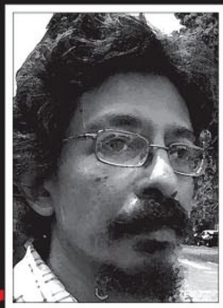


# Under Fire

## Press Freedom in South Asia 2008-2009

ANNEX: INCIDENTS OF PRESS FREEDOM VIOLATIONS BY COUNTRY, MAY 2008-APRIL 2009

**Detained 300 days for  
fearless journalism  
Drop Charges Now!**



**Thissa, Jesiharan & Valarmathy**

# Release

**Detained since 8<sup>th</sup> March 2008**

**Justice and Equality Movement**



## AFGHANISTAN

### Media Workers Killed

**2008:**

**7 June 2008:** **Abdul Samad Rohani**, a journalist working for the Pashtu service of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), disappeared after his vehicle was stopped by armed men in the suburbs of Lashkar Gah in the southern Helmand province. He was found dead the following day.

**2009:**

**10 March 2009:** **Jawed Ahmad Yazmi**, a local reporter for Canadian TV, was shot dead in Kandahar. Ahmad was released less than six months before by the U.S. forces after an 11-month detention in their Bagram military air base for alleged connections with terrorist groups.

**11 March 2009:** **Munir Ahmad Amil**, a journalist working for the new division of Emroze TV, was killed in a shooting at an army checkpoint in Kabul.

### Physical Harm, Threats and Intimidation

**2008:**

**7 May 2008:** **Fayzi Zadran**, a news presenter with the state-controlled Radio Television Afghanistan (RTA), came under pressure after appearing on a discussion programme in the privately owned channel Tolo TV. Zadran was sharply critical of the functioning of the state broadcaster and questioned the Government's commitment to free speech. He was shortly afterwards forced to resign.

**15 May 2008:** **Niloufar Habibi**, a presenter on the local public television station Herat TV, was stabbed in her home in Herat. She continued to receive death threats after leaving hospital and was forced to change residence several times.

**12 June 2008:** **Jameela Rishteen Qadiry**, a reporter for Radio Free Europe-Radio Liberty (RFERL) in the western city of Herat, reportedly received death threats via two anonymous phone calls. Qadiry had worked for the radio channel in the southern provinces of Kandahar and Helmand, where the Taliban insurgency has been strong.

**18 June 2008:** The Afghan Independent Journalists' Association received reports from five journalists about virtually simultaneous death threats. The journalists concerned are **Aziz Ahmad Shafi** of the BBC, **Sebghatullah Zahid** of Salaam Watandar community radio, and three reporters for Radio Free Europe-Radio Liberty: **Daud Wafa** in Jalalabad, **Rishteen Qadiry** in Herat, and **Amir Basheer** in Khost.

**18 September 2008:** **Rona Shirzai**, the owner and chief editor of Radio Quayash based in Faryab province, was threatened with the station's closure by the provincial governor. Shirzai was also ordered to reinstate two employees dismissed for professional misconduct and the promotion of political agendas inconsistent with independent and ethical journalism.

**30 November 2008:** **Hamid Saljoqi**, reporter for the daily *Ittefaq-e-Islam*, was beaten by police personnel in Herat city as he was entering the provincial governor's official residence to cover a public event. He was attacked again later the same day outside the premises of the Iranian consulate in Herat.

**2009:**

**18 January 2009:** **Khan Wali Salarzai** from Pahjwok independent news agency and Radio Television Afghanistan, **Abdul Ghani**, also from Radio Television Afghanistan and **Sayed Abdullah Nezami** from Al-Jazeera TV were threatened by provincial governor Fazalullah Wahidi at a press conference. The governor threatened to destroy their professional equipment.

**24 January 2009:** **Galia Rana Nooristani**, a reporter with the Pashto language Sada-e-Azadi TV and Radio, was threatened and physically restrained from approaching the site of a bomb explosion in Kabul city. Cameraman **Yousuf Mansouri** was physically assaulted by personnel of a private security contractor.

### Abduction and Detention

**2008:**

**28 July 2008:** **Mohammed Nasir Fayaz**, host of *Haqeeqat* (The Truth) program on the privately-owned Ariana TV, was detained for two days by members of the Afghan National Security Directorate (ANSD) at the government's behest. He was also allegedly beaten at the time of his arrest.

**12 October 2008:** Translator **Shokoor Feroz**, and his brother **Qaem** were held in custody for six weeks after going to the police station to report the kidnapping of Canadian journalist **Melissa Fung**. Fung is a correspondent with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), who was travelling with Shokoor Feroz and his brother, who was serving as their driver. Fung was freed from abduction 28 days later, while the two brothers remained in custody for six weeks.

**26 November 2008:** **Dawa Khan Menapal**, of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, and **Aziz Popal**, who worked for a television station in Kandahar, were kidnapped by the Taliban and released unharmed three days later.

**2009:**

**13 January 2009:** **Nazari Paryani**, Editor of the daily *Payman*, was detained in Kabul over an allegedly blasphemous article that was published by mistake. Paryani was freed provisionally after eight days in detention but continues to face possible prosecution.

**15 February 2009:** An appeal against the 20-year conviction of former journalist and spokesman for Afghanistan's Attorney-General **Ahmad Ghous Zelmay** was rejected by a Kabul Appeals Court. Zelmay was charged in November 2007 for wrongly interpreting religious scripture. He was sentenced in September 2008.

**March 8 2009:** An appeal by **Sayed Parvez Kambakhsh**



against his 20 year jail sentence on blasphemy charges was formally rejected by an appeals court without informing either the defendant or his lawyer. Kambakhsh was originally sentenced to death in January 2008. An appeals court in October 2008 upheld the conviction but commuted his sentence to 20 years imprisonment.

**March 23 2009:** The chief editor of the private TV channel Emroze **Fahim Kohdamani** was arrested following allegations that the content of an Emroze broadcast expressed anti-Islamic sentiments offensive to some Shiite clerics. He was released four weeks later

**March 23 2009:** Ariana TV reporter **Ajmal Alamzai** was arrested without explanation by security officials while on the way to Bakhater University in Kabul. He was released later that evening after interrogation by the National Directorate of Security.

**March 28, 2009:** **Syed Dawood Yaqubi**, a well-known satirist who edits the *Aaine-e-Roz* weekly, was taken from his home in Kabul by the ANSD and questioned about an article he published questioning the Iranian government's commitment to free speech.

