

P
R
E
S
S
F
R
E
E
D
O
M

Press Freedom Monitoring and Advocacy in Latin America and the Caribbean

Austin, Texas—September 2007

Forum organized by the
**Media Program of the
Open Society Foundation**
and the
**Knight Center for Journalism
in the Americas**
at the University of Texas at Austin

Press Freedom Monitoring and Advocacy in Latin America and the Caribbean

Austin, Texas–September 2007

Forum organized by the
Media Program of the Open Society Foundation
and the
Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas
at the University of Texas at Austin

Media Program



OPEN SOCIETY FOUNDATION



Copyright © 2008 by the Open Society Foundation.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form by any means without the prior permission of the publisher.

Press Freedom Monitoring and Advocacy in Latin America and the Caribbean

Conference report and commentary by Fernando J. Ruiz, professor of journalism, Austral University, Argentina.

Forum organized by the Media Program of the Open Society Foundation and the Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas at the University of Texas at Austin.

The analyses and conclusions presented in this report are not necessarily endorsed by the Open Society Foundation or the Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas. This report represents the independent opinions of the author and the forum participants.

Open Society Foundation
Media Program
Cambridge House, 5th floor
100 Cambridge Grove Street
Hammersmith
London W6 0LE
United Kingdom
Gordana Jankovic, Director
Stewart Chisholm, Senior Program Manager
Miguel Castro, Program Coordinator

Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas
School of Journalism
Communication Building A
University of Texas at Austin
Austin, TX 78712 USA
Rosental Alves, Director
Dean Graber, Program Manager
Jesus Alejandro Pérez, Research Assistant

Design and layout by Judit Kovács | Createch Ltd.

Contents

Abbreviations and Forum Participants	5
Introduction	11
Description and Analysis of the Meeting	15
i. Low Levels of Solidarity Among Journalists, especially in High-Risk Zones	15
ii. The Lack of a Culture of Protection Among the Media and Journalists	18
iii. Evaluation of Monitoring	20
iv. A New Agenda for Freedom of Expression	23
v. How to Improve Advocacy	30
Conclusion	37
Notes	39

Abbreviations

ABRAJI	Brazilian Association of Investigative Journalists
ADC	Association of Civil Rights–Argentina
AMARC	World Association of Community Radio
ANP–Bolivia	National Association of the Press
ANP–Peru	National Association of Journalists
APES	Association of Journalists of El Salvador
APU	Association of Uruguayan Journalists
CEPET	Center for Journalism and Public Ethic
CERIGUA	Center for News Reporting on Guatemala
CESO-IFJ	Solidarity Center–International Federation of Journalists Colombia
CNP	National Press Council–Panama
CPJ	Committee to Protect Journalists
FOPEA	Forum of Argentinean Journalists
IACHR	Inter-American Commission of Human Rights
IAPA	Inter-American Press Association
IFEX	International Freedom of Expression eXchange
IFJ	International Federation of Journalists
INSI	International News Safety Institute
IPLEX	Press and Freedom of Expression Institute–Costa Rica
IPYS	Press and Society Institute
OSI	Open Society Institute
PRENDE	Press and Democracy–Mexico
RSF	Reporters Without Borders

Forum Participants

Silvina Acosta

Trust for the Americas

sacosta@oas.org • www.trustfortheamericas.org

Ileana Alamilla

CERIGUA—Centro de Reportes Informativos sobre Guatemala, Guatemala

iliaalamilla@hotmail.com • www.cerigua.org

Ignacio Alvarez

Relator Especial para la Libertad de Expresión—Comisión Interamericana de Derechos Humanos

ialvarez@oas.org • www.cidh.oas.org/relatoria

Rosental Alves

Centro Knight para el Periodismo en las Américas, EEUU

rosentalves@mail.utexas.edu • www.knightcenter.utexas.edu

Ana Arana

Journalist, Knight International Journalism Fellow in Mexico

aranaana@gmail.com

Olga Barrio

Consejo Nacional de Periodismo, Panamá

direccionejecutiva@cnppanama.com • www.cnppanama.org

Vonda Brown

Programa para América Latina del Open Society Institute, EEUU

vbrown@osi-dc.org • www.soros.org

Jose Buendía

PRENDE—Fundación Prensa y Democracia, México

jbuendia@prende.org.mx • www.prende.org.mx

Joan Caivano

Inter American Dialogue, EEUU

JCaivano@thedialogue.org • www.thedialogue.org

Andrés Cañizalez

RSF—Reporters Sans Frontières, Venezuela

acanizalez@yahoo.com • www.rsf.org

Miguel Castro

Open Society Foundation Media Program
miguel.castro@osf-eu.org • www.soros.org

Stewart Chisholm

Open Society Foundation Media Program
Stewart.chisholm@osf-eu.org • www.soros.org

Joseph Guyler Delva

SOS Journalistes, Haïti
jguylerdelva@yahoo.fr

Laura Diniz

ABRAJI–Associação Brasileira de Jornalismo Investigativo, Brasil
Laura@abraji.org.br • www.abraji.org.br

Julie Dowds

NED–The National Endowment for Democracy, EEUU
julied@ned.org • www.ned.org

Tala Dowlatshahi

RSF–Reporters Without Borders
tdowlats@hotmail.com • www.rsf.org

Wesley Gibbings

ACM–Association of Caribbean Media Workers
wgibbings@yahoo.com • www.acmediaworkers.com

Gustavo Gomez

AMARC–Asociación Mundial de Radios Comunitarias
gusgomez@chasque.net • www.amarc.org

Dean Graber

Centro Knight para el Periodismo en las Américas, EEUU
deangraber@mail.utexas.edu • www.knightcenter.utexas.edu

Sheila Gruner

IFEX–International Freedom of Expression eXchange, Canadá
gruner@ifex.org • www.ifex.org

Gordana Jankovic

Open Society Foundation Media Program
gordana.jankovic@osf-eu.org • www.soros.org

Rohan Jayasekera

Index on Censorship

rohan@indexoncensorship.org • www.indexonline.org

Nadine Jurrat

The Rory Peck Trust

nadine@rorypecktrust.org • www.rorypecktrust.org

Zuliana Lainez

ANP–Asociación Nacional de Periodistas del Perú, Perú

anp@amauta.rcp.net.pe • www.anp.org.pe

Edison Lanza

APU–Asociación de la Prensa Uruguaya, Uruguay

elanza@busqueda.com.uy • www.apu.org.uy

Carlos Lauria

CPJ–Committee to Protect Journalists

clauria@cpj.org • www.cpj.org

Eduardo Marquez

Centro de Solidaridad de la Federación Internacional de Periodistas (CESO–FIP),
Colombia

edumago2000@yahoo.com • www.fipcolombia.com

Lenina Meza

Red Probidad, Honduras

leninameza@hotmail.com • www.probidad.org

Adela Navarro

Revista ZETA, Mexico

adela@zetatijuana.com • www.zetatijuana.com

Susana Oviedo

FOPEP–Foro del Periodismo Paraguayo, Paraguay

soviedo@uhora.com.py • www.fopep.org.py

George Papagiannis

Internews, EEUU

www.internews.org

Alejandro Pérez

Centro Knight para el Periodismo en las Américas, EEUU

www.knightcenter.utexas.edu

Dario Ramirez

Article 19–México, México

dario@article19.org • www.article19.org

Luisa Rangel

INSI–International News Safety Institute (América Latina), Uruguay

lulet2001@yahoo.com • www.newssafety.com

Leonarda Reyes

CEPET–Centro de Periodismo y Ética Pública, México

leonare@cepet.org • www.cepet.org

Fernando Ruiz

CADAL–Centro para la Apertura y el Desarrollo de América Latina,

Universidad Austral, Argentina

fjr1963@gmail.com • www.cadal.org

Gregorio Salazar

FIP–Federación Internacional de Periodistas

(International Federation of Journalists–IFJ), Latin America

goyosalazarm@hotmail.com • www.ifj.org

Daniel Santoro

FOPEA–Foro de Periodismo Argentino, Argentina

dsantoro@clarin.com • www.fopea.org

Helga Serrano

Centro Libertad de Prensa, Puerto Rico

hserrano@elnuevodia.com • www.centrolibertadprensa.org

Brisa Maya Solis

CENCOS–Centro Nacional de Comunicación Social, México

direccion@cencos.org • www.cencos.org

Marguerite Sullivan

NED’s Center for International Media Assistance, EEUU

marguerites@ned.org • www.ned.org/about/cima

Ricardo Trotti

SIP–Sociedad Interamericana de Prensa, EEUU

rtrotti@sipiapa.org • www.sipiapa.org

Ricardo Uceda

IPYS–Instituto Prensa y Sociedad, Perú

dir@ipys.org • www.ipys.org

Eduardo Ulibarri

IPLEX–Instituto de Prensa y Libertad de Expresión, Costa Rica
eulibbarri@amnet.co.cr • www.iplexcr.org

