



	Perú
Años	1997-2000



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Press freedom took a steep nose-dive in Peru during 1997. Three journalists were murdered, the authorities forced an outspoken television director to relinquish his post by stripping him of his Peruvian citizenship (the station had been fiercely critical of President Alberto Fujimori's administration) and reporters were kidnapped and assaulted throughout the year. Miguel Bravo Quispe, a correspondent for the daily, *El Comercio*, and vice-president of the College of Journalists in Pasco, was found with a bullet wound in the heart. Quispe, also mayor of the district of Yananchancha, close to Cerro de Pasco, was apparently murdered near Lake Uanamate.

Tito Pilco Mori, director of the radio station, Radio Frecuencia Popular and host of the programme, "Opinion Libre," in Rioja, died from injuries to the head and chest at the end of August. Four individuals said they were going to "shut him up" on August 28, and two days later he left the office to pick up daily newspapers. He never returned. His body was discovered on August 31. Eduardo Parado Samaniego, a 28-year-old radio journalist, was killed in an ambush by Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) terrorists on October 14. Parado, who had directed the news programme, "The World in 60 Minutes," on Radio Marginal in the district of San Martin de Pangoa, Satipo, since 1993, divided his time between his journalistic work and farming on land he owned in El Palomar, some eight hours' drive from San Martin de Pangoa, in Peru's central jungle area. In this region, all farmers are required to belong to the civilian farmer patrols, and at the time he was killed, he had been sent to accompany a Peruvian Army patrol which left from various locations to attract a Sendero camp located in the Alto Potsoteni and Rio Chiquireni zone. The patrol was ambushed by Sendero terrorists near the right bank of the Sonomoro River, and two people - including Parado - were killed. The Fujimori government's attacks on the press this year were the most severe since



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the President staged a "self-coup" and brought in temporary censorship measures in 1992. One of the main targets in 1997 was the private television channel, Frecuencia Latina Canal 2, which had been consistently critical of the government.

The muzzling of the channel began in April. Reporters from the station brought a camera into a military hospital to conduct a secret interview with Leonor La Rosa, a convalescing, non-commissioned Army intelligence officer. She told the channel that one of her Army colleagues, Mariela Barreto, had been murdered (this was gruesomely confirmed when Barreto's body parts were discovered days later). Both La Rosa and Barreto were accused of leaking information to the media about an apparent plan to intimidate the press as well as opposition members. Under pressure from the independent media, a military tribunal ordered the arrest of four Army intelligence officers. From that moment on, the authorities appeared to be seeking vengeance against Canal 2. First, there were attempts to impose crippling taxes on the station. Then, in a marked escalation of the dispute, the Armed Forces Joint Chief of Staff issued a strongly worded communique on May 24, claiming that Canal 2's 57-year-old, Israeli-born owner, Baruch Ivcher - a naturalised Peruvian citizen - had used his media outlet to carry out a campaign aimed at harming the prestige and image of the Armed Forces. In a new effort to discredit Ivcher, the government accused him of selling arms to neighbouring Ecuador, - with which Peru has a long-standing border dispute.

This campaign collapsed ignominiously when the documents said to implicate Ivcher were shown to be forgeries. Undaunted, the authorities continued their attack on the TV owner - angered, especially, by a report on Canal 2's ground-breaking investigative programme, "Contrapunto," alleging that the government was systematically tapping the telephones of scores of journalists, politicians, businessmen and artists "in the same style as Watergate." A few hours after the programme was transmitted



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on the morning of July 13, the government and the military revoked Ivcher's Peruvian citizenship - throwing Canal 2 into judicial limbo, since only Peruvians are permitted to own TV stations in Peru. The move was justified with a claim that there had been flaws in Ivcher's naturalisation paperwork in 1986. However, these allegations were entirely unconstitutional. The Peruvian Constitution declares quite clearly that no one can be deprived of his or her citizenship. In addition, the man who revoked Ivcher's nationality - Army general Victor Huaman, the Interior Ministry's director of naturalisation - was not empowered to overturn the original, higher-level decision which granted Ivcher his Peruvian citizenship in the first place. The Ivcher case enraged media and human rights organisations, both in Peru and abroad. However, even though none of Canal 2's allegations against the authorities (phone-tapping and others) was shown to be inaccurate, the government went ahead brazenly with the move to strip Ivcher of his citizenship.

Control of the TV channel was placed in the hands of two brothers, Samuel and Mendel Winter. Luis Iberico, director of "Contrapunto," said that the move against Ivcher "does no more than show that democracy and the state of law, freedom of expression and of the press have suffered the final and mortal blow." The Peruvian media rose up unanimously to condemn the revocation of Ivcher's citizenship. The country's respected independent newspaper, El Comercio, declared in an editorial: "Independent journalism institutions, unbowed by the government's steamroller, and citizens at large, must close ranks in these circumstances and energetically protest to stop the escalating anti-democratic process." In Washington, the American State Department spokesman, Nicholas Burns, said Ivcher was "being harassed and threatened with criminal prosecution for his television station's reporting and commentary about Peruvian government officials and the Peruvian military. This is an issue of concern to us ... these actions raise fundamental questions of freedom of the press and freedom of expression. The need to respect freedom of



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expression and of the press is an essential element of democracy ...” For his part, Ivcher told Reuters from Miami - where he is now based - that the Peruvian government was carrying out a “gangster-like” campaign “to finish off free journalism.”

The year began with journalists being caught up in the hostage crisis at the Japanese Embassy in the Peruvian capital, Lima. Some 15 journalists went into the diplomatic compound where Marxist guerrillas from the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA) had been holding dozens of VIP hostages since storming a lavish cocktail party there on December 17, 1996. President Fujimori, who had tried to suppress media contact with the rebels by cutting off electricity and telephone lines to the captured residence, was furious with the journalists, who included Koji Harada, a photographer for Japan’s Kyodo News Agency. Kyodo officials in Lima defended Harada, who, they said, had risked his life to bring the first images of the rebels to the world. The hostages included President Fujimori’s brother, two government Ministers, military officers, the Bolivian Ambassador to Peru, Japanese diplomats and businessmen. On January 7, Peruvian anti-terrorist police detained another Japanese reporter, from Asahi TV, and his interpreter, after they had sneaked past police for a two-hour meeting with the hostage-takers. The two men - a New York-based reporter, Tsuyoshi Hitomi, and a Peruvian interpreter, Victor Borja - were driven away by the police and taken to police headquarters in downtown Lima, where their notebooks and camera were confiscated.