## BANGLADESH

### Physical Harm, Threats and Intimidation 2008:

**24 May 2008:** *Daily Star* reporter **Mirza Shakil** was beaten by approximately a dozen guards at Tangail prison when he took photographs of the prison through perimeter railings.

**29 May 2008:** **Yasinur Rahman**, Netrokona district correspondent of the daily *Jugantar*, ETV and BDNews, had his hand crushed by police reportedly in retaliation for his stories on police corruption.

**6 June 2008:** **Khokhon**, a photojournalist with *Banglar Chokh* and Drik, was attacked and severely injured on Barguna district while documenting the flight of villagers from violent criminal gangs in the coastal zone.

**16 June 2008:** **J.M. Rauf**, district correspondent of the daily *Prothom Alo*, received a death threat after he inquired with local police about their failure to register a case.

**17 June 2008:** **Probhat Kumar Shah**, Faridpur Sadar Upazila correspondent of the daily *Amar Desh*, was physically assaulted and threatened with death by individuals named in a police complaint registered by the journalist.

**21 June 2008:** **Mohammad Ali**, Shibchar correspondent of the daily *Samokal*, was threatened with death after publishing a story on criminal activities of individuals in the area.

**25 June 2008:** **Kawsar Azam**, Ulaa Para correspondent of the daily *Noya Diganta*, received a death threat after publishing a report on corruption in development works in a local graveyard.

**7 July 2008:** Relatives of a police officer imprisoned on a murder charge attacked five journalists who were photographing the accused at the Satkhira district court.

**10 July 2008:** A senior official in the local administration in Rajshahi district threatened *Destiny* bureau chief **Saidur Rahman Naju** after he published a story on corruption.

**13 August 2008:** **Shafiqul Islam**, Dhaka University correspondent for the daily *Janata*, was attacked while covering a programme by the students' wing of the Awami League.

**15 August 2008:** Lalmonirhat correspondent of the daily *Sangbad Samiul Islam Sani* was attacked by a gang of suspected drug dealers and critically injured.

**15 August 2008:** Officials of the Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority attacked senior reporter with the daily *Jai Jai Din Tarun Sarkar* when he had gone to their office for an interview with the chairman.

**17 August 2008:** **Mohiuddin Jewel**, correspondent of the daily *Prothom Alo*, and **Sudipto Sharma** of the daily *Jugantar*, were critically injured after being attacked by student activists at Chittagong University.

**18 August 2008:** **Rafiqul Islam**, Phulpur correspondent of the daily *Bhorer Kagoj*, was attacked in retaliation for reporting a local crime.

**3 September 2008:** Six journalists in the northern district of Sirojgonj; **Helal Uddin**, **Shafiquzzaman Shafi**, **Sagor Basak**, **Abdul Hakim Shimul**, **Aslam Ali** and **Hasnuzzaman Tuhin**, were threatened by the district unit of the Jamaat-e-Islami for reporting on a case involving a war criminal.

**12 September 2008:** Eight journalists, **Nitol Hassan**, **Biplob Sarkar**, **Din Elahi**, **Ali Asaf Shaon**, **Nure Alam Durjoy**, **Nadim Mahmud**, **Faujul Kabir** and **Mahfuj Shaon** were assaulted by the youth cadre of the Bangladesh National Party at Dhaka University campus. Three students of the Department of Mass Communication were also injured in the incident.

**13 September 2008:** Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) personnel attacked senior journalist **Mustafizur Rahman** as he was going to a health centre for medical treatment.

**13 September 2008:** Senior reporter for the privately owned Islamic TV channel **Anisur Rahman Khan** reported receiving threats on his mobile phone after filing reports about the activities of militant religious groups in the Mirpur area of Dhaka city.

**16 September 2008:** **Sheikh Hasan Belal**, Kushtia district correspondent of the daily *Karotoa* and the news agency ABAS, was assaulted by a police officer in the main police station of the district town.

**18 September 2008:** Six journalists; **Mahbubul Islam Alamgir**, **Wazed Ali**, **Abu Sayeed**, **Hafijur Rahman**, **Sagor Chowdhury** and **Shahidul Islam Dabir** were threatened by a militant religious group in Khulna district.

**21 October 2008:** *Sangbad* and CSB Television reporter **Jahangir Alam Akash** was denied deferment of the hearings of two cases of alleged extortion against him despite his senior counsel being unable to attend. The judge also reportedly guided witnesses in recalling purported evidence against him.

**2009:**

**1 January 2009:** Staff reporter of the daily *Naya Diganta* **Abu Salem Akon** was threatened with death by an unknown caller unless he paid a specified sum of money.

**2 January 2009:** **Faisal Islam**, staff correspondent of the daily *Gramer Kagoj*, was seriously injured after being attacked in Jessore city.

**3 January 2009:** **Jahangir Alam Akash**, Rajshahi correspondent of the daily *Sangbad*, was threatened by unnamed caller.

**3 January 2009:** **Hossain Ahmed Helal**, president of the Lakhipur Press Club received death threats from a caller identifying himself as a cadre of the Islamist grouping, Harkat-ul-Jihad-ul-Islami.

**3 January 2009:** Activists of the Awami League attacked correspondent of the daily *Dainik Mathabhanga* **Harun Rashid Raju** while he was on assignment in Darshana Puran Bazar.

**5 January 2009:** **Arifuzzaman Arif**, chief reporter of a local newspaper in Narayanganj, was critically injured in what was believed to be a terrorist attack.

**21 January 2009:** **Satyajit Ghosh**, local correspondent of the daily *Prothom Alo*, was threatened by the Mayor of Shariatpur Poura Sabha following unfavourable reports.

**27 January 2009:** **Mostafa Kamal Majumdar**, editor of the weekly *The New Nation*, was threatened over telephone and then attacked while travelling in his car in the media colony of Mirpur, Dhaka.

**27 January 2009:** **Shipon Ahmed**, photojournalist of the daily *Janakantha*, was threatened while on assignment in Narayanganj.

## Abduction and Detention

**2008:**

**10 July 2008:** **Shah Humayun Kabir**, editor of the weekly *Khabar*, was arrested from Habibganj on charges of extortion.

**7 August 2008:** **Humayun Kabir Shelam**, Netrokona correspondent for the private television channel RTV was arrested on charges of extortion.

**7 August 2008:** Two journalists identified as **Mohammad Zakir Hossain** of the daily *Desh Janata* and **Mongshapru Marma** of the daily *Bhorer Kagoj*, were arrested on charges of extortion in Khagrachari town.