Yanina Valdivieso

FLIP–Fundación para la Libertad de Prensa, Colombia
investigacion@flip.org.co • www.flip.org.co

Serafín Valencia

APES, Asociación de Periodistas de El Salvador, El Salvador
serval40@hotmail.com • www.apes.org.sv

Rodrigo Villarán

IPYS–Instituto Prensa y Sociedad, Perú
rvillaran@ipys.org • www.ipys.org

Jose Carlos Zamora

Knight Foundation, EEUU
zamora@knightfdn.org • www.knightfoundation.org

Juan Javier Zeballos

ANP–Asociación Nacional de la Prensa, Bolivia
jjzeballos24@yahoo.es • www.anpbolivia.com

Introduction

Open Society Foundation Media Program

The Open Society Foundation's Media Program, in conjunction with the Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas at the University of Texas at Austin, gathered together nearly 50 press freedom practitioners working on Latin America and the Caribbean in the autumn of 2007. This was the first time that so many groups from this region had come together to discuss their work, share their approaches, and consider possibilities for future collaboration.

The Media Program supports activities across the globe that monitor and defend journalists' rights in order to foster the development of independent media and democratic societies. In Latin America, the Media Program has responded to media repression and censorship by engaging in activities to protect journalists, monitor press freedom violations, and advocate for reform. Partnering with the Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas, this meeting was organized to encourage cooperation and exchange of experiences among journalists and press freedom advocates to identify media repression trends and develop coherent advocacy strategies to fight them.

On average, even by the most conservative estimates, at least three journalists around the world have been killed every month for the past fifteen years for practicing their profession. Other types of physical attacks and direct threats have also increased, as have more subtle forms of indirect censorship such as the misuse of government advertising and the influence of concentrated media ownership on journalistic independence and diversity of viewpoints in the press.

In many ways, Latin America can be seen as a microcosm of these global developments. Mexico has now outpaced Colombia as the most dangerous place to be a journalist in Latin America, and one of the most dangerous places in the world for reporters and editors. This is largely due to the high number of attacks on journalists attempting to cover increasing drug trafficking and the government's inability to investigate these crimes. While no killings have been reported in Colombia over the past year, some press freedom groups attribute increasing self-censorship as the real reason behind the decrease.

Throughout the continent, the threat of attacks against journalists remains a leading cause of concern. Compounding the problem are inadequate labor protections for journalists and new, more subtle forms of indirect censorship such as governments or non-state actors punishing targeted media outlets by withholding advertising and/or conducting tax audits. In response to these developments, the Media Program has made support for freedom of expression monitoring and advocacy efforts a key priority for its activities in the region.

The number of organizations engaged in monitoring attacks against journalists as well as providing mechanisms to protect them has grown. The International Freedom of Expression eXchange (IFEX), a clearinghouse of freedom of expression organizations has seen an increase in its membership from less than a dozen in the early 1990s to more than 80 members by the end of 2007. The number of organizations engaged in reporting press freedom violations in Latin America has also increased in recent years to include not only international press freedom groups such as the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) and Reporters Sans Frontières (RSF), but also regional organizations such as the Inter-American Press Association (IAPA), the Instituto Prensa y Sociedad (IPYS), and national groups in countries such as Argentina, Mexico, and Peru. In addition, many associations of journalists in the region have taken on the task of reporting on violations, albeit often on a voluntary basis with few financial resources at their disposal.

This document is a summary of the meeting and recommendations for further collaboration written by professor Fernando Ruiz¹; it includes suggestions for adapting and sharing methodology on reporting press freedom violations, developing more comprehensive programs to address attacks, and examining ways to improve advocacy and protection programs for journalists. It is the hope of the conference conveners that coordinating efforts such as these will continue and occur more frequently. Events such as the Austin Forum can work to increase support for press freedom work in the region, and protect the journalists who risk their lives bringing information to the public and making the societies in which they live more transparent, accountable, and democratic.

Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas

Since 2003, leaders of about two dozen organizations dedicated to the training of journalists and the improvement of the quality of journalism in Latin America and the Caribbean have participated in the University of Texas at Austin's annual meeting called "The Austin Forum on Journalism in the Americas," where they exchanged experiences, learned from each other, and attended seminars and workshops.

In September 2007, most of the forum's attendees stayed in Austin for another two days to participate—along with leaders of many other organizations—in an even bigger event, this time to discuss issues related to "Freedom of Expression Monitoring and Advocacy in the Americas." The meeting, organized by the Open Society Foundation's Media Program and the Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas, gave about 50 leaders of freedom of expression organizations in the hemisphere an unprecedented opportunity to learn from each other and combine forces to seek solutions for some of the main problems they face, especially in their work monitoring press freedom violations and advocating for better defense of journalists' rights. The discussions occurred in the same style that has worked so well for the Austin Forum, based on the active participation of all the attendees.

The Austin Forum is one of the main programs of the Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas, which was created in 2002 at the University of Texas' School of Journalism, thanks to a generous grant from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation. Since its inception, the Knight Center has worked with thousands of journalists from Latin America and the Caribbean with the goal of developing professional training projects to elevate the standards of journalism in their countries.

The Knight Center, however, has gone beyond the "training as usual" tradition of media development programs. Instead of concentrating only on improving journalism skills, it has always coupled training with organizational capacity building, by helping journalists to create or strengthen their own local, independent, and self-sustained organizations. The Knight Center has helped to create a new generation of journalists' organizations in the hemisphere. And the Austin Forum has become a network that promotes communication and synergy among those organizations, with very positive results.

Although most of the Austin Forum member organizations have been created with a clear focus on professional training and other projects to improve the quality of journalism, the critical situation surrounding freedom of expression and particularly press freedom in the region forced many of them to adjust their activities to include also monitoring and advocacy. How could they remain within the confines of their training efforts, offering seminars and workshops, while seeing the deterioration of the environment where journalists had to apply what they learned? The organizations had to combine those original objectives of professional development with activities to monitor and denounce constant violations of their rights to

freedom of expression and freedom of the press. Some organizations have become involved in advocacy, launching campaigns against the use of violence against journalists and calling for more access to public information.

That has been the case, for example, of the members of the Austin Forum that come from the three largest Latin American countries: Brazil's ABRAJI (Brazilian Association for Investigative Journalism); Mexico's CEPET (Center for Journalism and Public Ethics); and Argentina's FOPEA (Argentine Journalism Forum). They were all formally established with help from the Knight Center to carry out projects intended to improve the quality of journalism in their countries. However, they ended up working, for example, as the sources of frequent alerts about violations of press freedom, as participants of the global network of IFEX (the International Freedom of Expression eXchange, the main global clearing house of denunciations related to Freedom of Expression).

But serious problems for freedom of expression have been endemic throughout the region and not only in those three larger countries. From Northern Mexico to the Argentine Patagonia, in the extreme tip of the continent, journalists have encountered serious obstacles to their work, despite the fact that the last two decades have been marked by an unprecedented and long period of peace and democracy in Latin America. The two days of deliberations of the Austin conference on freedom of expression show a complex web of problems that affect freedom of expression in Latin America. The following pages contain not only a summary of those deliberations, but relevant analysis of the problems faced by journalists and other civil society actors who are engaged in the construction of open and democratic societies in the Americas.

Description and Analysis of the Meeting

During the weekend of September 22–23, 2007, at the Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas at the University of Texas at Austin, certain themes regarding freedom of the press in Latin America emerged that transcended the different panels and debates. The best way to summarize everything said during those two days is to describe it through a dialogue, rather than in a chronological description of the panels and presentations. The order in which issues appear in this document does not suggest an order of importance; instead, it tries to reflect the order in which the issues were raised during the discussion. At the end of each topic the document's author was asked to provide his personal analysis of the discussion.

i. The Low Levels of Solidarity Among Journalists, Especially in High-Risk Zones

The most notable, and current, testimony to journalistic courage in Latin American media came from Adela Navarro Bello who received the 2007 International Press Freedom Award from the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) and manages the weekly publication *Zeta* in Tijuana, Mexico.² Panelists Ricardo Trotti (IAPA) and Carlos Lauria (CPJ), pointed out that Mexico has become the most dangerous country for journalists in Latin America. They emphasized that violence is no longer concentrated in the northern border and that it has spread throughout the country.