Journalists continued to fall victim to the extraordinarily protracted ordeal - and in dramatic fashion. Miguel Real - a correspondent for the London-based international video-news service, Worldwide Television News (WTN), who interviewed the Tupac Amaru leader, Nestor Cerpa, by short-wave radio - was forced to leave Peru in March after receiving anonymous “veiled threats that endanger his work as a journalist, as well as his physical person” - in the words of the Peruvian Foreign Press Association. News of Real’s departure followed a complaint by the Peruvian government’s



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leading representative in the hostage crisis, Domingo Palermo, that some unnamed foreign journalists were “advising” the MRTA command. The Peruvian Foreign Press Association called on the Fujimori government to hand over to the proper authorities any evidence it might have on ties between foreign journalists and the MRTA. In the end, the hostage crisis came to a bloody end when government forces stormed the embassy compound and killed all 14 of the rebels, including Cerpa, on April 22. In a long catalogue of horrendous assaults, Peruvian journalists were kidnapped, beaten or threatened throughout 1997.

Three hooded attackers stoned Carlos Rupay, the evening newscaster of the local affiliate of America Television, in Tingo Maria on March 19. Rupay had broadcast information on a series of irregularities committed by municipal and military officials. On April 1, three gunmen kidnapped Blanca Rosales, general publisher of the Lima newspaper, La Republica. Journalists from the TV programme, “En Persona,” run by Cesar Hildebrandt - who himself fled Peru for several months in 1996 in fear for his safety - were assaulted in Chacabayo by unknown gunmen on June 25. They stole the journalists’ video equipment. The reporters accused the intelligence services of involvement in the attack. On June 29, Benjamin Garcia Sucla, a well-known journalist who anchors the morning news programme on the Radio Melodia radio station in Arequipa, was nearly run down by a van with dark windows in what looked like a deliberate attempt to kill him as he was walking home. Luis Angeles Laynes, a political journalist for another paper, El Ojo, was severely beaten on July 2 by three assailants. El Ojo’s editor, Luis Agois, and its general editor, Agustin Figueroa, also said that they had received threats attributed to the intelligence service. Gines Barrois, another reporter, was kidnapped by three hooded assailants.

Moments before the abduction, he had been beaten up by people associated with the housing Fund, whose directors were being investigated for overvaluing electrification projects. He was freed after



five days in captivity. On November 28, Bertha Chacon Diaz, a journalist working for Presencia Regional, which broadcasts at 2.30 pm daily in Quillabamba, was viciously beaten in the face, head, stomach and legs, leaving her severely bruised. Chacon identified the assailants as Pedro Vera Almarez, director of a municipal water and sewerage company, and Lidia Almarez. The attack was related to Chacon's reporting of allegations of Vera Almarez's poor management and misuse of state funds. Chacon had previously received telephoned death threats. In addition to the actual physical attacks, journalists came under almost constant threat from both the authorities and thugs - known and unknown. On April 7, police burst into newsrooms and pointed guns at five journalists, threatening to kill them. The five threatened were Pedro Maguina and Edgar Palma, of the daily, Ya; Andres de la Cruz, of the TV channel, Canal Siete; Gudelia Galvez of Radio Ancash and Carlos Miranda of Radio Periodico Contacto. The threats were aimed at heading off coverage of the situation of eight minors in a Peruvian jail where their mothers were imprisoned for links to terrorism.

On November 17, a security agent at a pharmacy in San Isidro physically assaulted reporters from the programme, "En Persona," hosted by Hildebrandt. The reporter, Beatriz Llanos Cabanillas (daughter of the former Minister of Education, Mercedes Cabanillas), and a cameraman, Sergio Vergaray, were attacked in a local cafe while investigating allegation of trafficking in medicines, reportedly involving a former government Minister. Both reporters received serious injuries to the face. The assailant, identified as Jose Aparicio Campos, was arrested and taken to the local police station. Also on November 17, a masked group led by a woman and armed with revolvers burst into the studios of the the radio station, Constelacion - in the urban district of Chilca, in Huancayo. They hit a journalist, Raul Tazza Zevallos, and his assistants before gagging them. The intruders then threatened other staff members, forcing them to broadcast a 40-minute cassette, The gang then fled the premises.



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Journalists have scarcely been able to turn to the President or his government for support or protection. Fujimori and several government Ministers lashed out verbally at the media on several occasions in 1997. Ruben William Zurita Vilela, director of the radio programme, El Gran Mazgian de Radio, was jailed for a year on October 21 for committing crimes “against the public administration through the illegal exercise of the profession, an offence against the College of Journalists of Puerto Maldonado. According to the Lima-based Institute for Press and Society (IPYS), Zurita had occasionally used journalism for personal ends, including, according to one local reporter, blackmail. However, IPYS said his imprisonment set a dangerous precedent since he had been found guilty of “illegal exercise of the profession,” when there were many journalists who worked in Peru without undertaking formal training in communications or being members of the College of Journalists. Another matter of potential concern was the creation on September 24 of the Peruvian Press Council, a body intended to ensure that journalistic ethics were safeguarded. ADAM FEINSTEIN



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Isabel Chumpitaz, a radio journalist who championed peasant farmers' rights, was shot to death by a group of assailants, who also killed her husband and wounded her brother. The continuing persecution of the former owner of the Lima-based television station *Canal 2-Frecuencia Latina*, Baruch Ivcher, whose Peruvian citizenship was stripped and ownership rights suspended in 1997, sent an implicit warning to critics of the government. A former investigative journalist for *Canal 2*, José Arrieta Matos, was forced to seek political asylum in the United States. Throughout the year, journalists were subjected to a systematic campaign of persecution, as President Alberto Fujimori sought to intimidate and control the press in preparation of a bid for a third term in office. In addition to threats and physical attacks, favourite methods of intimidation were the use of trumped-up tax evasion charges and government-sponsored newspaper articles - published in several tabloids - questioning the character and patriotism of certain journalists.

Isabel Chumpitaz Panta, who presented a daily programme called "The Peoples' Voice," broadcast by *Radio Satélite* in the northern coastal district of La Unión, was shot and stabbed to death by about a dozen unknown assailants who stormed her home on April 6. Armed with rifles and pistols, the group of attackers asked Chumpitaz to identify herself before killing her and her husband, broadcaster José Amaya Jacinto, who had come to her aid. They then forced their way into the neighbouring houses of her relatives, seriously wounding her brother, Walter Chumpitaz, also a radio journalist. Villagers and farmers often called the tiny radio station to voice complaints against the regional and central governments on the programme, which Chumpitaz used to promote campaigns for improved services in the area. Although the police reported that one of the detainees had confessed to the killing, claiming that the motive for the attack was robbery, relatives suspected that Chumpitaz was silenced because of



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her critical reporting.

As in 1997, one of the main targets of President Alberto Fujimori's government was the former owner of the private television station, *Canal 2-Frecuencia Latina*, Israeli-born businessman Baruch Ivcher.

Attempts to muzzle *Canal 2* began in April 1997, when the station aired an interview with former Intelligence agent Leonor La Rosa, who alleged that the army had tortured her and killed one of her colleagues, Mariela Barreto Riofano, to prevent them from making public the existence of a secret plan to murder members of the press and opposition members. On July 13, 1997, just hours after *Canal 2* aired another report alleging that the government was systematically tapping the telephones of journalists, politicians, businessmen and artists, Ivcher was stripped of his Peruvian citizenship and forced to leave the country. Because Peruvian law precludes foreigners from owning media outlets, control of the station was turned over to the pro-government minority owners.