**10 August 2008:** Two journalists working for the weekly *Bichitra*, **Rubel Mia** and **Shohag Mia**, were arrested in Jamalpur district on unspecified charges.

**16 August 2008:** **Fazlur Hoque Roman**, correspondent of the daily *Naya Diganta*, was arrested on charges of extortion after publishing a story on corruption in a local hospital.

**2009:**

**20 January 2009:** Editor of Bengali daily *Janakantha* **Atiqullah Khan Masud** was released from prison after more than 22 months in detention after a successful bail application to the Supreme Court of Bangladesh. Masud was taken into custody in March 2007 by Bangladesh special forces under the "emergency" regulations then in force and later convicted of corruption.

## INDIA

### Media Workers Killed

**2008:**

**11 May 2008:** Photojournalist for leading newspaper the *Daily Excelsior* **Ashok Sodhi** died of bullet injuries sustained while covering an armed encounter between security forces and militants in India's Jammu region. He was 25.

**13 August 2008:** Thirty-five year old **Javed Ahmed Mir**, a cameraman for a local television station in Srinagar, died of bullet injuries while covering a demonstration in Kashmir.

**22 September 2008:** **Ravi**, a freelance photographer was the victim of a vicious assault while returning from a photography assignment in the northern Indian city of Chandigarh. He was pronounced dead on arrival at hospital.

**17 November 2008:** **Konsam Rishikanta**, a trainee journalist for the *Imphal Free Press*, was shot dead in Manipur with three bullet wounds. The motive for the murder of Rishikanta, 22, remains unresolved, as does the identity of the assailants.

**22 November 2008:** Journalist **Jagajit Saikia** was shot dead by a group of armed men as he left his office on a motorcycle. Saikia was a correspondent for the Assamese language daily *Amar Asom*.

**26 November 2008:** Correspondent for the Hindi-language daily *Hindustan Vikas Ranjan*, 32, was gunned down by three armed men outside his office in Samastipur district in Bihar state.

**2009:**

**24 March 2009:** Executive Editor of the Assamese-language *Aaji* newspaper **Anil Mozumdar** was shot dead late at night near his home in Guwahati by unidentified gunmen in a targeted attack.

### Physical Harm, Threats and Intimidation

**26 May 2008:** The headquarters of the Telugu-language daily *Andhra Jyothi*, and its employees were attacked with stones and doused in petrol in a protest organised by the

Madiga Reservation Porata Samithi (MRPS) over an article alleging MRPS corruption.

**5 June 2008:** Political activists from a group known as Shiv Sangram, attacked the home of **Kumar Ketkar**, editor of the Marathi language daily *Loksatta*.

**26 June 2008:** Several reporters were attacked while covering demonstrations held by the Students' Federation of India (SFI) in the state of Kerala. *Manorama News* reporter **Pradeep Joseph** was assaulted by SFI activists, as were *Malayala Manorama* journalists **Nishad Kurien** and **Arun John**. Cameraman **C Abhilash** and driver **Sabu** were beaten while attempting to save Joseph from his assailants. Activists then hurled stones at the *Manorama* offices.

**July 17 2008:** Police personnel conducting a guard of honour for colleagues killed in anti-insurgency operations in Orissa assaulted journalists covering the event. **Anil Reddy**, a reporter with the news channel TV9, was seriously injured in the incident. Reporters **Shaikh Maqbool**, of the Hindi daily *Nai Duniya* and **M.V. Chari**, of the Telugu language daily *Vishal Andhra*, were also injured.

**24 August 2008:** At least 13 journalists were beaten by police in Srinagar, capital of Jammu and Kashmir, as they tried to get to their offices after a curfew was introduced by the government. Among those injured were **Bilal Bhat**, the Sahara Samay TV station's bureau chief in Srinagar and his cameraman, **Muzaffar Ajaz Ahmad** of *News X*, **Jehangir Aziz** of ETV's Urdu service and **Amin Warsi** of *The Tribune* newspaper.

**14 October 2008:** Lawyers claiming allegiance to political group Periyar Dravidar Kazhagam (PDK) stormed *The Hindu* newspaper's office compound and attempted to force their way inside. The protesters later burnt copies of the newspaper.

**6 November 2008:** The government in Jammu and Kashmir sent out an advisory to all media organisations within its jurisdiction, against the publication of 'objectionable material' with the threat of withdrawing state advertising if organisations were non-compliant.

**7 December 2008:** Seven journalists were injured in Kashmir whilst covering a street demonstration campaigning for the boycott of state-wide elections. **Mukhtar Khan**, of the Associated Press and **Tauseef Mustafa**, of Agence France-Presse (AFP), were seriously injured in Kashmir. **Syed Muzaffar** of *Srinagar Times*, **Habib Naqash** of *Greater Kashmir*, **Bilal Bazaz** of *Imarat*, **Mohammad Afzal** of *Associated News of India* and **Fayaz Kabli** of *Reuters* were also injured.

## Abduction and Detention

**2008:**

**24 June 2008:** **K. Srinivas**, the editor of Telugu-language *Andhra Jyoti*, and two of its reporters **Kumar Vamshi** and **N. Srinivas** were arrested without warrant and held in custody until June 26 in Hyderabad.

**2009:**

**5 January 2009:** **B.V. Seetaram**, chairman and chief editor of Chitra Publications, from Mangalore in the state of Karnataka was detained and held on charges of defamation filed in 2007. Chitra Publications produces a number of popular Kannada language dailies and periodicals.

**11 February 2009:** Editor and publisher of *The Statesman* **Ravindra Kumar** and **Anand Sinha** (respectively) were arrested by Kolkata police and charged with promoting enmity between people on the grounds of religion. Both journalists were released on bail.

## NEPAL

### Media Workers Killed

**2008:**

**28 November 2008:** **J.P. Joshi** (alias Pandit), a journalist missing since October 8 is presumed murdered when human remains found in a remote area of western Nepal were identified as his.

**2009:**

**11 January 2009:** Journalist and human rights activist **Uma Singh**, 26, was murdered in the town of Janakpur by a gang of about 15 men after she returned home from work. Singh, a correspondent for the *Janakpur Today* daily and the radio station of the same name was stabbed repeatedly on the verandah that her dwelling shares with three others.

### Physical Harm, Threats and Intimidation

**2008:**

**10 May 2008:** News correspondent of Nepal FM 91.8 radio station **Tila Bhandari** was beaten and threatened with death by activists of the Nepali Congress (NC). Bhandari was attempting to cover news about a general strike staged by the NC.