Navarro Bello (*Zeta*) commented on the absence of solidarity among the media and journalists in Tijuana, as well as in most of Mexico's metropolitan areas. She pointed out that the Declaration of Hermosillo—in which editors along the northern border had agreed to simultaneously publish investigations on drug trafficking—could not continue because the

editors were unable to agree on which dates were the most appropriate to publish their joint articles. At this point, Jose Buendía (PRENDE) noted the absence of an editorial and commercial policy to confront drug trafficking, and said that important newspapers in Michoacán, Mexico, had even sold advertising to illegal entities. “They told me that was their publication’s commercial policy,” Buendía said. He then added that in the Mexican state of Guerrero, some local media are publishing “narco-messages” among the cartels. Lauria (CPJ) also pointed out that in Mexico, organized crime buys influence in the media with money. Eduardo Marquez (CESO-IFJ) said that in Colombia there exists more solidarity among media, and cited the Manizales Project.³

Trotti (IAPA) mentioned the need for initiatives inspired by the Arizona Project,⁴ which IAPA used as a model to promote similar projects in Colombia, Mexico, and Peru. Trotti (IAPA) and Joseph Guyler Delva (SOS Journalistes Haiti) proposed, as a model for journalists, the reactions of support that police officers often have when a colleague is the victim of an attack. Trotti (IAPA) said that the lack of solidarity in the region was evident. Juan Javier Zeballos (ANP-Bolivia) suggested that solidarity should come from organizations such as the ones present at the meeting, and recommended issuing joint declarations.

Another dimension of solidarity was also discussed: the participation of unions and/or professional organizations in each country. Marquez (CESO-IFJ) pointed out that an “organization is the best protection mechanism that journalists in Colombia could have.” An organization with more than a thousand members was recently created in Colombia, with 24 affiliates federated in that country’s departments. At the same time, Daniel Santoro (FOPEA) noted difficulties due to politicization of the unions and their mistrust of professional organizations. “There is a model of the professional journalist that sharply contrasts with the model of the journalist that prioritizes political and social militancy,” Santoro said. He added that these differences can affect the necessary solidarity among organizations.

Gregorio Salazar (IFJ), who advocates for a regional perspective in association building, proposed launching a campaign to promote the value of solidarity among Latin American journalists noting that “we have seen cases of colleagues taken to courts or seated before prosecutors, but it would seem that no one cares—not even their co-workers. They are alone.” Luisa Rangel (INSI) also recommended coordinating, at the very least, safety measures with other media.⁵ Navarro Bello (*Zeta*) told Rangel (INSI) that in Tijuana there isn’t any coordination of safety measures among the local media.⁶

Analysis

The recent history of Latin American journalism contains some notable cases that try to break with the tradition of low solidarity among the media. The three initiatives that IAPA promoted—inspired by the Arizona Project in the United States—mark a very interesting and promising path: the Hermosillo Declaration⁷ (Mexico), the Manizales Project (Colombia), and the Pucallpa Project (Peru). Their results varied but the initiatives were a positive start. There is a fourth initiative in Colombia called Alliance of the Media, in which the most important media in the country joined together to investigate sensitive topics such as the paramilitary outfits throughout Colombia. They managed to include all forms of media—from radio stations to magazines and newspapers—which are typically competitors. There is also an informal coordination of safety measures along Mexico's northern border. Journalists that cover the police beat developed safety practices such as not going out to report after 10 p.m., covering their beats in the company of other journalists, visiting the location where an event took place only after the authorities have already arrived, and trying not to ask too openly about the connection between a story and organized crime.

Journalists who live in places where institutions are stronger must get involved in the defense of journalists working in high-risk areas. A useful metaphor is to think of the journalist working in a high-risk area as inside of a well, and the journalist working in a safer area as outside of the well. The former would not be able to get out of the well without the help from the latter. This is why journalists in the most dangerous areas of Mexico should first receive the active support of journalists in the safer capital. There, journalists have more possibilities to advance standards of information than those located in areas besieged by organized crime where it is easier for drug dealers to attack smaller newspapers in the interior of the country. For instance, on February 7, 2006, gunmen terrorized journalists by shooting at the offices of *El Mañana* in Nuevo Laredo, thus diminishing the joint efforts of editors in northern states working on the Phoenix Project.⁸ However, criminals would not attack the larger, more metropolitan papers in the capital, such as *Reforma* or *Jornada*, and if they did, the government's reaction would have been completely different.

It is also important to get journalists along the southern border of the United States involved. Drug trafficking works with as much efficiency on one side of the border as on the other—the organization that effectively transports the drugs from Mexico works with similar efficiency inside the United States to receive and distribute the drugs. Journalists on both sides should find ways to support each other and

collaborate on information gathering and preparing articles. However, journalism in the United States does not seem to have a strong focus on the coverage of drug trafficking within its territory. In fact, using the Pulitzer Prize in Journalism as an approximate indicator of thematic interests, the only award given to an article that covered drug trafficking within the United States was won by *Newsday* in 1973.

A second dimension in professional solidarity that should be encouraged is to promote—within universities and newsrooms—the idea that part of every journalist’s duty is to support journalism protection organizations. This is something that Javier Dario Restrepo often notes in his workshops, but something which has not yet been widely undertaken by professionals.

It is also necessary to understand that risk zones for journalists are also areas usually characterized by low professional standards, and that one of the traits of these low standards is that professional organizations or unions do not function or are non-existent. Once again: as professional organizations in each country grow stronger, not only will they be capable of better protecting their colleagues, but they will also be capable of better training them. As Rosental Alves (Knight Center) said, “the two meetings in Austin during the week go hand in hand—protection and training are interrelated.”⁹

A third dimension of solidarity is the regional aspect, which also concerns local organizations. The representatives of international organizations (RSF, CPJ), and IAPA were the only ones to touch upon Cuba, and some others mentioned the situation in Venezuela. There is a strong ideological restraint that makes it difficult for many organizations to clearly express their views about freedom of the press violations in these countries. Cuban and Venezuelan journalists are going through a difficult time and also need solidarity from the organizations in the rest of Latin American. Moreover, condemnations of what happens in other countries could also help in preventing this from happening in your own country—when an organization alerts others to the problems facing press freedoms in one country, it also acts in favor of press freedoms in its own country.

ii. The Lack of a Culture of Protection Among the Media and Journalists

In her presentation, Navarro Bello said that the staff at the weekly newspaper *Zeta* has tried to both protect themselves individually and pursue investigative journalism by adopting safety measures such as signing investigative reports on organized crime with the byline “Zeta Investigations.” As the successor to *Zeta* founder Jesús Blancornelas, who died in 2006, Navarro Bello has been in charge of continuing the paper’s journalistic operations. Blancornelas sur-

vived an assassination attempt in 1997 and was under the constant protection of 14 officers from the Mexican army until his death. When Jorge Hank became the mayor of Tijuana during Blancornelas' leadership, *Zeta* decided to do without the municipal guards assigned to protect the building due to the fact that Hank was, and continues to be, suspected of being involved in crimes against journalists from the weekly. Navarro Bello also refused to continue having two guards as constant escorts as two of the alleged perpetrators of the murder of one of *Zeta's* editors worked for the current mayor. Now *Zeta* uses armored cars, special walls and windows, and bullet-proof vests as protection. In response to a question from Rangel (INSI), Navarro Bello said that her staff did not have any kind of psychological assistance. The good news for *Zeta* is that advertising and circulation have grown in the last year, which means that its economic situation is more reliable, and this also suggests that its presence is important. Ileana Alamilla (CERIGUA) pointed out that several Guatemalan professionals are also afraid that the deteriorating situation in Mexico will spread to Guatemala.

