



April 1, 2008

To IFJ Asia-Pacific affiliates and friends,

Welcome to IFJ Asia-Pacific's monthly e-bulletin. The next bulletin will be sent on **Thursday, May 1, 2008**, and contributions from affiliates are most welcome. To contribute, email ifj@ifj-asia.org

Please distribute this bulletin widely among colleagues in the media.

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1. "Stop the War on Journalists" Global Day of Action for Sri Lanka

About 40 press freedom and civil society organisations have already signed onto the IFJ's campaign to "Stop the War on Journalists in Sri Lanka", which was launched on March 28. The first step in the campaign was to send a joint letter to Sri Lanka's President, Mahinda Rajapaksa, demanding an end to attacks on and intimidation of journalists and calling for government officials and local authorities to respect freedom of the press and the rights of journalists to conduct their work in safety. More than 23 serious incidents involving verbal and physical violence, particularly against staff members of the state broadcaster, Sri Lanka Rupavahini Corporation (SLRC), have been recorded this year. The IFJ and its affiliates in Sri Lanka are organising a **Global Day of Action for Thursday, April 10**. A reminder to participate will be sent out soon.

All IFJ affiliates and partners are requested to support the campaign by:



- Sending letters of protest to President Rajapaksa through local Sri Lankan embassies.
- Sending letters to your home governments seeking support to protect media in Sri Lanka.
- Displaying the "Stop the War on Journalists in Sri Lanka" image as part of your actions to support journalists in Sri Lanka, for example, on your website, during rallies and in the press at any opportunity.

For more information or to tell us about your planned actions, email ifj@ifj-asia.org

2. Get Ready for World Press Freedom Day

In just over one month, May 3, press freedom and human rights organisations will conduct events to mark World Press Freedom Day. The IFJ encourages all affiliates, friends and colleagues to organise and participate in local and international activities to promote the international day of action to promote press freedom around the world. In Australia, for example, the Walkley Foundation for Journalism and the Media Entertainment & Arts Alliance will host Australia's annual Press Freedom Dinner, where journalists and media workers gather to reaffirm the media's independence and commitment to press freedom. The 2007-08 IFJ *South Asia Press Freedom*



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Report and the 2008 Alliance Press Freedom Report will be launched in Australia at the event. Dinner guests also will be asked to support the Alliance Safety and Solidarity Fund.

For more information, visit <http://www.alliance.org.au/pressfreedom/>

3. IFJ Calls for Fresh Start in Pakistan

An IFJ press freedom mission to Pakistan from March 13 to 17, with the support of the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ), gained significant ground in calling for an end to government-imposed restrictions on media. Mission delegates met the co-leader of the Pakistan People's Party, Ali Zardari, and the President, Pervez Musharraf, to discuss the urgent need for media reform after a tumultuous year during which repressive media restrictions were imposed under emergency rule. Zardari, the widower of assassinated opposition leader Benazir Bhutto, accepted a media reform strategy proposed by the mission delegates and committed to improve Pakistan's media landscape as a priority of the new coalition government. The IFJ-PFUJ strategy calls for decent working conditions for journalists, official recognition of the right of unions to negotiate on behalf of journalists, implementation of the Wage Board Award, media self-regulation and an ethical journalism program. IFJ General Secretary Aidan White paid tribute to the courage and actions of the PFUJ and Pakistan's media community in defending freedom of the media. The mission was followed by a two-day IFJ training workshop on media rights monitoring, attended by about 70 journalists.

For more information, visit www.pfuj.info or www.ifj-asia.org

4. China Reneges on Pledge as Journalists Forced Out of Tibet

Authorities in China clamped down on media in Tibet after protests in Tibet's capital, Lhasa, on March 14. After violent clashes between Chinese authorities and Tibetan protesters, police ordered foreign journalists out of Tibet and areas in Gansu and Qinghai provinces on March 16. China's authorities periodically blocked several websites including CNN, BBC and YouTube. The IFJ has received reports that authorities have permitted selected foreign journalists to enter Lhasa from March 26, but only on arrangement with the provincial government. The restrictions imposed on journalists and reportage of events in Tibet directly contradict China's commitment in its "Service Guide for Foreign Media Coverage of the Beijing Olympic Games and the Preparatory Period", issued in January 2007, which states that journalists will be assured of freedom of movement up to and during the Beijing Olympic Games in August. The IFJ campaign for a Democratic Media Culture in China continues to monitor media rights in the lead-up to the Olympics.