**13 May 2008:** **Bindu Kumar Chauhan** and **Kanhai Yadav**, journalists from Rupandehi, a western district of Nepal, received death threats from local police officers for reporting on police activities in a border area where smuggling occurs.

**16 May 2008:** Death threats were made in a refugee camp in eastern Nepal by members of the Communist Party of Bhutan Marxist-Leninist Maoist (CPB-MLM) against journalists working for the **Bhutan News Service**, a website operated by the Association of Press Freedom Activists (APFA).

**27 May 2008:** Editor of the Kailali-based newspaper *Sudur Sandesh Daily* **Hemanta Paudel** was threatened by the Maoist party-affiliated Young Communist League (YCL) for publishing critical news reports about incidents involving Maoists.

**28 May 2008:** **Lucky Chaudhari**, editor and publisher of the Kailali-based *Hamar Pahura* daily, was assaulted by the Young Communist League.

**29 May 2008:** Newspapers in Kailali, a far western region of Nepal, suspended operations indefinitely accusing the state of failing to ensure the safety of journalists and other media workers.

**8 June 2008:** **Deependra Kunwar**, a news correspondent for the Communication Corner radio production company, was assaulted and seriously injured by police personnel in Anamnagar, Kathmandu.

**17 June 2008:** FNJ Panchthar chapter president **Lekhnath Khatiwada** was threatened by Kamal Raj Nemwang, the secretary of the Federal Limbuwan State Council (FLSC) in the Panchthar district and by FLSC party workers.

**15 June 2008:** Journalist **Mahesh Shrestha** was threatened by the owner, finance director and other supporters of Unity Life insurance company due to a news article he wrote in the *Janadisa Daily* newspaper.

**19 June 2008:** **Mahendra Luintel**, the editor-in-chief of the *Nirantar* weekly, was attacked by the owner of an X-ray laboratory whose illegal activities he had been collecting information on.

**21 June 2008:** **Ganesh Sah**, a local correspondent for Sagarmatha Television station, was physically abused by officials from the Sagarmatha Zonal Transport Management Office (SZTMO) whilst collecting information for a story. Officials also threatened journalists **Royantar Mandal** and **Bijaya Kumar Yadav** in similar circumstances.

**27 June 2008:** A reporter for Kantipur television station **Khagendra Bhandari** was beaten by a resident of Banepa named in a story Bhandari had written two days before about drug addiction.

**1 July 2008:** **Prem Baniya**, a senior reporter with Avenues Television received repeated death threats over the phone following his *exposé* of corruption cases in a programme that he hosts.

**12 July 2008:** **Kamal Mishra**, a correspondent for *Nepal Samacharpatra* national daily and a member of FNJ's Jhapa branch, was beaten and threatened over a story published in the *Sanghu weekly*, a newspaper with which he was no longer associated at the time of publication.

**14 July 2008:** A group of businessmen attacked the offices of the *Hamar Pahura* daily and Gardener Offset Press and locked employees inside the premises.

**20 July 2008:** **Rajdhan Rai** and **Kishor Budhathoki**, correspondents of *Naya Patrika* and *Annapurna Post* dailies (respectively), were attacked by youths from the Khandbari Yuba Club.

**22 July 2008:** A number of reporters were beaten by Durbar Marg police in Kathmandu. Journalist **Ujjwol Prashant** and camera operator **Pramod Malla**, of Kantipur Television; journalist **Rishiraj Budathoki** and camera

operator **Shikhar Chimoriya**, of Sagarmatha Television; and journalist **Janak Gautam** and camera operator **Bhagawati Thapa** were assaulted while trying to gather information for a news story.

**24 July 2008:** **D. R. Pokharel**, a news correspondent for *Pokhara Aawaj* daily newspaper and a member of FNJ's Kaski chapter, was assaulted by transport workers.

**27 July 2008:** Protesters attacked a team of Right to Information activists in Nijgadh, obstructing the team's vehicle and harassing them. **Taranath Dahal**, president of the Rashtriya Samachar Samiti (the state-owned news agency) and Freedom Forum chairperson, project coordinator **Krishna Pokharel**, Right to Information trainer **Nayan Bahadur Khadka**, ARTICLE 19's Nepal Representative **Santosh Sigdel** and journalist **Chandra Kishor Jha** were amongst those assaulted.

**27 July 2008:** The Madhesi Janadhikar Forum (MJF) district committee issued a press release prohibiting the sale and distribution of the *Kantipur* and *Annapurna Post* daily newspapers. On 28 July, MJAF supporters collected all copies of the dailies and set fire to them.

**28 July 2008:** **Govinda Luitel**, a news correspondent for *Butwal Today* daily newspaper and the radio station Nepal FM reported a death threat via telephone from Birendra Nepal, secretary of the Devinagar Village Development Committee (VDC).

**29 July 2008:** **Kamal Bahadur Panthi**, a correspondent for the national daily newspaper *Kantipur* and a central council member of FNJ's Bardiya chapter, reported being threatened by administrative officer Tirtha Raj Bhattarai of the District Administrative Office.

**29 July 2008:** **K. B. Rana**, a local correspondent for Radio Nepal, and **Deepak Bhattarai**, of ABC Television, were attacked by police officers after returning to their hotel from collecting information about a clash between local townspeople and the police.

**2 August 2008:** **Sushil Dhungana**, a news correspondent for *Samachar Saransha* newspaper, reported receiving a death threat over a report titled "Increasing smuggling at Vajani Border, Concerned Authority Silent".

**3 August 2008:** **Rajesh Jha**, joint secretary of FNJ's Saptari district chapter, reported a threat by Young Communist League (YCL) member Arun Goit for reporting on the death of district education chief Hasarat Ali.

**4 August 2008:** Members of the Madhesi Students' Front set fire to copies of *Kantipur*, *Samacharpatra* and *Blast Times* newspapers for failure to cover an incident in which students of the Dharan Engineering College were beaten.

**4 August 2008:** The head of Terai Rastriya Mukti Sena (TRMS), Akash Tyagi, warned all Janakpur journalists to stop publishing and broadcasting news in Nepali language, or risk facing retaliation. Journalists **Ajaya Sah** of *Shrish Weekly*, and **Ganesh Kharel** correspondent for *Gorkhapatra*



and *Tarai Times*, reported personal phone threats to this effect.

**7 August 2008:** About 20 members of the MJF stormed the offices of the daily newspaper *Prateek*, damaging office furniture, a newspaper vehicle and other goods.