Alves (Knight Center) pointed out that journalists are the only professionals that go to war without any kind of previous training, and he added that neither the media nor the journalists in the region have a culture of safety. "It has taken me four years to convince my friends in Brazil to take advantage of the training that the INSI offers," said Alves (Knight Center). Rangel (INSI) explained that they have conducted three workshops in the region (Brazil, Colombia, and Venezuela), but only a handful of the media are members of INSI. Now INSI is planning to conduct workshops in Guatemala, Haiti, Mexico, and Peru. Rangel (INSI) said that the goal is to offer preventive recommendations, training for high-risk situations, and then address the issues (psychological, family-related, etc.) that come up after being exposed to danger. She also said that it would be important to insist on concerns related to journalists' safety, and promote awareness of and compliance with resolution 1738 of the UN Security Council, concerning journalists' treatment as civilians under the Geneva Conventions, approved on December 23, 2006.¹⁰ Rangel (INSI) mentioned that every journalist must understand that he or she is largely responsible for his or her own safety, but that the outlet that the journalist works for must also help guarantee the well-being of its employees. In Latin America, only *O Globo* is a member of the INSI. The newspaper contacted the INSI when, in August 2006, the First Capital Command (PCC) kidnapped two staff members from *O Globo* and demanded the broad-casting of a propaganda video. Rangel (INSI) said that they are working on a classification of risks in Latin America so that they can better issue recommendations and prepare workshops depending on the needs of each region. She pointed out that the INSI issued a number of recommendations, put together by the Dart Center (www.dartcenter.org), for journalists in the area of the recent earthquake in Peru. The INSI also recommended a self-analysis questionnaire prepared by experts at the University of Toronto designed to help journalists who went through high-risk situations determine if they are suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. She said that journalists suffer from many emotional scars and there is almost no literature on the issue.

Analysis

Developing a culture of protection is one of the areas that has more potential for fast and easy advancement, but most media professionals and organizations have not incorporated it yet. A new generation of employment contracts is also needed, which address issues related to journalists' mental and physical safety. It is also necessary to work within the wider network of journalists with uncertain work relationships—freelance and others—who are usually the ones facing more risk-related problems. As more of these journalists join organizations, the conditions necessary for their safety will improve. Moreover, bringing journalists together for trainings on topics related to safety can contribute to encouraging solidarity among them.

iii. Evaluation of Monitoring

Several presentations and comments placed an emphasis on the uneven quality of monitoring in Latin America. Mexico and Brazil were mentioned as countries with numerous attacks against journalists but without an effective nationwide monitoring system. In Mexico, several commentators pointed out the difficulty of coordinating efficient monitoring, even among existing groups. It is widely believed that both monitoring systems and categories of violations only offer a partial view of what is occurring in the Latin American media. Several participants pointed out that it is necessary to improve the methodological tools used for monitoring and assessing violations in order to better understand what is happening. Lauria (CPJ) mentioned that in a recent mission to Michoacán he learned that there were at least 20 journalists who were the victims of brief kidnappings (*levantones*) since the beginning of the year, and that they were not mentioned among CPJ's earlier alerts as the organization was not aware of these incidents until its visit. This is an example where there are several instances of violence against journalists that are not registered by monitors. Buendia (PRENDE) mentioned the existence of a growing network of young journalists who participate in the workshops organized by PRENDE, which are also being used to build its own network for reporting violations. However, according to Alves (Knight Center), coordination between the different organizations in Mexico is proving very difficult.

It was reported that in Brazil, ABRAJI, in partnership with IPYS, is building a more efficient monitoring system. It was also noted that no systematic monitoring exists in Bolivia or Ecuador. The system is also deficient in Central America and generates contradictory information. Peru and Venezuela were cited as more efficient cases, as well as Argentina, where, according to Santoro (FOPEA), a monitoring system will be launched in late 2007.

Several participants called for greater standardization of the International Freedom of Expression eXchange's (IFEX) methodology for issuing alerts, and said that every organization—both in- and outside of the IFEX network—could use the same methodology. The group that discussed monitoring concluded that “it is necessary to work more on improving the methodology, not because it doesn't exist [IFEX, for example, has disseminated its methodology], but because it isn't followed.” The group also said that “it is necessary to improve the categories of violations.” Several participants said they needed more solid parameters to define the different types of attacks against journalists and the media. Zuliana Laínez (ANP–Peru) asked how it would be possible to measure the new types of aggression without succumbing to a body count. It was noted that it would be important to incorporate the cases of indirect censorship into the alerts—just like Ricardo Uceda (IPYS) proposed in his presentation—while always keeping in mind the complexity and level of information that is needed. In the following plenary discussion, speakers noted that it was necessary, “to do a lot of work on the methodology of the monitoring of indirect restrictions.” Both the issue of labor conditions in media companies and the actions of *poderes fácticos*—powerbrokers—should be better and more closely monitored. Edison Lanza (APU) mentioned that his organization issued an alert on a case of self-censorship because of pressures from *poderes fácticos* involving the main local newspaper, *El País*.¹¹

Faced with these urgencies, it was considered important to move quickly, “in informing what is already known, what has been investigated, and explicitly saying that there is an ongoing search for further information.” There were concerns about the efficiency of alerts and general doubts about how to “build indicators of their impact. This was recognized as a necessity, not only for organizations to measure their own work, but also to use when looking for funding, since donors will want to know the real usefulness of the project proposed.” In any case, the absence of an evaluation of the alerts system did not prevent it from being “vindicated independently from its impact” since “it serves as an information and regional analysis instrument.” Uceda (IPYS) pointed out that what makes monitoring in Peru or Venezuela more efficient than in other countries is that there are larger amounts of information available on what is happening. “In Mexico,” Uceda (IPYS) said, “there isn't a system that produces this information. The system must have credible sources in each place that it can resort to.”

The group that debated the monitoring concluded that the challenges in this topic are to promote improvements in countries where the system works the least (e.g., Brazil, Mexico, and Paraguay), and to create monitoring systems where one doesn't already exist (e.g., Bolivia and Ecuador). It was concluded that “it wouldn't be necessary to create new organizations. Already-existing groups with different goals from monitoring, but with the capability and determination to make an efficient and professional network, could embrace this mission, with the support of others that have experience in that area.”

Ignacio Alvarez, the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression of the Organization of American States, mentioned the importance of having a good alert system in the region, and noted the low level of information on violations in the Caribbean.

To create and strengthen the network: The efficiency of monitoring is directly related to the quality of the specific country's existing network. Therefore, the effort to improve monitoring should consist, above all, of the creation of efficient networks that reach the country's interior. In general, people living in a country's capital (or in another central city) are usually in charge of monitoring activities, and there is not always enough information concerning the circumstances of the cases they denounce. As national networks improve, and begin to cover all risk zones, the information gap between journalists in the main cities and the interior will become smaller. Thus, the main effort should be focused in creating and strengthening each country's network.

Showing support for Paraguay: Paraguay had an unfortunate incident. The campaign to find the supposedly kidnapped journalist Enrique Galeano showed the maturity of both Paraguayan journalism and the organizations dedicated to defending local journalists, despite the fact that the kidnapping turned out to be a hoax. One must keep in mind that organizations defending freedom of expression will always run this kind of risk. However, it is necessary to support these Paraguayan organizations so they do not become discouraged after what happened—there is no doubt that they are on the right track. Moreover, these very organizations were the ones that reported the hoax and revealed it to the public. It was Andrés Colman himself, Freedom of Expression director for FOPEP (one of the region's new organizations), who discovered—as an investigative journalist for *Última Hora*—Galeano in Brazil. I believe that showing support for Paraguayan organizations would be very useful and could give them some strength to face those who want to attack the credibility that they had won.

Measuring impact: The false dilemma between the difficulty of measuring the impact of alerts and their efficiency came into discussion on several occasions. Donors have the logical intention of evaluating the actions they promote, but this raised some skepticism among a number of participants, perhaps because some thought that the difficulty of proving results could risk the financing of the alert systems. Any victim understands that the alert system is legitimate in itself, and it is not necessary to find an efficiency indicator for the system to exist, but it is also good to have more information about how the system works in order to continue improving it. It is ridiculous not to improve the detailed analysis of how alerts operate in Latin America.

It is something that must be done for the benefit of future victims. Some countries could be used as a sample to study the efficiency of alerts. A good idea could be to

organize a workshop with journalists who were victims and who can therefore help evaluate the contribution of alerts in regards to addressing their own specific cases, and distinguish the strong and weak points of the reporting.¹²

Experts' network: It would be necessary to create an experts' network, supported by academics, which can analyze and improve monitoring methodologies used in the production of information. One must keep in mind that, as a new bridge is built between the profession and academia, both will benefit.

