case he had filed against the owners of mining companies, calling on them to end their mining operations in the region and that the journalist was under pressure from the companies to withdraw his complaint, according to news reports.

Current Status: Police arrested Rakesh Naswani, Vishal Dandi, and Brijesh Duharwal for allegedly kidnapping Kothari and setting him on fire, according to news reports. The three suspects were allegedly

involved in illegal mining and also running chit (financial) fund companies, according to police. CPJ was unable to determine if the three suspects denied the charges against them. Local journalists called for an independent investigation by the Central Bureau of Investigation into Kothari's murder, citing police bias against the slain journalist.



Name: Hemant Yadav

Age: 45

Place of Incident: Dheena (in the Chandauli district of Uttar Pradesh)

Date of Incident: 3 October 2015

Reason: Yadav, a reporter for the privately owned Hindi-language news channel TV 24, was shot dead as he returned home from a marketplace. Two attackers on a motorcycle fired at the journalist and then fled.

Current Status: Authorities characterized the incident as “.. a case of revenge. The deceased was reportedly quite active socially and used to take up various causes of locals who approached him and it is possible that he could have antagonized someone by his activism, which led to his murder.” Police are investigating but no arrests have yet been made.



Name: Karun Misra

Age: unknown

Place of Incident: Sultanpur in Uttar Pradesh

Date of Incident: 13 February 2016

Reason: Misra, who was the Ambedkar Nagar bureau chief of the Hindi daily Jansandesh Times, was shot by three gunmen on motorcycles while he was driving home. The journalist died from his injuries on the way to the hospital.

Current Status: Police assigned a special team to investigate the journalist's murder. On February 18, 2016 police arrested five people in connection with Misra's murder. Inspector General A. Satish Ganesh, of the Lucknow-zone, issued a statement stating that two mining contractors in the area were allegedly upset with Misra's coverage of illegal mining for his paper.

Ganesh named two local mining contractors – Rahul Singh and Pawan Singh – as the suspected masterminds behind Misra's murder. The pair allegedly paid five locals 100,000 Indian rupees to kill Misra. Both contractors and three of the five men they had allegedly hired, identified as Ajay Singh, Sandeep Singh, and Haider Abbas, were arrested following a joint operation by Sultanpur police and the state's Special Task Force, an investigative body set up to investigate criminal matters including mafia activities in the state.

During questioning, the three men, allegedly hired by the contractors, confessed to murdering Misra. Police were still searching for two other suspects, identified as Aman Singh and Mama, who was identified by only one name. Additionally, authorities reported that an officer at the Kudwar police station was suspended for not taking adequate measures to address illegal mining in the area.



Name: Rajdev Ranjan

Age: unknown

Place of Incident: Bihar

Date of Incident: 13 May 2016

Reason: Rajdev Ranjan, bureau chief of Hindustan, was shot and killed. Ranjan had published the names on a hit list of 23, allegedly prepared by the Siwan don Shahabuddin. Ranjan himself figured at no. 7 on that list. His wife told a reporter that there were at least four news reports which Rajdev Ranjan has published in Hindustan, which angered Shahabuddin.

That included a picture showing Bihar Minister Abdul Gafoor dining with Shahabuddin inside the Siwan jail in March 2016.¹⁹

Current Status: In May 2017, the CBI named Shahabuddin as the accused in Ranjan's murder. His hitman had named him as the accused during a CBI interrogation, and Shahabuddin had been transferred from Bihar to Delhi's Tihar jail.

¹⁹ Two more journalists murdered. Reported by The Hoot at <http://www.thehoot.org/media-watch-briefs/two-more-journalists-murdered-9360>



Name: Akhilesh Pratap (a.k.a Indra Dev)

Age: unknown

Place of Incident: Chatra, Jharkhand

Date of Incident: 12 May 2016

Reason: Akhilesh Pratap, a district correspondent for the regional Hindi language news channel Taaza TV, was returning home on his motorcycle at night when an unidentified gunman shot him three times. Pratap, better known locally as Indra Dev, died before reaching the hospital.

He was known locally for his critical reporting on corruption in the implementation of government projects in the region and had also worked for print outlets in the past. The motive behind Pratap's killing was not immediately clear.

Current Status: The police "formed at least three teams to unravel the incident. The forensic team has also visited the spot." A few days following the killing, police said they arrested two men after they were able to identify the gunmen on the basis of CCTV footage. A preliminary investigation by police found that Pratap, in addition to his journalism, also worked as a contractor on rural electricity projects, reports said.

Police believed a dispute in connection to his contract work may have been the motive behind his murder. The Chief Minister announced compensation of Rs. 500,000 for the journalist's family.



Name: Kishore Dave

Age: unknown

Place of Incident: Junagadh, Gujarat,

Date of Incident: 22 August 2016

Reason: Kishore Dave, bureau chief for the regional daily Jai Hind newspaper, was found dead in his office at around 9:30 pm, after sustaining six to seven stab wounds to the chest. The motive behind Dave's killing was not immediately clear.