**7 August 2008:** **J.P. Gupta**, editor and publisher of the weekly *Dishanirdesh Today*, received a murder threat from Kasiram, president of the Insurance Unity and Life Company.

**7 August 2008:** A Kantipur Publications vehicle was intercepted by members of the youth wing of the Communist Party of Nepal-United Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML), who seized about 500 copies of the *Kathmandu Post* and *Kantipur* dailies. *Kathmandu Post* reporter **Ramesh Chandra Adhikari** was also threatened in the process.

**14 August 2008:** Journalist **Sheetal Sah**, a member and the coordinator of the FNJ's central region chapter, was threatened by a local political group, the Terai Rajya Mukti Sanghatan, while he was working in his office in Janakpur in Dhanusha district. Editors of the *Sirish* and *Janasaugat* weeklies in the same districts received similar threats.

**18 August 2008:** **Ananta Raj Luintel**, reporter of *The Himalayan Times* daily, was threatened by Laxmi Devkota, defence lawyer for serial killer Charles Sobhraj.

**23 August 2008:** Journalists **Milan Kumar Raut**, **Dipendra Timilsina**, **Mohan Bhattarai** and **Rohit Ghimire**, of *Anamolmani* weekly, published in Morang district in eastern Nepal, were attacked by a group of school teachers from the local Annapurna Boarding School.

**25 August 2008:** Radio programme *Halkhabar* was cancelled due to pressure from the Maoist party. The show's host, **Nimendra Shahi** was dismissed over comments regarding the incident of August 23. The programme was later reinstated, although Shahi was not.

**26 August 2008:** A group of protesters in Dhulikhel, Kavre harassed four journalists covering the demonstration. Journalists **Shiva Prasad Dahal**, treasurer of FNJ's Kavre chapter, **Khuman Singh Tamang**, a correspondent for *Kantipur* daily, **Kedar Timsina**, of *Annapurna Post*, and **Prakash Khanal**, of *Sanjibani* daily, were physically abused and prevented from reporting on the incident.

**28 August 2008:** **Sahadev Thapa**, correspondent of Avenues television station and associate editor of Hamro radio station was deliberately targeted in an attack by members of the student wings of two political parties.

**18 September 2008:** The office of the Kathmandu-based *Metro Post* daily and *Democracy* weekly was vandalised by a group of some 15 armed people alleged to be members of the Night Restaurant Entrepreneurs' Association. The group entered the publications office and manhandled editor **Ramhari Silwal** and computer operator **Laxman Chitrakar**.

**18 September 2008:** **D.B. Thokar**, editor of *Janapratirodh*, a Kavre-based weekly was attacked by two locals while he was carrying published newspapers from the press.

**21 September 2008:** The office of the daily *Sandhyakalin*, an evening paper located in Bhotahiti district in central Kathmandu, was attacked by demonstrators throwing stones.

**18 October 2008:** A journalist for the daily *Sandakpur Yubaraj Gautam* was beaten up by a bus driver after publishing a news story alleging overcharging by local transport.

**20 October 2008:** A journalist **Kamal Sah** and computer operator **Jaya Kumar Chaudhari** from Janakpur-based *Tarai Times* were assaulted at the newspaper's office in Janakpur. The group entered the newspaper's office and vandalised equipment.

**24 October 2008:** **Ram Mani Upadhyaya**, editor of *Basudha* fortnightly and a member of the FNJ Dhanusha chapter, was attacked and seriously injured by unidentified assailants.

**October 25 2008:** A Himal Media van was badly damaged while transporting the company's chief executive officer, when attackers on motorcycles threw rocks at it.

**28 October 2008:** **Siddharaj Upadhyay**, a correspondent with the national daily *Gorkhapatra*, was physically abused and threatened with death by businessman Birendra Shah.

**28 October 2008:** President of the FNJ's Pyuthan chapter **Sachin Pokharel** was threatened by Dal Bahadur K.C., a former chairperson of the Village Development Committee (VDC) over the presentation of a news story.

**5 November 2008:** **Abadesh Jha**, the vice-president of the FNJ Saptari chapter, and **Sanatan Mandal**, a news correspondent for *News Today*, were attacked by an unidentified group of 4 or 5 men. The journalists were held for about 20 minutes and physically assaulted.

**12 November 2008:** **Dinesh Thapa**, a member of FNJ's Sindhupalchowk chapter, and **Netra Paudel**, a news correspondent for *Sindhu Prabaha* weekly, were attacked by organisers of a protest at the Araniko highway in central Nepal, because they did not arrive promptly.

**13 November 2008:** The eastern regional office of Rastriya Samachar Samiti (RSS) in Biratnagar was vandalised by an unknown group.

**16 November 2008:** Copies of *Himal Khabar Patrika* magazine were seized and burnt as they were being prepared for distribution in Kathmandu.

**18 November 2008:** The Regional Bureau office of Avenues Television was attacked by a group which identified itself as the Khumbuwan Rastriya Morcha (KRM) district committee.

**20 November 2008:** Five journalists, **Birendra KM**, **Ekwel Ahamad**, **Jaya Krishna Yadav**, **Pramod Yadav** and **Dhirendra Chaudhary**, received death threats via telephone from an unidentified group regarding a report on child abuse published in a local newspaper in the eastern Sunsari region.

**20 November 2008:** A vehicle for the ABC Nepal television station was attacked and vandalised on its way to report a strike organised by the Citizens' Struggle Committee.

**Nabin Khadka**, the driver of the vehicle, was injured in the incident.

**24 November 2008:** **Rajesh Chamling Rai**, a correspondent for *Gorkhapatra Daily*, was attacked by a group of protesters at a student union demonstration in Ghantaghar, Kathmandu.

**7 December 2008:** A group of alleged alcohol smugglers took control of Ramaroshan FM and locked its doors in response to a news broadcast about their activities. **Bed Prakash Timilsina**, the FNJ's Achham chapter president and **Binod Thapa**, the chairperson and a journalist for Ramaroshan FM, along with radio station staff were forced to hide to save their lives.

**21 December 2008:** The premises of the Himalmedia group were vandalised by 40-50 people belonging to Maoist-affiliated groups. More than a dozen media employees were injured, including *Nepali Times* editor **Kunda Dixit**, *Himal Khabarpatrika* executive editor **Kiran Nepal**, chief executive officer **Ashutosh Tiwari**, *Himal Khabarpatrika* reporter **Damber Krishna Shrestha** and administrative employee **Surendra Sharma**.