Getting radio and television involved: It is also necessary to encourage the involvement of associations for radio and television owners in campaigns promoting freedom of expression. According to a recent study from the University of Cardiff on journalists' deaths, "deaths are equally distributed between print and electronic media." However, print media owners and journalists are usually more involved in organizations that defend freedom of expression than their counterparts in electronic media. In general, print journalists are more eager to advocate for freedom of the press. However, the public has a closer relationship with audiovisual media than with print media.

iv. A New Agenda for Freedom of Expression

(a) *Work Conditions*

Salazar (IFJ) said that Latin American journalists are trapped between violence and uncertain work conditions. A great majority of participants emphasized the growing deterioration of journalists' working conditions, which gravely affects their levels of protection. This is why the presence of experts on the matter was praised. "It's not common to talk about journalists' working conditions in a freedom of expression forum," Salazar (IFJ) said. In general, Salazar continued, "it can be said that the most decent working conditions in Latin America can be found in those countries where workers are organized in unions." He pointed out that in many countries outside Latin America, employers and journalists' organizations join their efforts to defend freedom of expression, and INSI's case is a clear example, but in Latin America that collaboration is minimal.¹³ IFJ considers freedom of association to be as important as freedom of expression. There are several countries in Latin America that do not have collective contracts. The only ones that have collective contracts are Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Mexico, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Venezuela, while in Honduras there are some company contracts. The reason for this, Salazar (IFJ) said, is not the lack of solidarity attributed to journalists; instead, the freedom to organize into unions has been undermined as much as the freedom of expression has, but that these violations receive less attention. He gave an example of how it is

possible for both employers and unions to reach and sign an agreement on quality journalism.¹⁴ Eduardo Ulibarri (IPLEX) made a comment on this issue: “It’s impossible to establish a correlation between collective agreements and journalistic quality. Occasionally, in some of our countries, the union leaders are very inflexible and sometimes very corrupt, and that’s why an agreement doesn’t guarantee quality journalism.” Leonarda Reyes (CEPET) asked how to include labor demands in the agenda when the word “union” is stigmatized in the region. Salazar (IFJ) responded: “In the media where labor rights are the most respected, there is more respect for a journalist’s work. And where work conditions are more precarious, there’s less respect for their work. The collective agreement cannot be conceived as a mere vindication and economic demand. It’s broader than that since it must include training, preparation for high-risk situations, journalists’ legal defense, copyright protection, [and] gender equality.” Gustavo Gomez (AMARC) also pointed out that work conditions are very relevant and must be taken into consideration, and Marquez (CESO–IFJ) referred to, “journalists’ low income figures, which are mostly earned from private ads. In the Atlantic coast, journalists’ earnings depend on advertising sales, and rent airtime to broadcast their programs. Journalists also work as political consultants to earn some extra cash. And sometimes a journalist has to pay an extra \$50 to interview a politician that a radio station doesn’t endorse. Most domestic correspondents have become advertising salesmen.” Alamilla (CERIGUA) also said that in her country “there’s great instability in the workplace.” The Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression noted that the office’s trimester reports include information on media companies that fire journalists because of state pressure.

Analysis

It is necessary to vigorously incorporate the topic of working conditions into the discussion about press freedom. The decreasing membership and credibility problems facing unions in most of the region’s countries have diminished the strength of workers’ demands. Therefore, it is important that professional associations help promote a culture of good work as part of their search for quality journalism. It would be valuable to create—in a joint effort with the International Labor Organization (ILO)—a workshop and a document that identify connections between work conditions, freedom of expression, and journalists’ safety in Latin America.¹⁵ The document would help to begin sensitizing unions and corporate organizations to the issue. If journalism is not formalized as an occupation with considerable protection, it will be more difficult for it to fulfill its role in a democracy.

(b) *Governments' Stigmatization*

Many participants mentioned that the process of stigmatizing the media, led by government rhetoric in several countries, often contributes to promoting violence against journalists in the streets. This happens in Venezuela, according to Salazar's testimony (IFJ). Lauria (CPJ) also pointed out that in that country, the stigmatization of the opposition media, from both pro- and antigovernment groups, has provoked street violence against journalists. According to Lauria, the same thing happens in Bolivia where "there is a growing intolerance against the press." In Ecuador as well, "there is a similar confrontation. The president wants to introduce certain initiatives to the Constituent Assembly to place restrictions on the media." Lauria also described growing efforts by the governments in Bolivia and Ecuador to undermine the independent media, which can ultimately promote violence. For Bolivia, he mentioned the aggressions against *Red Unitel*, *Red Uno*, and the newspaper *La Razón*. Laínez (ANP-Peru) expressed her concern about the relationship between the government and local media in Bolivia and Ecuador.

(c) *Demanding the Fulfillment of the Law as a Censorship Mechanism*

Uceda (IPYS) mentioned that governments can use legal mechanisms, such as the closure of radio stations that do not have legal licenses, but may have really been motivated by a desire to censor the stations. He referred to the RCTV case, in Venezuela, and other cases in Peru as well: "Legal but illegitimate mechanisms, which are difficult to verify, are often used. Illegal radio stations are shut down, but only when these inconvenience someone, such as the case of two stations in Peru. Does the issue of licenses only concern the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC)? How can the freedom of expression associations react when censorship mechanisms are legal and legitimate?" And he added: "There are more than 2,000 radio stations in Peru, most of which are illegal, so the government shuts them down when they irritate them. These cases imply a new challenge for monitoring organizations."

(d) *Radio and Television Licenses*

Gomez (AMARC) pointed out that the issue of community radios has only recently become relevant to the agenda of freedom of expression, and added that "community radios were an issue of illegality until not too long ago. At the beginning it was difficult to get IFEX to send our alerts." Alamilla (CERIGUA) also considered the defense of community radios a highly important issue. Uceda (IPYS) said that "we are going to have to monitor how licenses are being distributed in Peru since community radios didn't receive any." Several participants referred to the quality of the studies conducted by AMARC-Latin America on the current situation of community radios.

(e) *Concentration of Property*

Uceda (IPYS) presented some of the results of the study conducted by IPYS on media concentration in some Latin American countries. Ulibarri (IPLEX) said that one must consider different types of concentration, keeping in mind that, if they are strictly media companies, there is less risk than in a conglomerate in which media operations are only a part of the total assets that media owners use to lobby or pressure to provide benefits to their other corporate assets. And one must also take into account the internal standards of journalistic organizations, since there are some concentrated organizations that might have very high standards and give more guarantees of pluralism than a situation in which there are several media companies, but all may have low quality standards and thus offer less pluralism.

(f) *Government Advertising*

Discussions were not in-depth, but there were several references to the Open Society Justice Initiative-sponsored study conducted by the ADC (Civil Rights Association), in Argentina, which is being expanded to other countries in the region.¹⁶ The initial study attempted to examine the misuse of government advertising.

(g) *Judicial Harassment*

Marquez (CESO-IFJ) mentioned that suing the media is a common practice in Colombia, but did not expand on the subject.

(h) *Limited Access to Official Sources*

Uceda (IPYS) mentioned the case of Venezuela but did not expand on the subject. Santoro (FOPEA) said that in Argentina Néstor Kirchner never gave any press conferences during his presidency.

(i) *Mass Media as Censoring Agents*

Uceda (IPYS) said that “freedom of the press does not guarantee freedom of expression. Freedom of expression can be affected by the media.” He added that the IPYS decided to issue self-censorship alerts, “when it’s provoked by the media’s particular interests and is information that the general public should know.” He explained that this is a topic that should be discussed since IFEX does not admit these criteria in its protocol because it only registers censorship from external pressures. Serafín Valencia (APES) spoke of parallel powers such as the media, not referring to the journalists but to the media owners, who also represent political and economical powers. Valencia added that “media companies end up setting conditions on journalists’ work.”

Ulibarri (IPLEX) responded to this point: “If there is no freedom of the press, I think there’s an absolute guarantee that there will be no freedom of expression. It’s an argument that must be dealt with carefully, since some actors, which are not friendly to press freedom, sometimes try to demonize the press with the argument that media companies are only interested in profits and, as a result, the general situation of freedom of expression in the country is endangered.”

(j) *The Lack of Professionalism as a Risk Factor*

Several participants mentioned the lack of professionalism as an opportunity for the enemies of press freedom. Lauria (CPJ) mentioned Bolivia’s case, where the low standards of the media and journalists—in particular, a strong oppositional slant in the reporting allow the government to harshly question and undermine the media. Zeballos (ANP–Bolivia) pointed out that his organization has just approved a code of ethics that attempts to improve the media’s accountability. In particular, he said, audiovisual media have the lowest standards. Television hosts have turned into judges of society and have generated criticism. The press in Bolivia has less credibility than congress. This also happens in other countries, such as Argentina, where opinion and news are overlapping too much.