Dave's family claimed that his reporting on sexual harassment allegations against a local politician, Ratilal Suraj, was a likely motivation for the attack. Dave's brother, claims Suraj had filed defamation charges over Dave's coverage of the allegations and that the two had been "clashing" since the complaint was filed. He said Dave had received death threats from local leaders that the family had reported to police before his murder.

Current Status: Police theorized the attack was likely motivated by 'personal enmity.' On August 24, police arrested three suspects identified as Firoz Kasambhai Hala, Sanjay Rama Rathod, and Arif Alam Saiyed for their alleged involvement in Dave's murder. The police alleged that Dave was involved in a transport business with the accused and that he was murdered in a dispute over money. The three suspects were apprehended based on CCTV footage that captured them riding motorcycles near Dave's office around the time of the crime, however there were no surveillance cameras in Dave's one-room office and that there were no witnesses to the murder.

Nevertheless, the three confessed to the crime, and that they had burnt Dave's blood-soaked clothes to eliminate incriminating evidence. Police also said they had recovered pieces of Dave's broken mobile phone from the accused.



Name: Dharmendra Singh

Age: unknown

Place of Incident: Sasaram, Bihar

Date of Incident: 12 November 2016

Reason: Singh, a reporter for the national, Hindi-language newspaper Dainik Bhaskar, was shot by three unidentified men near his home in Sasaram. Singh died in an ambulance on the way to a hospital. Singh was credited for his reporting by colleagues stating that he “used to report fearlessly about the illegal stone-cutting that’s [been] going on in the Sasaram district for years... whenever the administration found a nexus between [police] officials and this stone-cutting mafia, Dharmendra used to write about it. So we think that it is because of his reporting that he lost his life.”

Singh’s family told police investigating the crime that they believed that two jailed men, who blamed the reporter for their sentences, had ordered the murder: “Because he was a crime reporter, [Singh] had good relations with police officers. Criminals...thought he was a police informer.” Singh had told police that one such man might try to harm him.

Before Singh died, he told his nephew that a jailed man, who blamed the journalist’s reporting for his conviction, was responsible for the shooting attack.

Current Status: The police chief promised that a special team would investigate the murder.



Name: Sudip Datta Bhowmik

Age: unknown

Place of Incident: West Tripura district

Date of Incident: 21 November 2017

Reason: Sudip Dutta Bhaumik, an investigative reporter at the Bengali-language daily Syandan Patrika, had worked as an investigative journalist for the last 20 years, and specialized in exposing corruption in the police force. The journalist was shot by a guard outside the office of Tapan Debbarma, a commandant in the Tripura State Rifles paramilitary force. Debbarma had invited the journalist to his office to speak with him about a clarification that the commandant wanted for a November 13, 2017 story that Bhaumik wrote, alleging financial irregularities in the paramilitary force.

Current Status: The police superintendent of West Tripura district, which has jurisdiction over the paramilitary, said police arrested Debbarma on 22 November 2017 and he has been charged with murder and criminal conspiracy.

Additionally, Nanda Reang, the guard who allegedly shot Bhaumik, has also been detained under a criminal conspiracy charge. The police have said that the matter is still under investigation.



Name: Gauri Lankesh

Age: unknown

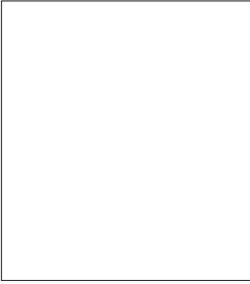
Place of Incident: Bangalore

Date of Incident: 5 September 2017

Reason: At least three unidentified assailants fired at Gauri Lankesh outside her home, as she returned home from work. She was shot in the head and chest and died immediately. The female journalist published and edited Gauri Lankesh Patrike, a Kannada-language weekly tabloid known for its criticism of right-wing extremism and the establishment, according to media reports.

The newspaper covered sensitive issues, including communal violence and the caste system. Lankesh was part of a government panel involved in shaping a Maoist surrender to state police, and reportedly, was sympathetic to the Maoist rebels and involved in the reintegration of former rebels.

Current Status: unknown



Name: Naveen Gupta

Age: unknown

Place of Incident: Bilhaur, Uttar Pradesh

Date of Incident: 30 November 2017

Reason: Naveen Gupta was a stringer for Hindustan and also wrote for the Hindi-language daily Swatantra Bharat, as well as another daily Dainik Jagran. He wrote frequently on illegal mining along the Ganga river. As the journalist parked his car one evening inside a complex where his brother has a garment store, two unidentified men called out to the journalist. After talking with the men, Naveen Gupta walked away. Four other men, standing a short distance away, then shot him in the head, face and chest. Naveen Gupta was pronounced dead en route to the hospital.

Current Status: unknown



Name: Shantanu Bhowmik

Age: unknown

Place of Incident: West Tripura district

Date of Incident: 20 September 2017

Reason: Shantanu Bhowmik, a reporter for the local Bengali-language television news channel Dinraat, was beaten to death while he was covering clashes between members of the separatist Indigenous People's Front of Tripura and the ruling Tripura Rajya Upajati Ganamukti Parishad party.