In 1998, the government's campaign against Ivcher continued with attempts to try him for alleged tax evasion, the Lima-Based Press and Society Institute (IPYS) reported. Tax court judge Nicolas Trujillo López and provincial public prosecutor Hilda Valladares concluded that Baruch Ivcher and nine associates in a leading mattress manufacturing company, Productos Paraíso del Perú S.A., which is owned by Ivcher, were responsible for defrauding the state out of customs duties totalling US\$ 1,094,610. Chief Prosecutor Arquimedes Pesantes asked the Court on Tax and Customs Crimes to sentence Ivcher to 12 years in jail and a hefty sum in damages for customs fraud, tax evasion and falsifying documents. However, numerous irregularities were reported in the trial, which began on September 14, including the fact that the "key witness" was not present and that he was named in the trial only by number - the first time that this type of identification of a witness had been used in a civil trial. In addition, the national taxation administration body (SUNAT) had not been asked to intervene during the initial investigation of the

charges, although it should have been according to the law. On November 2, the Supreme Court in the Tax and Customs Court system confirmed a lower court verdict, which found Ivcher and his associates in the Productos Paraíso del Perú mattress company guilty of evading taxes and duties, and an international warrant against Ivcher, who was residing abroad, was issued.

In December, the campaign of persecution against Ivcher was broadened to include his wife and daughter. In an official letter to the INTERPOL in Lima, tax court judge Nicolas Trujillo ordered that Neomy Even and Michal Ivcher, the wife and daughter of Baruch Ivcher, should be found and detained on charges of doctoring *Canal 2's* books, IPYS reported. Trujillo said that the alterations in the books were made with the purpose of falsifying Mrs. Ivcher's and her daughter's stakes in *Canal 2* in order to "initiate a non-existent right as third party shareholders."

On March 3, Public Prosecutor Alejandro Espino Mendez made a request for the initiation of legal proceedings against the former head of *Canal 2's* investigative unit, José Arrieta Matos, on charges of obstructing justice and of general contempt, IPYS reported. Arrieta, who resigned from his job in September 1997 after Baruch Ivcher was stripped of his citizenship, was accused of persuading a former agent of the army intelligence service, SIE, Jose Luis Bazan, to give a false version of events regarding an attack on the home of Member of Congress Javier Diez Canseco. In an interview with Arrieta at the end of 1994, Bazan gave supposed details about the attack, which was reportedly organised and carried out by SIE agents. As head of the investigative reporting unit at *Canal 2*, Arrieta was responsible for the interview with former Intelligence agent Leonor La Rosa on the programme "Contrapunto." He was also in charge of the investigations which led "Contrapunto" to produce reports about the SIE's tapping of telephones.

On March 19, the Second Criminal Court of Lima (SJPL) rejected the

accusations presented by public prosecutor Alejandro Espino Mendez against Arrieta. However, members of the national tax administration body (SUNAT) went to the home of Arrieta's wife on March 28, looking for accounting documents and income statements from an alleged company belonging to Arrieta, in an apparent attempt to use tax evasion charges to persecute and imprison Arrieta, IPYS reported. On July 15, the director of the asylum office of the United States Immigration and Naturalisation Service informed Arrieta - who had left Peru on January 7 after being informed of the plans to have him arrested and prosecuted - that he had been granted political asylum, IPYS reported.

Journalist Rubén Zurita Vilela was released from prison on January 16. Zurita, a controversial broadcaster with *Radio Sinfonía* in Puerto Maldonado, was sentenced on October 21, 1997, to one year in prison for "illegal practice of journalism" and for "insulting several state officials." Among the reasons for the decision, it was stated that Zurita was exercising his profession as a journalist illegally because he was not a member of the College of Journalists. Zurita was released from prison on January 17, but barred from continuing to work as a journalist. One positive result of the Zurita case was that Congress passed legislation declaring that anyone could engage in the practice of journalism. Law 26937, guaranteeing the free practice of journalism, was promulgated by President Fujimori on March 12.

After serving one third of his five-year sentence and having benefited from the "two-for-one" terms under which a prisoner is given one day of freedom for every two days in jail, radio station owner Ricardo Palma Michelsen was ordered freed on August 27. Judge Nicolas Trujillo ordered the release. Palma, general manager of *Radio Miraflores*, was serving a jail term at the San Jorge prison for tax evasion. On May 23, 1997, the Supreme Court chamber specialising in tax and customs offences had ordered Palma detained in the ongoing tax case which had opened against him in May 1996. Palma was accused of failing to disclose earnings in



order to evade taxes.

Several opposition journalists were victims of a press campaign – apparently orchestrated by the government’s intelligence service – aimed at discrediting them. On April 13, the daily *El Chino* accused Gustavo Mohme, editor of *La República*, of being, among other things, “an arms trafficker.” Other journalists with *La República* - Fernando Rospigliosi, Edmundo Cruz and Angel Páez - were also victims of attack pieces in several tabloid newspapers. An article on May 25 in *El Tío* was headlined: “The Traitor Páez Sends Secret Army Documents Abroad.” Páez, who had also received a number of telephone death threats, told a *New York Times* correspondent that the articles about him and the other journalists - printed in several small-circulation papers relying on advertising from government agencies - included intimate details of their personal lives, political pasts and finances. Although the papers had little credibility, the journalists feared that the articles could have a chilling effect. Páez said he feared that a mentally unstable person could take the articles as a “green light” to attack him as a traitor.

In April, Olga Lena Campos Chavez was sentenced to ten years in jail for the assassination of Miguel Bravo Quispe, the mayor of the district of Yanacancha, IPYS said. Quispe was also a correspondent for the daily paper, *El Comercio*, and for *Radio Programas del Peru*. Olga Campos was the assassinated mayor’s secretary. Bravo Quispe was killed on January 7, 1997 by four shots from inside his pick-up truck. The crime was committed in a deserted spot on Lake Yanamate, nine kilometers south of Cerro de Pasco.

On April 7, five people armed with revolvers and pistols assaulted *Radio San Martín* and carried off transformers, sound equipment and electrical equipment. The small radio station broadcasts from the district of Carabayllo. The motives for the attack were unknown. On April 8, the mayor of the Lima district of San Martín de Porras, Javier Kanashiro, attacked journalist Diogenes Torres Agreda, host of a political programme



on *Radio Latina*. Kanashiro fired three shots at the journalist, who remained unharmed, accusing Torres of ruining his political career. Radio broadcaster Gladys de la Cruz Pariona, who had been developing a campaign on her programme, “Solidarity”, in support of handicapped people, was attacked by two assailants in a microbus in the La Victoria district of Lima on April 9. The journalist suffered multiple injuries to the head and limbs.