(k) *Conceptual Discussion of Parallel Powers*

The idea that governments are not the only source of potential enemies to press freedom was expressed several times during the meeting. After Alamilla’s (CERIGUA) presentation, participants began a profound discussion on “parallel powers”—powers operating in the shadows. These would be nongovernmental entities that pressure, coerce, or directly attack the media or journalists, thus promoting self-censorship. And they can do this because they benefit from a certain degree of impunity. Alamilla (CERIGUA) said that “[the participants’] common denominator is impunity, but each country has its specific circumstances.” There are untouchable groups that appear to be above legal and governmental control. Gomez (AMARC) said that the idea of parallel powers suggests that “the bad guy in the movie is not always the government.” Ulibarri (IPLEX) said that the discussion on parallel powers actually concerns the crisis of the rule of law, and this is where work is needed. Alves (Knight Center) thought that the discussion on parallel powers is important but vague, since it refers to something in need of a definition. Alves (Knight Center) mentioned the criminal organizations that control the slums of Río de Janeiro as an example of parallel powers. Sheila Gruner (IFEX) defined them as very powerful entities that lurk in the shadows and cannot be touched by the law. She also mentioned the expression *poderes fácticos*, as used by Alamilla (CERIGUA) and Lanza (APU). Lenina Meza (Probidad) said that these parallel powers have grown since the arrival of democracy. Tala Dowlatshahi (RSF) pointed out that it was necessary to determine the parallel powers in each respective country and to develop a manual with better practices to fight them.

Ana Arana (independent consultant) asked if the expression “parallel powers” referred to traditional powers in each specific region. During the discussion, Uceda (IPYS) said that he thought the expression was interesting but required more precision in order to take more effective action. Gómez (AMARC), on the other hand, thought that the concept should not be too specific since each country has different parallel powers and with this approach a regional campaign can be promoted and then adapted to each country. In Uruguay, according to Gómez, organized crime doesn’t have much influence, but a parallel power that does affect freedom expression is the organization of newspaper and magazine distributors. Andrés Cañizález (RSF–Venezuela) mentioned that in Venezuela, the opposition newspaper *Tal Cual* (under the management of Teodoro Petkoff) was not currently circulated because of a conflict with its distributors, and that no alert had been issued on the subject, even though it was limiting freedom of expression.

Alamilla (CERIGUA) referred to the “transnationalization of criminal groups” and added that “organized crime is imbedded into the state institutions.” Navarro Bello (*Zeta*), in her presentation, said that “attacks against press freedom from organized crime are increasing while those from political powers are becoming fewer.”

Analysis

In his final message last year, IAPA president Rafael Molina said that “it had been some time since we experienced such a violent year as the current one, since 2005 some 19 journalists have been killed and 5 have disappeared. Organized crime (...) is the biggest challenge that governments must face.”

It is essential to understand that organized crime is a coalition that counts on strong state support. And to fight it, it is necessary to also have a coalition with strong state support. Civil society organizations will not be capable of taking any serious measures against the mafia if they do not build solid alliances with important sectors of the state.

The connections between organized crime and the state are crystal clear. The crimes against *Zeta* seem to originate from the alliances between public officials and criminals. The current mayor of Tijuana is one of the main suspects in the crimes, and *Zeta* was not only attacked but also—according to the testimony of Navarro Bello (*Zeta*)—suffered from “fiscal persecutions,” “one audit after another,” and “fines for alleged irregularities,” which suggest strong and direct pressure from the state. There are local political figures who are suspected or directly accused of being the masterminds of crimes against journalists in Brazil, Mexico, Paraguay, and Peru. Several police and military officers are suspected or directly accused of being the

main perpetrators of these crimes. That is to say, among the main aggressors one can find an enormous number of state officials. IAPA's successive resolutions about impunity in Brazil are useful to find a very common pattern among crimes against journalists in that country: A politician (usually at a local level) makes the decision and a police officer executes the order. From that point of view, they are state-sponsored crimes.

A criminal coalition with a strong state link comes to mind. CPJ's press release after the offices of a Nuevo Laredo newspaper came under gunfire states it clearly: "These aggressions registered throughout the country are produced by members of organized crime and public servants at the local, state and federal level." In an interview prior to the attempt on his life, Jesús Blancornelas said: "The main complicity, the main protection [that drug dealers enjoy] comes from the office of the attorney general, since their main accomplices, agents and officials, work there."¹⁷ Blancornelas feared that the growing violence spreading throughout Mexico would infect the highest spheres of the federal government—in other words, that the criminal coalition would gain allies at the highest levels of the government.

The main effect of the mafia enjoying governmental cooperation is that officials who form part of the criminal network often block the government's capacity to sustain the rule of the law; therefore, upholding the rule of law turns into a type of intrastate war.

Given that the criminal coalition has turned into a notable enemy of freedom of expression, it will be necessary for the groups that promote this freedom to contribute to the construction of an alternative coalition that also has a strong state presence, but that is dedicated to defending the rule of law. Without the liberties guaranteed by the rule of law, even the possibility of improving the quality of journalism is very limited.¹⁸

Journalism must contribute to building this government-sponsored coalition for the rule of law. Crime works in networks, and the fight to defend the rule of law must work similarly. We must build trust between journalists and the state institutions that have been penetrated the most by organized crime (which also happen to be those institutions directly responsible for fighting it) such as politicians, judicial officers, and the police.

Folha de Sao Paulo's former ombudsman and founder of ABRAJI, Marcelo Beraba, following the attacks of PCC against the police, said, "after years and years of criticizing (fairly, in my opinion) institutional inefficiency and corruption, I feel that we have lost every kind of empathy from the police."¹⁹ But it is important to understand that to improve the quality of democracy, the integrity of the state must

improve, and for that to happen we must set foot in the most important institution in the defense of citizens' rights—the police. The more corruption there is in the police, the greater risks journalists will face. Being charged with the mission of upholding the rule of law, the police department is not only an aid to the judiciary branch, but also to journalism. We must strengthen the good police officer, and where he does not exist, we must build him. We must become involved as civil society in this intrastate conflict that impedes the fulfillment of the rule of law. The degradation of the police, which can be found in most of the countries in the region, destroys the trust between police officers that support the rule of law and the rest of society, journalists in particular. If it is not possible for the police in Latin America to make a transition to democracy, our rights will continue to be limited. Criminal elements of society benefit from the crisis of values from which these public officials suffer. These include, drug traffickers, the *maras* (who recently killed journalists in Ecuador and El Salvador), organizations such as Brazil's PCC (which recently kidnapped and threatened journalists), and all the large and small gangs that roam the region (among them the Guyana gang that killed four newspaper employees in 2006, in what was the most violent act against journalism in Latin America in several years).

It is not possible for journalism to face organized crime on its own. Violence against journalists is only possible because of their isolation. Mobsters should be the ones in isolation, not journalists. For this to happen, the press can and should develop a level of trust with political organizations, state institutions (such as the ombudsman's office), and sectors from the police and the judicial branch.

For these reasons, I suggest that we think of programs for all of Latin America that would promote the networking of journalists with police officers and judicial authorities (for example, common-interest workshops that would contribute to their mutual knowledge).

This way, it would be possible to begin gaining the trust and creating the necessary collaboration to work together—each sector with a specific mission—and there will be more possibilities to build this alliance in defense of the rule of law that will protect freedom of expression. One of the key ideas to argue for these programs is that, the more isolated journalism becomes, the more danger it will be exposed to.

v. How to Improve Advocacy

The group that discussed the ways to promote and advocate in favor of campaigns for freedom of expression debated at length the definition of the word advocacy. They all concluded—the rapporteur wrote—that “advocacy needs to be clearly defined since, for some NGOs, political

lobbying is prohibited because of their status as charitable organizations.” For many of the group’s participants, the expression *incidencia* reflects the idea of advocacy, but the general perception is that there needs to be more dialogue between donors and organizations to clarify this concept.

Following that note, the conditions for a good campaign (clear objectives, precise messages, concrete target audiences, and a communication strategy) were discussed. Participants agreed on, “the importance of building coalitions, both nationally and internationally, regardless of mandates, but with knowledge that might be useful during the campaign (for example, universities that offer theoretical frameworks, lawyers’ associations that campaign against impunity) and help to build solidarity.”

When discussing ideas for campaigns, participants mentioned, “the reform of the legal system to improve its capacity to deal with attacks against media and freedom of expression,” “awareness of the dangers associated with the work of journalists,” “ethics in journalism,” “the decriminalization of defamation,” and “regulation of government advertising.”

Lanza (APU) said that in the group where advocacy was discussed, the idea of designing some sort of second-generation Chapultepec Declaration on Freedom of Expression was proposed, which would be the result of the discussions between different organizations and would help campaigning abroad in favor of the new rights and against the new dangers that freedom of expression faces.