**22 December 2008:** Employees of APCA Nepal, which markets the *Himalayan Times* and *Annapurna Post* newspapers, came under threat by Maoists' unions as did employees of Kantipur publications, which publishes the *Kantipur* and *Kathmandu Post* dailies.

**22 December 2008:** Journalists participating in an FNJ-organised protest were attacked by police officers in the vicinity of the Parliament building. FNJ secretary **Ramjee Dahal** suffered a head injury.

**22 December 2008:** FNJ president **Dharmendra Jha**, Reporters Club president **Rishi Dhamala**, and **Ishowri Ohja**, former president of FNJ's Kavre chapter, were abused at Dolakha when on their way to participate in a programme held by the Nepal chapter of the South Asia Free Media Association (SAFMA).

**23 December 2008:** A group led by Ajay Kushwah, president of the Parsa district Youth Force, attacked the Birgunj offices of the *Ankush* daily newspaper, destroying office equipment and burning files.

**24 December 2008:** The FNJ's Avenues TV chapter secretary, **Suman Dhungana**, was attacked at the Nepal Commerce Campus in Minbhawan, Kathmandu by members of the Revolutionary Student Union, for giving a speech on press freedom during a programme organised by the college.

**25 December 2008:** A group of five men attacked Ruru FM radio station in Gulmi, western Nepal. The men assaulted technician **Raju Basnet** with a knife and hurled stones at the station.

**26 December 2008:** **Bhola Thapa**, the president of the FNJ's Kavre chapter, was threatened by a group calling themselves members of the Youth Communist League (YCL).

**27 December 2008:** Editions of the *Kathmandu Post* and *Kantipur* newspaper could not be published in the Eastern Region as Maoist-aligned unions seized control of the editorial and administrative sections of the Kantipur Publications offices.

**2009:**

**11 January 2009:** *Kantipur* news reporter **Manika Jha** was threatened in her home in Janakpur by a group of three or four people who broke her windows and warned that she would be the next person to be attacked following the murder of Uma Singh.

**19 February 2009:** Gadhimai FM radio correspondent **Gyanendra Raj Mishra** was shot near Narayani Stadium in the district town of Birgunj.

**21 February 2009:** Members the MJF seized and set ablaze copies of the daily *Bypass* in retaliation for unfavourable reporting.

**2 March 2009:** Copies of the daily newspapers *Kantipur* and *Kathmandu Post* and the magazine *Nepal* were torched by activists of the Tharu Welfare Council in Khamar in the eastern plains district of Sunsari. A delivery van transporting the newspapers also seized.

**4 March 2009:** Image TV correspondent **Keshav Bhandari** was attacked by student activists from the United Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) in a confrontation between rival student activist groups.

**4 March 2009:** Offices of the daily newspaper *Jana Kranti* in the far-western town of Mahendranagar were attacked by members of the youth wing of the Communist Party of Nepal (United Marxist-Leninist) causing extensive damage.

## Abduction and Detention

**2008:**

**9 June 2008:** Krishna Kumar Yesmali, president of the FNJ's Siraha chapter and news correspondent for Sagarmatha Television, and Rambabu Khadka, district correspondent for Image Channel and Communication Corner, were detained for an hour and mistreated by India's border police after taking pictures of the border area.

**3 August 2008:** **Samjhana Paudel**, a news correspondent for Nepal FM station, was detained while gathering information on a protest organised by women's rights activists at Maitighar Mandala, Kathmandu.

## PAKISTAN

### Media Workers Killed

**2008:**

**25 May 2008:** Express TV reporter **Mohammed Ibrahim Khan** was fatally shot by unknown men near Pakistan's border with Afghanistan.



**15 August 2008:** **Mohammad Azim Leghari**, reporter for *Halchal* newspaper and the Sindh-language television station Dharti TV, was gunned down in Dadu City, in the southern province of Sindh while covering the story of a young couple targeted by their clans for their beliefs on marriage.

**27 August 2008:** *Azadi* (Independent) reporter **Abdul Aziz Shaheen**, 52, was kidnapped by the Taliban in the Swat valley. He was reportedly killed two days later during an air-strike by government forces on the Taliban camp where he was being held.

**3 November 2008:** **Abdul Razzak Johra**, a reporter with the Royal TV network, was dragged out of his home by six armed men and killed. Johra, 45, had prepared several reports on drug-related crime is believed to have received threats for some time in relation to these articles.

**8 November 2008:** Journalist **Qari Mohammad Shoaib**, 32, was killed by Pakistan security forces in Swat valley. A reporter for daily newspapers *Azadi* and *Khabar Kar*, Shoaib was shot dead in Mingora as he returned home from work.

**2009:**

**4 January 2009:** **Mohammad Imran**, reporter for *Eitedal* and **Saleem Tahir Awan** reporter for *Apna Akhbar* were killed in a suicide bomb attack at the site of an earlier explosion which police, forensic scientists and journalists were investigating. Five people were killed and 25 injured in the attack.

**24 January 2009:** **Aamar Wakil**, reporter for *Awami Inqilab* was shot in the back next to his home. He worked for "The People's Revolution", a regional daily based in Kohat, south of Peshawar.

**18 February 2009:** **Musa Khankhel**, reporter for *The News International* and GEO TV went missing on February 18 while reporting on a series of public events addressed by senior cleric Maulana Sufi Mohammad. His bullet-ridden body was discovered hours later in the same area.

**26 March 2009:** **Raja Assad Hameed**, senior reporter for Waqt TV and *The Nation* daily newspaper was shot by attackers outside his home in Rawalpindi and died a little later in hospital.

## Physical Harm, Threats and Intimidation

**2008:**

**1 May 2008:** **Faqir Muhammad**, the deputy commander of the Pakistan Taliban, issued threats against journalists in Khar who publish "offensive" and "vulgar" photos of women.

**12 May 2008:** Pakistan Supreme Court upheld an order to restrain the media from reporting anything that may be deemed "derogatory" of judges.

**3 July 2008:** Local Taliban members threatened four journalists via the circulation of pamphlets in the South Waziristan Agency of Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). The pamphlets named **Anwar Shakeel**, correspondent of the daily *Islam* and AFP news agency;

**Zafar Wazir**, correspondent of the daily *Aaj* and AVT Khyber television station; photojournalist **Din Mohammed**; and **Gul Khan** and warned them to give up their professions because their supposedly false reporting on Taliban and local tribesmen.

**7 June 2008:** Offices of Kook TV, a local station based in Multan, in the east-central province of Punjab, were stormed by about 60 people who seriously injured reporter **Mazhar Mahay**, while inflicting serious property damage as well.