On May 2, journalists working for *El Comercio* received death threats on the eve of the newspaper’s publication of an interview with an ex-police officer who had fled to Miami. According to RSF, the newspaper was about to publish an interview with the former officer who accused the secret service of forcing him to fabricate evidence implicating Baruch Ivcher in a stolen car scandal. “It is amazing that before the paper was published, certain people knew the contents of the story, which can lead one to believe that our telephones were bugged. Only State organs could have managed to bug the phones,” said assistant editor Alejandro Miro Quesada Cisneros.

On May 7, journalist Carlos Paredes and cameraman Roger Cordova of the *ATV-Canal 9* programme “Sin Censura” (Uncensored), were detained for several hours in the city of Chiclayo in northern Peru, IPYS reported. The journalists, who wanted to determine the official version of a report on the crash of a military plane, were detained at a Peruvian air force base for four hours on the grounds that they had committed offences against national security and against the security of the air force base. Their equipment was confiscated and their cassettes were erased.

On May 26, journalist Cecilia Valenzuela, host of the programme “Here and Now”, broadcast on *Andina de Televisión*, received a death threat on her cellular phone.

On August 21, public prosecutor José Ochoa Lamas began a criminal investigation against Peru’s most outspoken television journalist César Hildebrandt Perez Trevino, host of the widely-watched news programme,

“En Persona.” On August 24, Ochoa Lamas asked the police to investigate Hildebrandt on charges of treason and espionage, IPYS said. The charges were based on the broadcast of a supposedly confidential piece of information given by Foreign Affairs Minister Eduardo Ferrero Costa to a closed session of Congress on August 4. In the session, Ferrero reported on the incursion of 300 Ecuadorian troops into Peruvian territory. In December, Hildebrandt quit his job after squabbling on air with his station’s boss, *Reuters* reported. The journalist accused the station on his December 2 show of switching off the power during some of his most controversial political programmes, blacking out the programme. After making the allegations on his show, Hildebrandt received a phone-call on air from Genaro Delgado, owner of the private station, *Red Global*. The ensuing squabble between the two men was broadcast live and ended with the presenter announcing his resignation. “It is better to lose one’s head than one’s dignity,” he said.

On August 22, José Olaya, editor-in-chief of the Lima daily *El Tío*, received a death threat when an anonymous telephone caller shouted, “this time they won’t miss,” IPYS reported. On November 14, 1996, when Oyala was editor of the daily *El Chino*, he survived an attack which left him with six gunshot wounds. He was travelling in his car with his wife, when two assailants on a motorcycle shot at him seven times at point-blank range.

In the eastern Peruvian city of Tingo María, Ricardo Guerrero Febres, who works for *Radio Aleluya* and *Global TV Canal 13*, was detained by the police for three hours on August 26 and accused of being a terrorist, IPYS reported. The incident occurred at the local electoral office as the journalist was pursuing a story regarding upcoming municipal elections.

On September 8, Peru’s Supreme Court annulled the January 23 verdict by a chamber of the Puno Superior Court which absolved six army officers and one civilian tried for the October 17, 1996, bombing of *Radio Samoa* and the Puno affiliate of *Channel 13-Global Televisión*, IPYS reported.

The seven had been acquitted of terrorism charges, undisputed damages, illegal possession of arms and supplying explosives. The Supreme Court ordered a new trial of the accused, who are all currently free.

In August and September, journalist Isaac García Villanueva was the victim of an attack campaign launched by public servants and sympathisers of the governing party, IPYS reported. On August 18, a representative of the President's Office, González Reategui, visited the province of Tarapoto to support the re-election of the incumbent mayor and candidate for the Vamos Vecino party. García taped Reategui's speech at a public demonstration, in which Reategui said that if the mayor was not re-elected, the government would not invest in public works projects in the region. At the end of the demonstration, García was instructed by Reategui's bodyguards to turn over the tape. However, García was able to switch the tapes, keeping the recording of Reategui's statements and later presented it on air. In the face of numerous accusations regarding the use of public funds to support Vamos Vecino municipal candidates throughout the country, Reategui had to leave his post as President of the Council of Ministers. On September 27, García returned to Tarapoto, where public servants and sympathisers of the governing party initiated a campaign to attack and discredit him. Advertisements in the form of articles and editorials ran on a daily basis, accusing García of being a traitor and responsible for the government's failure to support the region. García, his family and his colleagues were concerned that the journalist could become the victim of physical aggression by enthusiastic government sympathisers on the eve of the municipal elections. On October 12, a day after the elections, García received a death threat over the telephone. The week before, he was fired from *Radio Siglo XXI*, where he had been working, due to apparent pressure from the government.

On October 9, Julio Vera, owner of the *Channel 9* television network, told Cecilia Valenzuela, host of the programme "Sin Censura", that her

last show would air on November 1. On October 12, Luis Ibérico, the director of the programme, was told his contract with *Channel 9* was being terminated. Financial difficulties were cited as reasons in both cases. Both journalists told IPYS that they believed the actions were undertaken to put an end to independent and objective reporting at the station. The two had produced important stories on government corruption and the illegal actions of the intelligence services. Both journalists had received death threats and a campaign to discredit Valenzuela was undertaken by a sensationalist daily close to the government. It was believed that *Channel 9*, which was heavily indebted and going through severe financial difficulties, was offered financial assistance through official advertising in exchange for taking opposition programmes off the air.

On October 24, leaders of the National Federation of Newspaper, Magazine and Lottery Sellers threatened and coerced Lima's young newspaper vendors into not selling three dailies printed by the *Compañía Impresora Peruana SA* printing house - *La República*, *El Popular* and *Liberio*, IPYS reported. In an October 26 editorial, the daily *El Comercio* claimed that it was no coincidence that this sudden attempt to silence the papers occurred on the very day media were expected to report extensively on the results of peace negotiations with Ecuador. In the same column, *El Comercio* said one could not help view two bills proposed in Congress - one on granting benefits to the vendors and one on the children's rights - in the context of these incidents.

On October 27, journalist José Luis Bardales, director of the bi-weekly *Quincenario Matutino* and director of the *Matutino* news programme, broadcast over *Radio Panamericana*, was kidnapped for several hours in Aucayacu, in the department of Huánuco, by four men in a car without licence plates. The kidnappers told Bardales that he had 24 hours to leave Aucayacu and threatened to kill him otherwise. Bardales told IPYS that he did not know who was behind the incident, although it could be connected to his investigations into RAF *Contratistas Generales*, a

company where he has exposed management irregularities. Since then, he has been in hiding and afraid of reprisals.

On November 2, Gustavo Mohme, editor of *La República*, received a threat over the phone by a man calling himself the “Comando 5 de abril” (Fifth of April Commando). *La República* reported on November 4 that the threats were aimed at stopping Mohme from publishing news on the Inter American Human Rights Commission’s upcoming visit to Peru. The name “Fifth of April Commando” alluded to President Alberto Fujimori’s April 5, 1992, “coup”.