Current Status: In December 2017, state police confirmed that four people were arrested and are being held in police custody on a court order, in relation to the journalist's death.



Name: Rajesh Mishra

Age: unknown

Place of Incident: Brahmanpur Chatti,
Ghazipur district

Date of Incident: 21 October 2017

Reason: Rajesh Mishra was a stringer for the Hindi daily Dainik Jagran. Assailants on motorbikes shot the journalist dead outside his brother's store.

Current Status: Between December 3, 2017 and January 5, 2018, state police arrested four people - Ajit Yadav, Sunil Yadav, Jhanku Yadav, and Pavan Yadav in connection with Mishra's murder. Police said that the suspects are members of a gang headed by a man named as Raju Yadav, who is suspected of being the mastermind. Police alleged that Yadav was angry about stories by Mishra that accused him of illegal sand mining and alcohol trafficking. Police added that three of those arrested confessed to being involved in the murder. In January 2018, police confirmed that those arrested have been charged with murder under section 302 of the Indian Penal Code.

CONCLUSION

In a single decade, India has experienced the progressive erosion of the country's press freedom and the establishment of an era of widespread persecution of members of the press.²⁰ For over a century, Indian "civic and cultural life" encompassed access of news from traditional local newspapers, however, as technology evolves, so too does the nature of communication and method of expression.²¹

The media space has grown more competitive and journalists are challenged to provide greater depths of information to satisfy the interests and needs of their commanding audiences. This cycle indirectly leads to the "persecution of journalists," as the case studies show by the number of threats to, and arrests of journalists, while in the line of duty.²²

As fewer traditional media outlets exist, the realisation of profits becomes a strain on media corporations. Thus, indiscriminate monetary incentives from "dodgy investors" become an influence and in some cases dictate the news content.²³

Domestic Indian law entitles every journalist to report information, regardless of whether this information impairs the government or private actors. However, this freedom is being curbed. The timeline of case studies chronicles the increase of these threats and the suppression of journalists' constitutional right to freedom of expression.

There is a great need for the "proper functioning of our democratic setup", in order to reshape the current dynamic, facing the media and their practice.²⁴ Today, the greatest conundrum to resolve is the

²⁰ Bihar Senior Journalist, Chandrashekhram's statement from National Consultation on Media Freedom & Law Report, August 2015

²¹ Senior Journalist Sukumar Murlidharan statement from National Consultation on Media Freedom & Law Report, August 2015

²² Maharashtra Senior Journalist Geeta Seshu statement from National Consultation on Media Freedom & Law Report, August 2015

²³ Business Standard Journalist, Vanita Kohli Khandekar statement from National Consultation on Media Freedom & Law Report, August 2015

²⁴ HRLN statement from National Consultation on Media Freedom & Law Report, August

type of change that is required for this transformation. It has been offered that courts may not be the best place to “attack the law” and instead “putting pressure on legislature” to enact necessary changes²⁵ may be the way forward.

Journalists play an important and critical societal role as they are “soldiers of the pen.”²⁶ They deserve protection by immediate legal remedies and regulations, which embrace members representing all forms of media from print to television to digital. Establishment of a legal protection entity, to offer legal defence services for journalists with existing and pending court matters is of paramount importance as is access to governmental information and courts without bias. While the UP state government may argue that they are headed in that direction because they believe their 2016 erection of a “toll-free helpline” for journalists may be of assistance, it would only appear to be a mechanism for capturing a complaint from a journalist, assuming he or she was in a position to, or still alive, to actually contact the number.²⁷

Therefore, great and more substantial change is needed to provide protections that will ensure security and guard the lives of journalists in India.

2015

²⁵ Advocate, Apar Gupta, statement from National Consultation on Media Freedom & Law Report, August 2015

²⁶ Advocate, KK Rai’s statement from National Consultation on Media Freedom & Law Report, August 2015

²⁷ CPJ Report at <https://cpj.org/reports/2016/08/dangerous-pursuit-india-corruption-journalists-killed-impunity-Chapter-1-Jagendra-Singh.php>

In India, journalists have come under repeated attacks in the recent times. They have been killed, arrested, and wrongly implicated in many cases. There have been increasing number of criminal cases against journalists. Many media houses have seen their offices ransacked. It is sufficient to say that there have not been darker times for journalists in India as it has been in the recent past and now. It is in this context that this compilation is brought out. This compilation brings out the stories of the journalists who have been arrested and killed for performing their duty.

“Journalism can never be silent: That is its greatest virtue and its greatest fault. It must speak, and speak immediately, while the echoes of wonder, the claims of triumph and the signs of horror are still in the air.”

— Henry Anatole Grunwald,
former Managing Editor, Time Magazine

“Journalism will kill you, but it will keep you alive while you’re at it.”

— Horace Greeley,
founder and editor of New York Tribune