**15 July 2008:** *Aaj Kal*, an Urdu-language daily published from Lahore, was threatened by Islamic activists angered by the publication of a cartoon.

**3 August 2008:** The president of the Tribal Union of Journalists (TUJ), **Khayal Zaman Afridi**, received serious injuries when armed persons fired at him.

**14 September 2008:** A group of about 50 armed men attacked the Shahpur Jehanian Press Club. Among those assaulted were: **Manthar Dahiri**, correspondent of the daily newspaper *Sobh* and president of the press club; **Abdul Aziz Channa**, correspondent of the daily *Koshish* and general secretary of the press club; **Zahid Bughio**, correspondent of the daily *Sindh*; and **Haji Mohammed Haroon**, correspondent of the daily *Mehran*.

**12 October 2008:** **Farhan Somroo**, a cameraman with Aaj TV was hit in the stomach by two bullets while reporting on a clash between students at a college in Karachi. Reporter **Osma Chaudhry** was also injured.

**22 October 2008:** Sub editor **Abdul Qayum** and photojournalist **Jamal Tarakai** of the daily *Awam* were injured in a bomb blast outside the offices of local newspapers in Quetta. The offices of five daily newspapers – *Awam*, *Atemad*, *Intekhab*, *Public* and *Tijarat* were damaged in the explosion.

**2009:**

**1 January 2009:** Over thirty armed men belonging to the Sindh Nationalist Front (SNF) political party stormed the offices of the Sindhi-language daily *Awami Awaz* and threatened its staff.

**6 January 2009:** **Ahmad Faraz**, a crime reporter for Pakistan's leading television network *Geo News*, was assaulted by security personnel from the Defence Housing Authority in Lahore when he attempted to access the scene of a crime.

**7 January 2009:** The home of **Hameedullah Khan**, a correspondent of the *Dawn* newspaper and Dawn TV in the Swat Valley, was destroyed in an explosion during an army offensive against the Taliban. Gunmen had previously torched a shop owned by Khan on 5 July 2008.

**26 January 2009:** An angry crowd ransacked the studios of Samaa TV in the southwestern city of Quetta.

**1 February 2009:** **Kamal Asfar**, a journalist for the *Ash-Sharq* magazine and brother of Aamar Wakil, who was killed on January 24, escaped a murder attempt by two men firing shots at his car near Kundiyali in the Kohat district.

**17 February 2009:** The Press Club in Wana, in the South Waziristan tribal area, was destroyed in a bomb attack in what the PFUJ and IFJ believe, was a deliberate action to spread fear in the journalism community.

## Abduction and Detention

**2008:**

**3 July 2008:** Reporter **Pir Zubair Shah** and photographer **Akhtar Soomoro** were kidnapped by a Taliban group in the Mohmand region of the Tribal Areas.

**6 July 2008:** **Wiqar Kiyani**, a journalist working for the *Guardian* newspaper from the United Kingdom, disappeared shortly after he returned to Islamabad from a reporting assignment in Karachi. He was released on July 9.

**26 August 2008:** **Hasan Abdullah**, an anchor and reporter for Pakistan's leading television channel Dawn News, was detained for six hours by officers of an intelligence agency.

**4 September 2008:** **Musa Khankhel**, a correspondent for the daily newspaper *The News* and the television channel Geo TV, was taken to the headquarters of the Army in Saidu Sharif, capital of Swat district and detained by security forces personnel. Khankhel was abused by five members of the security forces and accused of inaccurate reporting.

**11 November 2008:** Aaj TV correspondent **Mehboob Shah** and cameraman **Mohammad Sami** were temporarily detained in Jamrud, in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). Local authorities detained the pair as they sought to report on the funeral of six people.

**11 November 2008:** **Khadija Abdul Qahar**, a Canadian publisher of a web magazine, and two of her Pakistani colleagues were kidnapped in the tribal areas of Pakistan where she was gathering material for a documentary.

**14 November 2008:** **Motoki Yotsukura**, the Pakistan bureau chief of Japanese newspaper *Asahi Shimbun*, and her Afghan colleague and facilitator, **Sami Yusufzai**, a correspondent for *Newsweek*, escaped an attempted abduction by armed men in the Khyber region bordering Afghanistan but suffered injuries when the men fired shots at their car.

**2009:**

**8 February 2009:** **Noor Hassan**, a reporter for the Royal News television channel, was abducted in the Swat valley, the epicentre of fundamentalist militant insurgency in Pakistan's North West Frontier Province (NWFP). He was released the next morning.

## SRI LANKA

### Media Workers Killed

**2008:**

**28 May 2008:** **Paranirupasingam Devakumar**, a correspondent for Sirasa TV, Shakthi radio and the MTV

Television Network in Jaffna district, was hacked to death in Navanthurei on his way home from Jaffna town.

**6 October 2008:** TV journalist **Rashmin Mohamed** was killed in an explosion whilst covering the open ceremony of the new office of the United National Party (UNP) in Anuradhapura.

**2009:**

**8 January 2009:** *Sunday Leader* editor **Lasantha Wickrematunge**, was shot dead at close range on his way to work by two men on a motorcycle.

**12 January 2009:** Tamil journalist and contributor to media controlled by the LTTE, **Puniyamoorthy Sathiyamoorthy** died of injuries sustained in an artillery attack in Jaffna by the Sri Lankan army.

### Physical Harm, Threats and Intimidation

**2008:**

**19 May 2008:** **J.L. Jawfarkhan**, the editor of the weekend newspaper *Vaara Ureikal* was assaulted by a gang of three and robbed of his digital camera in election-related violence in the eastern province.

**19 May 2008:** A Sirasa TV media vehicle and a television camera were smashed by political activists on a significant Buddhist holiday in Sri Lanka. The injured crew consisted of journalist and producer **Lalith Rajapaksha**, cameraman **Chanadana Amarasinghe** and driver **P.P. Kostha**.

**29 May 2008:** **Sirimevan Kasthuriarachchi**, a senior defence reporter for *Sinhala Divaina* newspaper of the Upali Newspapers Group, was warned against reporting on matters related to defence and the Sri Lankan Army by an unknown group of individuals who forced their way into his house.

**5 June 2008:** Journalist **Kanchana Kumara Ariyadasa**, who works for a number of newspapers and radio stations as a freelancer in Dambulla, Matale district, received death threats by a ruling party politician.