On November 14, Irwin Berríos Pariona, director of the news programme “Opini3n”, which is broadcast by *Radio Uranio* in the province of Ambo, department of Huánuco, was attacked by the Provincial Mayor, Walter Santa Cruz Ponce. The assault took place at City Hall while preparations for the “Miss Ambo 1998” pageant were underway. Mayor Santa Cruz immediately went to the police station and filed a complaint against the journalist. A warrant was issued for his arrest and he remained in jail for twenty four hours even though the district attorney Luis Omar Palacios Zevallos had ordered his immediate release. Berríos Pariona told IPYS that Santa Cruz’s behaviour was a reaction to the journalist’s criticism of his administration. The journalist complained that he was successively denied air time for his news programme, due to direct pressure from the mayor.

On December 17, Javier Peláez Olórtogui and Marco Villanueva Escobar, editor and publisher, respectively, of the daily *Diario de Chimbote*, received three and two-year suspended sentences by the Provisional Judge of the First Criminal Court of Chimbote, IPYS reported. The sentences stemmed from a defamation and slander suit brought against the journalists by Enmer García Carhuajulca in connection with reports critical of the justice administration in Santa province.



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Throughout the year, Peru's journalists were subjected to a systematic campaign of persecution as President Alberto K. Fujimori sought to control the press in anticipation of his bid for an unprecedented third term in office. In addition to threats and physical attacks, favourite methods of intimidation included legal and economic pressure, and government-sponsored articles in the tabloid press attacking the character and patriotism of certain journalists. The country's judiciary – the independence of which has been seriously compromised since President Fujimori introduced a government-controlled system of “temporary judges” in 1992 – handed down several suspended prison sentences. Julio Sotelo Casanova, former general manager of the television station, *Frecuencia Latina-Canal 2*, received a suspended four year prison sentence for fraud and illegal alteration of corporate documents. Several other journalists were given suspended prison sentences and stiff fines for criminal defamation. In September, President Fujimori's government withdrew Peru from the jurisdiction of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, the legal arm of the Organization of American States (OAS), effectively depriving Peruvian defendants of the right of appeal to an international court. The court, however, declared Peru's withdrawal “inadmissible” and said it would continue to summon the Peruvian government to declare in cases involving abuses.

Félix Haro Rodríguez, a photographer and host of a programme broadcast on *Radio 1160's* affiliate in Aucayacu, northern Peru, was brutally murdered in early June. He was found several days after having disappeared on June 2 when two unknown persons arrived at his home under the pretence of hiring him to take photographs at a social event. After an intensive search, his dismembered body was discovered in Cotomonillo, three kilometres from Aucayacu. The fact that he was killed with machetes suggested that the Maoist terrorist group, the Sendero



Luminoso (Shining Path), was responsible for his death. Haro's radio programme featured traditional music, although he also commented on local problems, including official corruption and the activities of drug traffickers and terrorists.

On January 27, Victor Raúl Arroyo Huamán of *Radio Éxito* in Ica, 300 km south of Lima, was assaulted by three individuals, who seriously injured him. Arroyo Huamán, along with other journalists in Ica, had recently exposed irregularities at the National University San Luis Gonzaga de Ica (UNICA).

Between January and March, the mayor of the city of Huaraz, Ancash Department, publicly attacked and threatened several investigative reporters, including Carlos Miranda Arroyo, Robin Hood Ipanaque, and Juan Huaman Campomanes of the radio station, *Vision Alegria*, Pedro Maguina Calderón of *Ya* newspaper, and Hernán Toledo of *ATV Huaraz*. On February 9, Huaraz journalists demonstrated in protest of Mayor Waldo Ríos Salcedo, who accused them of negative coverage.

On March 1, provincial prosecutor Eduardo Macedo Zapata ordered the investigation into the 1997 murder of journalist Tito Pilco Mori officially closed, saying "there were no factors that suggested a criminal element leading up to his unfortunate death." Pilco, owner and director of *Radio Frecuencia Popular* in Rioja, San Martín province, was assaulted on August 28, 1997, as he was returning home on his motorcycle from a visit and died from his injuries on September 3. Two witnesses reported seeing assailants beat the journalist, but the official report said his death was the result of head wounds received when he crashed his motorcycle while drunk. In May, Macedo Zapata and his deputy, José Manuel Monteverde Tuesta, were dismissed because the investigation was plagued with irregularities. Pilco's family believed that Monteverde – whose integrity had been questioned by Pilco on his radio show, "El Pueblo Quiere Saber" (The People Want to Know) – was behind the murder.

On March 18, two masked gunmen tried to kill José Luis Linares



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Altamirano, a producer for *Radio Marañón* in Jaen province. Linares was shot several times, injuring a kidney and the small intestine. *Radio Marañón* is known for its reports on human rights violations in the region. Two months earlier, Linares had received anonymous calls warning him not to report on human rights violations on his programme, “Punto Corazón.” Similar threats were also received by other journalists working at *Radio Marañón*.

Patricia Vásquez Salinas, a journalist who worked at the Central Reserve Bank until 1992, received death threats in March after reporting in the newspaper *Referendum* on nepotism at the bank. In addition, Vásquez said, the administrative manager of the Central Reserve Bank submitted a letter to the Lima Journalists’ College, asking that “drastic sanctions be applied” against the journalist.

On April 19, some 15 people stormed the offices of *Radio Estudio 99* in the city of Satipo, Junín Department, damaging equipment and threatening journalist Fernando Santos Rojas, director of the news programme, “Libertad de Prensa.” Journalists suggested that provincial mayor Arturo Durand Panez had ordered the attack in order to silence Santos Rojas’s critical reporting. Since taking office three years earlier, the mayor has constantly harassed and threatened Satipo’s independent journalists.

Julio Sotelo Casanova, former general manager of the TV station *Frecuencia Latina-Canal 2* and representative in Peru of *Canal 2*’s former owner, Baruch Ivcher, was given a four-year suspended prison sentence on June 18. Sotelo and Ivcher were accused of falsifying Ivcher’s wife’s and daughter’s stakes in the station in order to “initiate a non-existent right as third party shareholders.” Ivcher has been one of the main targets of President Fujimori’s government since April 1997, when *Canal 2* aired an interview with former Intelligence agent Leonor La Rosa, who alleged that the army had tortured her and killed one of her colleagues, Mariela Barreto Riofano, to prevent them from making public the existence of a

secret plan to murder members of the press and opposition members. Israeli-born Ivcher was stripped of his Peruvian citizenship in July 1997 and forced to leave the country. Because Peruvian law precludes foreigners from owning media outlets, control of the station was turned over to the pro-government minority owners.

On July 8, Manuel Jesús Silva Ruiz, producer of the programme “*Varietades*” on *Radio Super AM-FM*, was given a three-year suspended prison sentence and ordered to pay 20,000 soles (US\$ 5,800) in damages after the former mayor of Ucayali, Manuel Vásquez Valera, filed a libel complaint against him. Silva Ruiz had reported on the mayor’s alleged ties with “subversive organisations.”