For more information, visit the IFJ's China campaign page ([click here](#)) and watch out for the IFJ China e-Bulletin to be released on April 8.

5. Human Rights of Detained Afghan Journalists Abused

Serious concerns are held for four Afghan journalists held in detention. Sayed Parvez Kambakhsh, 23, is sentenced to death for blasphemy on allegations that he downloaded and distributed anti-Islamic material from the internet. His sentence was handed down at a closed trial in which he was denied legal representation. Ghows Zelmay, a former journalist, is being held without charge after he was accused of publishing a Dari translation of the Qur'an. According to IFJ associates in Afghanistan, the conditions of Zelmay's prison cell are appalling. Ali Muhaqiq Nasab, editor of a women's rights magazine in Afghanistan, was reportedly arrested in Iran on March 4 and continues to be held without charge by Iranian officials. Nasab's wife has been refused the right to visit or talk to him via telephone and he has had no access to Afghanistan's embassy in Iran. Jawed Ahmad, 22, a journalist for Canadian Television (CTV), is being held without charge at Bagram Air Base. He is being detained by United States military forces after he was arrested at Kandahar airport for



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reportedly having contacts with local Taliban leaders and possessing a video containing Taliban materials.

Meanwhile, the IFJ joins its associates, the Afghan Independent Journalists' Association (AIJA) and the Committee to Protect Afghan Journalists (CPAJ), in expressing sincere condolences to the family, friends and colleagues of Abdul Haq Wala, editor-in-chief of the English daily *Kabul Times*, who passed away last week.

For more information, visit www.ifj-asia.org

6. Journalist in the Philippines Receives Death Threat

Targeted attacks continue to plague the media community in the Philippines, with a death threat made to a tabloid newspaper reporter on March 5. According to IFJ affiliate the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines (NUJP), Jet Sinacruz, a reporter for *Abante*, received a threatening text message warning him to enjoy his birthday celebrations as they would be his last. There are concerns that Sinacruz may be targeted for a series of articles he wrote in 2007 about alleged corruption by city councillors and the rising incidence of car theft. In a more positive move, however, the Supreme Court has issued a writ of amparo (a protection order) on behalf of Mindoro Oriental community journalist Nilo Baculo. Baculo, a former host of radio show "Isumbong mo kay Ka Nilo" and publisher of local tabloid *Traveler's News*, had been targeted for exposing alleged corruption. While the writ is an encouraging sign that the judiciary is prepared to act, more than 80 murders of journalists in the Philippines remain unresolved and inactive.

For more information, visit www.ifj-asia.org or www.nujp.org

7. Media Monitoring Expands in India

The IFJ will hold media monitoring workshops in Srinagar (Jammu and Kashmir) and Raipur (Chhattisgarh) in April, following a workshop in Guwahati (Assam) in February. The workshops, arranged in partnership with IFJ affiliates the Indian Journalists Union (IJU), the National Union of Journalists (India) and All India Newspaper Employees Federation (AINEF), as well as local media organisations, support the development and expansion of networks to monitor and report on media rights violations in conflict zones. Participants will also learn advocacy skills to highlight abuses of media rights and safety. A fourth workshop is expected to be held in Bangladesh in May as part of an overall South Asia regional project, supported by UNESCO's International Programme for the Development of Communication.

Meanwhile, the National Union of Journalists (India) has condemned moves by authorities in China to force foreign correspondents to leave Tibet, which shares a border with India.