**8 June 2008:** The chairperson of the state-controlled Sri Lanka Broadcasting Cooperation (SLBC), called for the death of senior journalist **Poddala Jayantha** during a breakfast radio broadcast called *Isira*. Jayantha is the general secretary of Sri Lanka Working Journalists Association (SLWJA).

**14 June 2008:** Editor of the monthly magazine *Montage* and South Asia co-coordinator of the International News Safety Institute (INSI) **Frederica Jansz** reported a death threat from an unknown caller.

**16 July 2008:** An anonymous caller threatened Sri Lanka Press Institute (SLPI) staff, in particular **Ranga Kalansuriya**, the Director General of SLPI, who reported to work that day after spending a few days working from home following death threats.

**14 July 2008:** **Meegoda Hemapala**, freelance provincial correspondent of *Giraduru Kotte*, was given death threats when his house was surrounded by a violent mob angered over his reporting of a child abuse case by police.

**7 July 2008: Chaminda Kulathunga**, provincial correspondent of Hambantota for a number of radio stations operating from Colombo, was assaulted by a local police officer and his national identity card and tape recorder seized.

**7 July 2008:** Sirasa TV court reporter **T. Jayakumar** was threatened and asked not to report a fundamental rights petition filed by a Major General against the military high command.

**18 July 2008:** Journalist **Yohan Perera** and photographer **Pradeep Dilrukshana** from the *Daily Mirror* newspaper were assaulted by Urban Development Authority (UDA) officials whilst covering the illegal demolition of hundreds of homes in Colombo. TV journalist **Dushantha Manoj** from Sirasa TV was also harassed.

**4 August 2008:** Minister of Labour, Mervyn Silva assaulted Sirasa journalist **Thushara Saliya Ranawaka** and video cameraman **Waruna Sampath** and seized their cameras in full view of police.

**15 August 2008:** Journalist **Thakshila Jayasena**, of the BBC Sinhala Service was given a death threat after he covered a protest rally by the United National Party, Sri Lanka's main opposition party.

**28 August 2008:** Students of the Colombo University Medical Faculty harassed and assaulted journalists **Yamuna Harshani** and **Janaka Galappaththi** of *Lankadeepa* daily newspaper as they were covering a story on campus. Television journalist **Dushantha Manoj**, was also assaulted after being called to the scene.

**8 September 2008:** Journalist **Radhika Devakumar** a provincial correspondent for the *Thinakaran* Tamil language daily in Batticaloa survived an attempted murder by a gang of unidentified gunmen who entered her house and shot her at point blank range.

**15 September 2008:** Four senior journalists from the Sinhala language weekly *Siyatha* resigned over the lack of editorial independence and the flagrant violation of the professional rights of journalists. The journalists included Chief Editor **Manjula Wediwardana**, Deputy Editor **Athula Withanage**, Features Editor **Jayasiri Jayasekara** and Chief Sub Editor **Sisira C. Vithange**.

**23 October 2008:** Members of paramilitary groups linked to the Eelam People's Democratic Party (EPDP) disrupted the delivery of the daily newspaper *Uthayan* and prevented staff from leaving their homes.

**4 November 2008:** Government authorities ordered the state-controlled TV station, Sri Lanka Rupavahini Corporation to stop a live TV programme related to freedom of expression in Sri Lanka.

**25 November 2008:** An unidentified caller threatened the family of B. Jasiharan, a publisher arrested along with journalist Tissainayagam under Sri Lanka's Prevention of Terrorism Act. The caller demanded a ransom to ensure Jasiharan's safety in prison, and warned of murder within three days if the payment was not made.

**29 November 2008:** Eravur police officers beat journalist **Mohamed Hussein** from Kalmunai media house with batons because he was covering the suddenly imposed dawn to dusk curfew in Batticaloa.

**7 December 2008:** Political cartoonist **Winnie Hettigoda** received repeated threats over the phone regarding a cartoon published in the weekly *Lanka*.

**9 December 2008:** **Dinesh Weerawansa** and **Pramod de Silva**, two editors of the state-run *Sunday Observer* and *Daily News* respectively were removed from their positions after the publication of inflammatory remarks by Sri Lanka's army chief.

**2009:**

**6 January 2009:** A heavily armed group of masked men broke into the MTV/MBC offices in Pannipitiya, lighting fires and destroying property.

**23 January 2009:** The editor of the privately-owned weekly *Rivira*, **Upali Tennakoon**, and his wife were attacked and wounded by four men on motorcycles as they drove to work near Colombo.

**1 February 2009:** Defence Secretary Gotabaya Rajapaksa accused three international news organisations, **CNN**, **Al-Jazeera** and the **BBC** of partisan reporting on the Sri Lankan civil war situation. The BBC Tamil and Sinhala broadcast services operated by the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation (SLBC) reported over 25 instances of interference in content, in violation of the agreed contractual terms.

**24 March 2009:** A hand grenade was thrown into the offices of the Jaffna-based national Tamil language daily, *Uthayan*.

## Abduction and Detention

**2008:**

**22 May 2008:** **Keith Noyahr**, deputy editor and defence analyst of the English weekly *The Nation*, was abducted and assaulted. He returned home early on 23 May, after enduring severe physical harm.

**14 November 2008:** **A.R. Vaama Loshan**, 32, General Manager of the Tamil language Vетри FM Radio was detained for eight days by the Terrorism Investigations Division (TID).

**2009:**

**25 February 2009:** **N. Vidyatharan**, editor of the Tamil language newspaper *Sudar Oli* was detained by police in a "kidnap-style" operation without warrant or explanation. Vidyatharan had been interrogated for over 8 hours on February 16 about his articles on civilian casualties in the conflict in Sri Lanka's north. His bank transactions and telephone call records over many months were minutely scrutinised. Vidyatharan was released on April 24 after a Colombo court found that there was no evidence implicating him in unlawful activities.

**March 11 2009:** Veteran journalist and media adviser to Sri Lanka's principal opposition party **Dammika Ganganath Dissanayake** was abducted by armed men who interrogated him about a book he allegedly wrote criticising the Sri Lankan President. He was released the following morning after denying knowledge of the book.





The IFJ is a non-governmental, non-profit organisation that promotes coordinated international action to defend press freedom and social justice through the development of strong, free and independent trade unions of journalists. IFJ Asia-Pacific coordinates IFJ activities in the Asia-Pacific region. The IFJ works closely with the United Nations, particularly UNESCO, the United Nations OHCHR, WIPO and the ILO, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the European Union, the Council for Europe and with a range of international trade union and freedom of expression organisations. The IFJ mandate covers both professional and industrial interests of journalists.

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