On August 16, Ricardo Bullón Matos, news director of *Radio Señorial* in Huancayo, was given a two-year suspended prison sentence, barred from working as a journalist for two years, and ordered to pay 15,000 soles in damages after being found guilty of libelling Janina Soria de Véliz, chairwoman of a local charity. Bullón Matos had revealed the conclusions of an internal audit which questioned her running of the charity.

Juan Sánchez Oliva, director of the news programme “*Quassar en la Noticia*” on *Radio Quassar* in Huaraz, received threats over a period of several months in 1999, culminating in the severe beating of his brother, César Augusto, on August 27.

In September, legal proceedings were started against the journalists’ association, *Prensa Libre*, after it published the findings of an investigation concerning the army’s intelligence service. The charges were brought at the request of the National Intelligence Service and the military judiciary, which accused journalists and opposition members belonging to the association of basing their reports on fake documents.

On September 20, Reynaldo Benavides Ramos of *Radio Luren* in Ica was assaulted and threatened by three men after he reported that a local businessman, José Luis Huasasquiche, was involved in the attempted

assassination of Benavides's colleague, Peter Mayer.

Juan Sausa Seclén, a correspondent for the daily *La República*, received death threats and was forced to go into hiding following the publication of articles in the September 28 edition of his newspaper on the activities of Hugo Coral Goycochea, the head of the 6th Military Region intelligence operations unit based in Bagua.

Radio Palmera journalist Fernando Mejía Cornelio, station manager Lennin Ruiz Dávila and *Radio Central* journalist Alberto Medina were briefly detained in the province of Bellavista, San Martín Department, on October 5. All three were accused of speaking in support of terrorism after they were forced to broadcast a manifesto of the armed opposition group, Movimiento Revolucionario Túpac Amaru – MRTA (Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement). Johny Pezo of the *Doble A* radio station in Yurimaguas went through a similar experience in November 1998 when he was jailed for “attempting to justify terrorism” after being forced to read a statement by the MRTA on his radio programme. He was released on January 18 after almost two months in prison.

On October 20, the director of the daily *El Tío*, José Olaya, received a death threat at his newspaper's editorial offices. According to Olaya, a female caller said: “No security will be sufficient to save Olaya and his family from death this time. We are going to kill him and his family like dogs so that he shuts up once and for all.”

Hugo Borjas, former columnist for the daily *El Chato*, was kidnapped and threatened on October 27. Borjas, who was released after five hours, had revealed on October 22 that the owner of *El Chato*, Rafael Documet, was being paid a monthly fee by a man close to the government and the army to publish articles criticising journalists who supported the opposition. Since March 1998, at least ten tabloid newspapers, including *El Chato*, *Repudio*, *El Tío*, *El Chino*, and *La Chuchi*, published similar articles defaming independent journalists. A favourite target was the director of the daily *La República*, Gustavo Mohme Llona, who is also a member of



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Congress and a persistent opponent of President Fujimori's government.

On November 10, Ángel Duran of *Radio Quassar* in Huaraz, Ancash Department, was shot and injured in an ambush. Duran, who is known for his investigative reporting on corruption, had already received death threats in September after he accused Fredy Moreno, a deputy minister in the president's office, of involvement in the illegal accumulation of wealth.

Three people were sentenced in June to life in prison for their roles as ringleaders in the 1998 murder of journalist Isabel Chumpitaz Panta, a radio journalist who championed peasants' rights, and her broadcaster husband, José Amaya Jacinto. 13 others received sentences ranging from four years suspended to 25 years' imprisonment. Chumpitaz – who presented a daily radio programme called "The Peoples' Voice" on *Radio Satélite* in the district of La Unión – and her husband were shot and stabbed to death by a dozen assailants who stormed her home on April 6, 1998. Villagers and farmers often called *Radio Satélite* to voice complaints against the regional and central governments on the programme, which Chumpitaz used to promote campaigns for improved services in the area.



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2000 World Press Freedom Review

By Kela Leon

Long thought to be invulnerable, Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori's reign over the country came to an embarrassing end this year. Indeed, it appeared the president suffered the final indignity of being pushed before he had the opportunity to jump. In November, the president, who had won questionable elections in April and May, attempted to resign from a hotel room in Japan over an embarrassing scandal involving his closest advisor, Vladimiro Montesinos; however, the letter of resignation was rejected by the Peruvian congress, which elected to fire Fujimori instead.

The scandal became public when Montesinos was caught bribing an opposition politician on video. Montesinos is believed to have siphoned off some US \$70 million into Swiss bank accounts during his tenure. Before departing to Japan, true to his tradition, Fujimori tried to appease his critics in a last desperate attempt to prove his innocence by personally leading the manhunt for the former spy who disappeared on 23 October. Since Montesinos' disappearance, one accusation after another has surfaced, including allegations of his participation in gun running and drug trafficking in addition to widespread corruption. Reportedly, Montesinos also played a large role in engineering Fujimori's re-election.

In the run up to the elections it became evident that Fujimori and his cronies would try to tighten their grip on the media in order to stem criticism over Fujimori's dubious decision to stand for a third term. As a consequence, the past year saw a barrage of attacks directed at journalists that dared to report critically on government affairs. Fujimori's continued presidential ambitions also caused resentment among Peruvians that, at times, they took out on the press.

On 6 January, a group of reporters covering a protest rally against the re-election of Fujimori were attacked by protestors carrying stones, glass bottles and wooden sticks. Bayron Horna and cameraman Miguel

Ascencios of Frecuencia Latina Channel 2, John Ariza and Dany Felipa with Andina Television Channel 9 and Aldo Kom with Channel N were injured during the incident. Aside from being attacked by angry crowds, reporting on corruption has proved to be a dangerous task for journalists in the Andean nation.

On 25 October, José del Carmen Parraguez Pérez, a journalist with Radio FVC, in Nueva Cajamarca, was attacked by eight unknown individuals while he was on his way home. Prior to the attack, Pérez had been harassed by a group of people who warned him to stop reporting on state corruption.

Photographers Jhony Laurente and José Abanto, both with daily La República, were attacked by two individuals and had their camera equipment destroyed on 22 February. La República had investigated and published a report claiming that public funds were being used to make t-shirts with the emblem of the pro-Fujimori Peru 2000 political coalition. The head of the National Intelligence Service, Admiral Humberto Rozas, denied the allegations. Responding to this denial, La República published a photo series, which showed pictures of a police truck transporting the t-shirts towards the Presidential Palace and the National Intelligence Service Headquarters. This incident was part of a disturbing pattern of attacks against journalists reporting on the antics of the Peru 2000 coalition in the past year.

At the end of February, Teobaldo Menéndez, director of the radio program “Inédito”, aired by Station X in Yurimaguas in the Amazon department of Loreto, was assaulted by two unknown individuals. In addition, the attackers also threatened Menéndez, saying they would kill him if he did not stop criticizing Nery Salinas, a congressional candidate for Peru 2000.