The elaboration of a document containing the best practices for preparing campaigns in favor of freedom of expression in Latin America, including advice on how to work better in coalitions, was also proposed, as was the creation of databases of experts in the field of freedom of expression, so that different organizations could quickly consult them. And it was also suggested that a permanent forum for the exchange of ideas be established.

Trotti (IAPA) spoke of the importance of the letters that citizens write to their representatives. He specifically referred to the importance of international missions and the press coverage they receive.

Several exhibitors and participants—such as the rapporteur Ignacio Alvarez and Gruner (IFEX)—agreed on the importance of strengthening local organizations.

Álvarez referred to the “precautionary measures” when people’s lives and safety are in grave danger. When the current rapporteur took office, the institution received 150 alerts per month. Today it receives 2,300 alerts from the different countries in the region. Álvarez said that “at the beginning it was easier to call local organizations, and even call the threatened or attacked journalist to boost the presentation of precautionary measures.” Journalist protection advocates should invest more time in explaining how the system for asking for precautionary measures works, and let local organizations be the ones to take care of this. Many journalists had been threatened prior to being slain, therefore Álvarez believes some of these lives could have been saved had the precautionary measures been in place. Making an instruction manual for journalists on how to use the inter-American system is being considered.

Improving the Relationship between Journalists and Citizens

Several speakers and participants pointed out that a weakness in the defense of journalists is that there is not enough social awareness regarding the role of the press. Often the general population does not treat the complaints from the media community as being sincere, since there is a perceived bias that the journalistic community will support each other regardless of the validity of their claims. Trotti (IAPA) pointed out that “it must be made clear that we’re not looking for privileges for journalists, but for society” and “that our clamor is yet to reach the general public.” George Papagiannis (Internews) said that he was shocked by the fact that in Mexico the high level of violence targets the general population and not just journalists, and said that we run the risk of becoming isolated from society (he gave the example of the initiative to federalize crimes against journalists) since all sectors of society are targeted for killing. Papagiannis (Internews) recommended a media literacy campaign to explain to citizens the importance that journalism has for democracy. So far in 2007 (January–September), there had been between 1,000 and 1,400 killings of civilians in Mexico, according to information provided by Lauria (CPJ). Guylor Delva (SOS Journalistes Haiti) pointed out that the work of journalists must relate to the creation of an atmosphere of rights for all citizens. Alamilla (CERIGUA) said that society is oblivious to these concerns, given that it has much graver problems. Navarro Bello said that after the deaths of *Zeta*’s editors, there were several demonstrations of support coming from the general population—such as letters of condemnation from readers. Moreover, the circulation of *Zeta* is now high, its page count has increased, and many Baja California companies support the newspaper through advertising. However, Navarro Bello added that she doesn’t “see a very organized society when it comes to defending its journalists.” Rohan Jayasekera (Index on Censorship) also pointed out the importance of obtaining more citizen support for this cause. Láinez (ANP-Peru) also said that a campaign to close the gap between journalists and the community was necessary. Meza (Probidad) said that it seemed to her that, for the general public, the right to information was something “too idealistic.”

Advances and Setbacks in Impunity

“In Latin America, impunity is the rule,” Lauria (CPJ) said. In his presentation, Trotti (IAPA) said that there is plenty of impunity in Latin America, but a bit less than in other areas in the developing world. Trotti (IAPA) pointed out a nuance to offer more hope: In Latin America, impunity is lower than in other regions of the world. Today there are 77 detained persons in the region because of crimes against journalists and Brazil is the country with the most criminals behind bars. But in the last 20 years—Trotti continued—crimes have not subsided and that this was a source of great frustration. According to Trotti (IAPA), the key to fighting impunity is “investigation, investigation, investigation.” Using investigation information is what moves governments, especially when missions are sent to these places to meet with

authorities. After a crime against a journalist is committed, Trotti (IAPA) proposed to immediately send a mission to the place of the crime representing several organizations for the defense of journalism, both at the regional and local level. After a question from Dowlatshahi (RSF), Trotti (IAPA) pointed out that they spoke with the international credit institutions, for example the Inter-American Development Bank and the World Bank, to condition the loans of those governments that do not cooperate with the fight against impunity, but the institutions were reluctant to use this type of pressure. Guyler Delva (SOS Journalistes Haiti) saw, as a very positive action in his country, the formation of a commission—which includes high authorities and journalists—to investigate crimes against journalists. Dario Ramirez (Article 19) said that they were going to start a national campaign against aggression and impunity but had not yet resolved if they would take on a specific case or use a more general approach. He added that, in general, in Mexico there is a need for knowledge on how to organize campaigns and there is also a lack of financial resources. The Special Rapporteur informed those present that he was finishing a study on the status of the investigations on all slain journalists between 1995 and 2005, although some governments were very reluctant to provide information. Álvarez (IACHR) said that “a historical debt that we have is that not a single case dealing with the murder of a journalist has reached the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. There have been very important cases of access to information, contempt charges, and slander, and it was fundamental to incorporate those subjects in the legislative agenda and in the recommendations to member states.”

Analysis

Monitoring systems and mechanisms to fight impunity have improved, but violence against journalists continues, which is a source of frustration for Trotti (IAPA). The following hypothesis can be offered to explain this situation: In the last 20 years, journalists' professionalism and training have improved, and with that, their ability to question and challenge power has also grown. If the improvement in monitoring and the fight against impunity had not occurred, it is possible that the number of dead journalists would be larger. The press became more professional, more active, more skeptical, but the number of deaths did not increase at the same rate. And that could be considered an achievement of the advances in the defense of the press. It is interesting to note the INSI proposal to create an annual index of impunity that would rank the countries with the worst records for deaths of media workers.²⁰

Trotti (IAPA) said that after 10 years of pushing for the federalization of crimes against journalists, now for the first time there is a project being considered by President Felipe Calderón of Mexico. In 1997, IAPA requested from President Zedillo such a federalization, when it wanted the investigation of the Miranda case (the first editor of *Zeta* to be killed) to move beyond the entanglements of the local judiciary branch. Ten years later, President Calderón is still considering it. Trotti (IAPA) also mentioned that the congressional Media Commission in Mexico is “very sympathetic” toward promoting the federalization, the increase of sentences, and the need to ensure that there is no statute of limitations in investigating crimes against journalists. But he did not seem very confident in the Special Prosecutor for Crimes against Journalists, within the Office of the Attorney General, with whom he met the week before the meeting in Austin. In answer to a question from Láinez (ANP-Peru), Trotti (IAPA) said that the Peruvian president Alan García showed interest in the idea of a special jurisdiction for journalists, where there would be specialized judges. Ramirez (Article 19) also said that “in Mexico there were good signs indicating that power is changing: the sentence in the Televisa case and the electoral reforms.” He noted that the current senate has reopened the debate on the broadcasting legislation to cover the gaps left by the Mexican supreme court’s recent decision that declared the former law unconstitutional. He pointed out that they jointly prepared a document that will be very important for this discussion. It would seem that, in Mexico, while there were little improvements to improve the quality of monitoring, there were successes in organizing campaigns and promoting their desired goals (advocacy), in which local and international organizations worked well together. The IACHR’s Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression said that, on the occasion of the office’s upcoming 10-year anniversary, it is producing a report to map and diagnose the status of freedom of expression in each of the 35 countries that form part of the organization. The indicators that it used for the evaluation of each country were taken from the American Convention on Human Rights (1969) and the Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression. He mentioned also that they have seen some of these indicators in-depth, and have included the specific topic of pluralism and the government’s positive obligation to promote it as part of the methodology for the study. The special rapporteur said they were analyzing the independence of the authorities who take decisions on issuing radio frequencies.

Analysis

An important lesson from Mexico these last two years is that pressure should not stop after the state announces that it has accepted journalists’ demands. In Latin America, the sanctioning of a law, or the creation of a public office, are only symbolic acts if there

is no ongoing commitment from the state to fulfill that law and to give that office a real and effective mandate. In Mexico, for example, as violence against journalists escalated, the federal government granted symbolic gestures such as the decriminalization of defamation, the right to confidential sources, and the creation of a special prosecutor's office. Journalists would die and a few hours or days later laws would be passed or federal measures be approved for the benefit of journalistic practice. Navarro Bello (*Zeta*) commented on the situation of the special prosecutor's office: "[It has] limited investigative powers, personnel, and least of all, economic resources. The special prosecutor barely receives calls from threatened or injured journalists, or from the families that report a missing person or a killing. The lack of any real power in this office renders it useless." Through these "concessions," the holders of political power ease the pressure from civil society but do not effectively change the way their operations work.