For more information, visit www.ifj-asia.org

8. New Leaders Welcomed in Taiwan and India

In Taiwan, Chen Hsiang-lan has been appointed President of the Association of Taiwan Journalists (ATJ). Chen is a senior journalist with the Chinese Television System in Taiwan. The ATJ's Executive Committee also nominated 15 new board members and three board supervisors. In addition, journalists writing for online media are now eligible to apply for ATJ membership.

In India, the National Union of Journalists (India) has appointed P.K. Roy as President and Atmdeep as Secretary-General. The IFJ acknowledges and thanks the union's former President, Dr. K.N. Trikha, for his longstanding commitment to press freedom and journalists' rights in India. Dr. Trikha has taken up a position as the Coordinator of International Affairs at the NUJ(I).



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Latest IFJ Asia Pacific protests

March 2008

[Sri Lanka: Stop the War on Journalists in Sri Lanka says World Press Freedom Community - 27/03/2008](#)
[China: IFJ Urges China to Abide by Free Media Commitments - 27/03/2008](#)
[Sri Lanka: Sri Lanka Minister Verbally Abuses Journalists - 25/03/2008](#)
[Afghanistan: IFJ Deeply Concerned for Afghanistan Journalists' Rights In Detention - 20/03/2008](#)
[Sri Lanka: Three Journalists Released as Military Man Appointed to SLRC - 20/03/2008](#)
[China: IFJ Condemns Trial of Human Rights Activist in China - 19/03/2008](#)
[Sri Lanka: Family of Threatened Journalist Seriously Injured in Attack in Sri Lanka - 17/03/2008](#)
[China: Information Clampdown in Tibet Fuels IFJ Concerns for Safety - 17/03/2008](#)
[Pakistan: "Threat to Life" of Journalists in Karachi Sparks IFJ Call for Urgent Action over Political Intimidation - 16/03/2008](#)
[Pakistan: Musharraf Backs IFJ Calls for Change As Journalists Demand a Fresh Start for Media in Pakistan - 15/03/2008](#)
[Sri Lankan Government Urged to Act on SLRC Attacks - 14/03/2008](#)
[Pakistan: Pakistan's New Government Pledges to IFJ - Media Freedom Will Be Secure in "100 Days of Reform" - 14/03/2008](#)
[Pakistan: Call for Fresh Start for Media Freedom in Pakistan](#)
[Sri Lanka: Journalists Hauled In for Questioning in Sri Lanka - 11/03/2008](#)
[China: Journalists and Human Rights Activists Warned to Remain Silent in China - 11/03/2008](#)
[Sri Lanka: Sri Lanka Needs Independent Free Media Policy - 11/03/2008](#)
[Afghanistan: Women's Magazine Editor from Afghanistan Arrested in Iran - 11/03/2008](#)
[Sri Lanka: Women Get Short Shrift in Sri Lanka's Media - 08/03/2008](#)
[Pakistan: Two Journalists Kidnapped in Pakistan's Troubled Baluchistan - 07/03/2008](#)
[Pakistan: Black Day to Fight for Media Freedom in Pakistan - 06/03/2008](#)
[Sri Lanka: Another SLRC Employee Attacked in Sri Lanka - 06/03/2008](#)
[Nepal: Editor of Newspaper Threatened in Nepal - 06/03/2008](#)
[Philippines: Journalist Receives Birthday Death Threat in the Philippines - 05/03/2008](#)
[Afghanistan: Journalists Prepare for 2009 Elections in Afghanistan - 05/03/2008](#)
[Pakistan: Journalist Killed, Another Injured in Bomb Attack in Paksitan - 04/03/2008](#)
[China: Foreign Journalist Detained in Beijing - 03/03/3008](#)
[Sri Lanka: Threats Against Journalists After Government Minister's Brawl - 03/03/2008](#)
[India: IFJ Condemns Ban on Newspaper, Attack on Delivery Van - 29/02/2008](#)
[Nepal: Threats on Journalists Grow from All Sides of Conflict - 29/02/2008](#)

If affiliates have any information on a press freedom violation, please make sure you immediately contact staff at IFJ Asia-Pacific so action can be taken.

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