On 1 March, La República correspondent Ana María Tejada was detained by Walter Chipoco, campaign manager for congresswoman Carmen Lozada de Gamboa, a high profile spokeswoman for Peru 2000, while she was interviewing him in the city of Tacna. Apparently, Chipoco

forcefully took the journalist to a house where he proceeded to erase the cassette tape that contained the interview. The Fujimori regime has shown that it has little time for alternative views. Opposition media have been subject to constant pressure from the authorities through various measures.

A case in point were several incidents of harassment directed at the newspaper *Liberación*. On 7 April, two days before the presidential election, the Fifty-Ninth Civil Court of Lima ordered the embargo of a printing press operated by LEA S.A. where the opposition dailies *Liberación*, directed by Cesar Hildebrandt and *Punto Final* are printed. The measure was perceived as yet another act of intimidation against *Liberación* and its editor, since according to company owner, Abraham Hochman, the company which holds the debt is Hochman International not LEA S.A. Furthermore, although Hochman is the owner of the grounds where the printing press is installed, the equipment is not owned by him. Therefore, the embargo is illegal.

On 23 June, the municipality of San Borja ordered the company BDHIV S.A. to end all commercial activities. The company is located in the same building as the offices of *Liberación* and the order thus affected the newspaper as well. Reportedly, the order came in response to a number of complaints from neighbours over the increase of traffic caused by the commercial activities in the office building. The municipality said that it would take action unless the building was vacated.

An investigative journalist with *Liberación*, Rossana Cueva, was summoned to the 2 Penal Court of Lima on 29 August, to respond to defamation charges in a case filed by a member of the Superior Court of Lima. Prior to the charge, Cueva had published a report titled, "Meet the magistrate that saved Fujimori". In the article, Cueva had written that judge Juan Miguel Ramos Lorenzo had been reinstated in spite of the fact that he had been dismissed from the Judiciary due to corruption charges brought against him in 1998. Moreover, the judge had ruled in

favour of President Fujimori in his divorce case after being reinstated.

In early October, Jaime Alemán a lawyer who represents Vladimiro Montesinos, attacked reporter Mariella Patriau and photographer Adriana Navarro, both with Liberación, in Panama City where the journalists were investigating financial corruption involving the presidential aide. Authorities also tried to silence political opposition through various measures.

On 22 March, the Thirty First Criminal Court of Lima attempted to re-open the case against lawyer Heriberto Benitez who was accused of breaching the press law and defaming General Baltazar Alvarado. In 1998, Benitez claimed during a television interview that Alvarado, then director of the Central Military Army Hospital, was holding tortured ex-intelligence service agent Leonor La Rosa captive at the hospital compound without allowing her to receive visits from her family or her lawyer. Prior to the latest round of criminal charges, two courts had acquitted Benitez; however, the Supreme Court decided to reactivate the case.

At the time the case was reopened Benitez was standing for congress but was forced to withdraw since according to Peruvian legislation citizens who are involved in criminal cases are prevented from standing for public office. Press freedom violations are not limited only to Lima, the capital, but have also occurred in different parts of the country.

Together with mayor Ivan Vasquez and other local authorities, a group of journalists published a statement protesting a number of press freedom violations in the Amazon city of Iquitos on 4 April. Two days later, journalist Alberto Ramos Romero head of the National Journalists' Association of Huaraz, stated that several local journalists had been forced to resign from their jobs by media owners due to their criticism of the government. Included among them were, Alberto Ramos Romero, news director with Radio Ancash; Robin Hood Ipanaqué with Radio Vision Alegria; Edgar Palma Huerta, director of the biweekly La Jornada and Gerardo Rocha news director with Radio Huascarán. As anticipated, coverage of the April elections proved to be a difficult task for journalists.



Channel N, an independent cable television station belonging to the daily newspaper El Comercio group, was fined US \$84,000 on 10 April by the National Electoral Jury for broadcasting polling results in the 15 day no poll period before the elections. The station had received attention for its objective coverage of the election campaign.

Apparently, Channel N was transmitting a pre election conference live on 5 April, in which polling statistics were being debated. Although participating experts had been warned that the conference was being televised live, a latecomer who did not hear the warning unexpectedly mentioned specific polling percentages, without giving the cameraman a chance to switch off the transmission. The size of the fine was later reduced on appeal.

Moreover, on the same day, the National Electoral Jury fined the daily El Comercio de Cuzco approximately US \$8,000 for publishing an opinion article in its editorial section that mentioned polling results. This happened regardless of the fact that details of the poll had already been made public. The elections, and the ensuing criticism of fraud, resulted in violence in parts of the country.

On 10 April, a day after the presidential elections, a group of syndicalists and students vandalized several media outlets in the city of Huaraz protesting electoral fraud. Windows and doorways were broken at Radio Ancash, Prensa Regional, the YA newspaper and AMR Television de Huaraz Channel 2.

In addition to these attacks, a group of protestors assaulted a Panamericana Television crew on 11 April, while they were covering a post electoral meeting featuring presidential contender Alejandro Toledo. A crowd attacked the crew while they were in the station's mobile unit, which was severely damaged. Two assistant cameramen were also seriously injured.

A different kind of pressure on the media also surfaced in the wake of the elections. On 24 April, Raymundo Flores, an army colonel, Milecio



Vallejos, Peru 2000's departmental coordinator in Bagua Grande and Flavio Flores, a journalist with Radio Utcubamba, approached Carlos Flores Borja, press director with radio Galaxia Super Stereo, and allegedly attempted to bribe him.

Reportedly, the journalist was offered the equivalent of US \$200 for changing the radio station's editorial line and airing a message criticizing presidential candidate Alejandro Toledo. The station had been subject to harassment prior to the elections as well. In February, a man who identified himself as a member of the Public Relations Office of the Las Brisas army headquarters at Bagua showed up at the station's offices and started to ask questions about the identity of the station's staff, its programmes and their schedules. The man did not present any identification. At times, government officials have also resorted to violence in order to silence journalists.

During the evening hours of 24 May, Fabian Salazar, occasional collaborator with the La Republica was tortured at his office in Lima by four unidentified men. According to statements made by Salazar from his hospital bed, the men, presumed to be intelligence agents, cut his arm with a knife and stole a number of videos that he had just obtained from various sources. The stolen videos featured two members of the National Electoral Jury entering the premises of the National Intelligence Service headquarters. Likewise, the videos showed journalists, opinion poll company directors and the owner of Channel 4 television station, Jose Francisco Crousillat, entering the offices of spy chief Vladimiro Montesinos.

Journalists Hugo Gonzales Hinostrroza, a correspondent with Liberación, Omar Robles Torre, editor of the biweekly Presencias, and freelance photographer Roger Luciano were injured and had a camera and cellular phone stolen by regional government employees on 12 May. The attack occurred in the Andean province of Carhuaz while the journalists were taking photographs of a group of people who were gathered around state

owned vehicles in the service of the food aid government Programa Nacional de Asistencia Alimentaria. The food programme has been denounced as an attempt to bolster support for Fujimori. Several other journalists were also attacked for criticising the food programme.