Legislation must particularly penalize the murder of those professionals who fulfill an evident public service and who were hurt precisely during the fulfillment of that service, such as in the case of police officers, but also of journalists. It is necessary to work conceptually on the idea that those who are at the democratic frontier should be especially protected by the law.

In general, based on comments during the meeting, organizations do not feel supported by the general population in their demands for freedom of expression and the defense of journalists. A key concept here can be Guyler Delva's (SOS Journalistes Haiti) idea of an "atmosphere of rights for all citizens," which is especially relevant in this subject. The idea is that citizens must perceive that when the rights of journalists are threatened, the rights of citizens are also being strained. It is a matter of communicating the idea that it starts with journalists and then reaches the rest of the citizens; and that is when problems with freedom of expression begin, it forebodes the deterioration of the general public's rights and guarantees.

It would be possible to promote a second generation of the Declaration of Chapultepec. It seems to have fulfilled its cycle and it was a useful tool to spread basic freedom of expression values. The proposal now would be to collectively draft a new declaration of principles, that incorporates the new agenda, and that can serve the purpose of making a campaign across Latin America to encourage candidates and political leaders to sign it. It could include topics ranging from the safety of journalists to the need to give press conferences once elected. As Ricardo Trotti (IAPA) said, the fulfillment of the Declaration of Chapultepec also serves as an indicator of advances and setbacks in that country. The proposal is to build a new, more comprehensive

It is also interesting to discuss the creation of conditions set by international development organizations, as the INSI recommends: “We call on the international development organizations, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, to reinforce the resolution [UN 1738], adding to it dispositions so that, when granting assistance and other forms of aid, the country’s history of journalists’ killings is considered.”²¹

Conclusion

The experience and discussions at the meeting were rich, but they must be maximized. The organizations that attended have a lot to learn from one another. Therefore, the necessary information must be created and distributed to reiterate the lessons learned during the meeting so the learning will continue. When the actions, topics, and organizations are compiled and presented, we will all be able to learn the following: how codes of ethics were developed in Bolivia and Argentina; the joint commission's fight against impunity in Haiti; Panama's CNP and its ability to join and direct the efforts of every journalism organization toward a common goal; monitoring in Colombia, Peru, and Venezuela; the missions led by the CPJ and the IAPA; or the way in which Peru's ANP succeeded in creating an alliance with the ombudsman's office. To think and act regionally and to act locally is an excellent path to improve journalism and, therefore, to improve the quality of democracy a little more. If there were only one recommendation to make it would be to strengthen local organizations. The quality and impact of monitoring and campaigning depends on them. Improving the efficiency and capacity of local organizations to seek and obtain resources and develop solid organizational structures, is the first step toward the enhancement of the quality of each of their programs.

In Latin America, there have always been several eras elapsing at the same time. As a result, we are able to witness aggression against the press that reflects both the old era and the new context of Latin American politics. I believe that the meeting missed a discussion about the dangers that threaten developed societies today and that can begin soon in the region. For example: A journalist goes to prison almost every year in the United States, usually because many states do not have laws to protect journalists' right to source protection. This is a danger that will grow in several countries in Latin America and it would be important to energetically

push to prevent this lack of protection and to achieve the necessary legal shield. A second example: There was no discussion in Austin about the limits on the Internet that so many governments, as well as technology companies, can impose. We have not yet incorporated the topic of new media. The governments of Latin America are at this moment making key decisions about information technologies that can affect the future of freedom of expression, yet journalists and press freedom advocates have had little discussion about this subject.

Notes

- 1 Fernando J. Ruiz is a professor at the Universidad Austral and an associate researcher at the Centro para la Apertura y el Desarrollo de América Latina.
- 2 *Zeta* is for Latin America what Guillermo Cano's newspaper *El Espectador* was for Colombia in the eighties: A symbol of the struggle between journalistic ideals and an overwhelmingly superior enemy in the form of drug cartels. *El Espectador's* building was bombed in 1986 and its director killed. In *Zeta's* case, editor Jesús Blancornelas initially survived an attempt on his life in 1997, although his bodyguard died during the attack. He later died of health complications in 2006, and now Navarro Bello is the newspaper's editor. Francisco Ortiz Franco, editor of *Zeta* at the time, was gunned down in 2004. *Zeta's* website is available at www.zetatijuana.com.
- 3 The Manizáles Project is based on the experience of the Arizona Project, formed in 1976 after the journalist Don Bolles was killed in Arizona. Bolles founded Investigative Reporters and Editors (IRE) in 1975 and after his death, a group of colleagues from IRE decided to collectively continue the investigation into the corruption case he was covering. The conspiracy was revealed and his killers eventually sentenced.
- 4 For more information, go to www.ire.org/history/arizona.html.
- 5 Recommendations from the International News Safety Institute (INSI) state: "We call on media organizations and media workers' associations, including unions, to cooperate with each other with the purpose of addressing the issue of better safety conditions in the exercise of journalism. Safety should never be a competitive issue." The INSI also, "calls on every journalist to support each other mutually when working in hostile environments and put aside competitive issues when lives are in danger." *Killing the Messenger: The Deadly Price of News* (INSI, Belgium, 2007): 7.
- 6 See *Risk Map for Journalists* (IAPA, Miami, 2006). For more information, go to <http://www.impunidad.com/map.pdf>.
- 7 For more information, go to http://www2.eluniversal.com.mx/pls/impreso/noticia.html?id_nota=302382&tabla=notas.
- 8 The Phoenix Project is an initiative of Mexican newspapers and journalists designed to follow up on crimes against those working in the press. This first report was published simultaneously in newspapers throughout Mexico, as well as on radio and television stations in the country. See <http://www.impunidad.com/toplevel/fenix/Project.doc>.

- 9 In the meeting immediately prior to this one, a number of organizations dedicated to training journalists in the region gathered in what is known as the Austin Forum for Journalism in the Americas.
- 10 To read a UN press release on resolution 1738, go to <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2006/sc8929.doc.htm>.
- 11 The press release read as follows: "It has become public that an investigation conducted by journalist César Bianchi from the supplement "Qué Pasa" of the newspaper *El País* was the target of censorship within the company El País S.A. The censored report made reference to the activities of the contractor Francisco Casal and his company Tenfield, holder of the rights to televise Uruguayan football. The report had accumulated several months of work and was scheduled to be published on Saturday, August 18, but it was not released because of a decision from the highest executive level. This is a grave case of censorship over issues of general interest, this time originating from the private sector. These practices undermine the journalist's freedom of expression and citizens' right to information, given that editorial autonomy cannot justify the act of censorship because of the magnitude of the report. These practices directly impact the journalist victim of censorship and the rest of his colleagues working in said company, since they might lead to self-censorship" (APU, September 12, 2007).
- 12 This is what the South African organization MISA (Media Institute of South Africa) did: "The workshops gave journalists an opportunity to speak about the abuses that they had suffered and the effect that those abuses have had on them, to mention if they had received some kind of support, and which were the forms of support that had helped them the most and what more could have been done to support them." *Campaigning for Free Expression: A Handbook for Advocates* (IFEX, Toronto, 2005): 22.
- 13 In Panama, there might be an interesting exception: a national press council which groups faculties, media directors, and journalists' unions. Its executive director, Olga Barrio, attended the meeting in Austin.
- 14 Salazar cited the agreement signed in July 2007 between the WAZ (Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung Mediengruppe) and the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ).
- 15 The IFJ, in conjunction with the ILO, produced a report in 2006 titled *The Changing Nature of Work: A Global Survey and Case Study of Atypical Work in the Media Industry*. Available at <http://www.ifj.org/pdfs/ILOReport070606.pdf>.
- 16 Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Honduras, Peru, and Uruguay.
- 17 Interview with Jesús Blancornelas: Interview (Parts 2–3) (www.youtube.com/watch?v=W9FDsQqScFI&mode=related&search=).
- 18 See Silvio Waisbord's recent article, "Democratic Journalism and Statelessness," *Political Communication*, Volume 24, Issue 2 (April 2007): 115–129.
- 19 Marcelo Beraba, "A guerra en Sao Paulo", *Folha de Sao Paulo*, May 25, 2006.
- 20 INSI, *Killing the Messenger: The Deadly Price of News*, 5.
- 21 *Ibid*, 7.



OPEN SOCIETY FOUNDATION