Jaime Pedroza, a reporter with Lima based station Radio Santa Rosa, was beaten by two men while he was covering the National Office for Electoral Processes on 24 May. The unidentified attackers made references to Pedroza's reporting on the political manipulation of the government sponsored food aid programs and popular kitchens. They also threatened Radio Santa Rosa news producers Juana Martínez, Ismael Soto and Mary Ann Lynch.

The day after the beating, Asunta Montoya, press director for Radio Santa Rosa, made an announcement in which he complained that for several weeks members of the radio's staff had been subjected to various forms of harassment. Among them he cited a visit from an unidentified man who displayed an interest in journalist Miguel Lopez. On 11 May, reporter Gianina Manchego was stopped in the street by an unknown individual who also inquired about the radio station's editorial line.

Intimidation and harassment of the radio station's staff continued on 29 May when journalist Leddy Mozombite, a producer of the programme "Soncco Warmi" (heart of a woman), was attacked by four unknown individuals who held her from behind and tore her clothes. The attackers ran away after bystanders came to the aid of the journalist. As they were fleeing, the attackers threatened that she would not escape so easily next time.

On 24 July, the Peruvian Air Force prohibited all civilian aircraft from flying over Lima. The ban prevented all airplanes from flying under three thousand metres. The decision was taken just before a major anti-Fujimori demonstration was about to take place in conjunction with the presidential swearing-in ceremony. In consequence, Channel N was prevented from recording news from the station's helicopter. Many members of the foreign

press were also affected by this order, as the cable station is a regular contributor of news footage used by international agencies. On 25 May, the Channel N pilot and reporters were prevented from boarding the helicopter, which was surrounded by policemen.

During the coverage of the National Independence Day and the presidential swearing-in ceremony on 28 July, sixteen journalists were the target of various acts of intimidation from both police authorities and protestors participating in street protests. Aside from outright attacks against journalists, institutions such as the National Intelligence Services, formerly headed by the now disgraced and dethroned spy chief Vladimir Montesinos, had in the past used other tactics against political opponents. Several shady, but nonetheless effective methods have been employed.

Cecilia Valenzuela director of the online news agency imedia.com reported that a van with tinted windows stood guard in front of her office for several days, starting on 31 August. Furthermore, she was nearly run over by an unidentified vehicle close to her home on 4 September. Valenzuela has also been the subject of a smear campaign in the so-called popular press (prensa chicha) that was launched on 2 September. In recent years, these newspapers have been used to pressure journalists critical of the government. The campaigns have been linked to the National Intelligence Services.

At the time of her harassment, Valenzuela was reporting on the sale of arms by Peruvian authorities, including Vladimiro Montesinos, to the Colombian guerrillas. Other scare tactics by dubious characters include an incident on 14 March, when two men, later identified as off-duty army personnel, entered Radio Astoria's recording studio as reporter Luis Ugáz was conducting his programme. The officers physically attacked the journalist and threatened to kill him. On 16 March, two unidentified men forcibly entered Carlos Martínez's house where they proceeded to ransack the property. Martínez is a reporter with the program "La Razon", transmitted by Radio Arpegio in Iquitos in the province of Maynas in the

department of Loretos. Despite hopes for a change after the fall of the Fujimori regime, another journalist with the same radio station was handed a sentence for defamation this year.

On 20 December, it was reported that James Beuzeville Zumaeta director of the radio programme “La Razon” was sentenced to a one-year suspended prison term and ordered to pay approximately US \$2,300 in civil damages. Zumaeta was convicted of insulting and defaming José Gonzales Reátegui, the former president of Loreto’s Provisional Council of Regional Administration. The charges stem from 1997 when the journalist started to report on corruption and financial irregularities allegedly committed by Gonzales.

In a surreal incident of direct abuse by the authorities, on 12 September, journalist Alexis Fiestas Quinto and photographer Victor Granda, both with the newspaper El Popular, were attacked and detained by the mayor of San Juan de Lurigancho Ricardo Chiroque. In addition, the two had their equipment confiscated by the mayor and his head of security, Wilson Herrera Moscoso and bodyguard Enrique Vargas.

The two journalists were covering a protest over health problems linked to the demolition of a number of public washrooms. When the mayor realised that the journalists were interviewing and taking pictures of the demonstrators, he and his friends started to beat the journalists and forced them at gunpoint to a municipal office where they continued the beating for two hours. In a statement on 14 September, mayor Chiroque blamed the journalists for the incident. Such behaviour reveals to a large extent the widespread lack of respect for the press among Peruvian politicians.

Providing further evidence for this, Congressman Luis Cáceres Velásquez attacked La República reporter Rosa Reyna on 22 September. Reyna had been among a group of journalists questioning the congressman in the Congress building. During the interview, Cáceres described La República as “public enemy Number one” and dared a reporter from the daily to come forward. When Reyna identified herself,



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he said that she should be grateful that she was not a man or he would punch her.

He then dragged her to his office and continued to insult the journalist and compared La República to a “brothel”. His aides closed the office door to prevent Reyna from leaving. A radio reporter for Radio Programas del Peru, managed to sneak into the office and proceeded to transmit the incident live.

On 26 October, Congress president Martha Hildrebrandt apologised to Reyna on behalf of the parliamentary directive table. However, five motions introduced on 1 December to debate disciplinary action against Cáceres Velásquez did not pass due to a tiebreak in the house. The decision not to proceed with a debate on possible disciplinary action was made by vice president Francisco who carried the deciding vote. In reaching the decision not to investigate the case, Tudela argued that the incident had occurred over two months ago and was no longer of any importance. In an act of solidarity, those journalists covering the Congressional session walked out.

On 2 July, Luis Baltazar Caviedes Nuñez de la Torre was found dead on the banks of the Chuyapi river in Cuzco. Nuñez de la Torre, a journalist with Sur Oriente and Frecuencia Integral radio stations, had bruises and injuries to the right side of his head and right eye. It appears that he was murdered rather than the victim of a brutal robbery since all his belongings were still with him.

Former director of Cambio magazine Yehude Simon Munaro was granted a presidential pardon on 2 December and released from prison after eight years of imprisonment at the Miguel Castro high security state penitentiary. Although an investigation by a governmental ad hoc commission for the release of the innocent in prison included his name in a list which was presented to the president, Fujimori did not heed the recommendation. In 1992, Simon was sentenced to 30 years in prison for supporting terrorism through his writings in Cambio. Jorge Santistevan, the former



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Ombudsman Ad Hoc Commission member declared that it had been advisor Montesinos who was adamantly opposed to Simon's release.

On 6 December, after a three-year national and international campaign, a civil court enabled businessman Baruch Ivcher to regain control of Frecuencia Latina, the Channel 2-television station. Ivcher was stripped of his Peruvian citizenship on 11 July 1997 paving the way for Channel 2 minority share holders, Mendel and Samuel Winter, to take over the administration and editorial control of the station, which was characterized by close support of the Fujimori regime and an intense smear campaign against opposition journalists, politicians and human rights activists, widely believed to have been orchestrated by the National Intelligence Services.