

Murder of Iraqi Journalists

The betrayal of Iraq 's media professionals

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A new landmark in the Iraq catastrophe, and a new landmark in history altogether: at least 300 media professionals have died in Iraq .

Suhad Al-Khalidi, reporter for Iraqi Media Network, was killed by US troops on 4 February 2007 when their patrol passed by her car in Hilla. **Three guards** working for the government funded al-Iraqiya TV were killed by fire of foreign security guards in central Baghdad on 7 February 2007. Foreign security guards accompanying a delegation shot and killed the three guards. **Rasoul Abdul Hussein**, a reporter, was killed together with his wife in Diwaniya on 21 February 2007. **Hamid Mohammed Salih**, a program director for the Dijlah radio station, was assassinated in the Jami'a district On 19 March 2007. **Mohammed Jassim Yousif**, a reporter for the Iraqi Media Network, was assassinated west of Baghdad on 31 March. **An unknown correspondent** for the Egyptian daily Al-Ahram was killed in a car bomb explosion targeting the Shi'ite Khillani mosque in a crowded area of central Baghdad on 19 June 2007. **Abdul Khaliq al-Habir al-Anbaki**, a caricaturist in al-Mutamar newspaper, was killed along with his 11-member-family in the car bombing attack that took place on 27 July 2007 in Karrada, central Baghdad .

The two things these murders have in common is that these persons were Iraqi media professionals and that their assassination, which occurred in 2007, went unreported by CPJ (Committee to Protect Journalists), and RSF (Reporters Without Borders). These casualties are listed on the *BRussells Tribunal* website (<http://www.brusselstribunal.org/JournalistKilled.htm>) and their cases were taken from different press reports.

What's happening with the Western journalist ethics? What's happening with the solidarity between Western media professionals and their Iraqi colleagues? The above mentioned killings, did they not take place? Were they not mentioned in one or another press report? Why are they not listed then?

Different journalists organisations defend the interests of their colleagues and/or compile lists of killed media professionals in occupied Iraq: CPJ (Committee to Protect Journalists), RSF (Reporters Without Borders), INSI (International News Safety Institute) - closely linked with the IFJ (International Federation of Journalists), ICasualties (Iraq Coalition Casualty Count), (IFEX) International Freedom of Expression Exchange - who collect most of their data from RSF-, and others, like UNESCO.

CPJ considers a journalist to be killed on duty if the person died as a result of a hostile action—such as reprisal for his or her work, or crossfire while carrying out a dangerous

assignment. CPJ does not include journalists killed in accidents, such as car or plane crashes, unless the crash was caused by aggressive human action (for example, if a plane were shot down or a car crashed trying to avoid gunfire). Nor does CPJ include journalists who died of health ailments. They list only 26 Media professionals killed in 2007, of which 5 in a list of pending investigations into suspicious deaths, called [Killed: Motive Unconfirmed](#).

The Freedom Forum Journalists Memorial (Newseum) staffers claim to compile their list from information circulated by the Committee to Protect Journalists, the International Press Institute, the International Freedom of Expression Clearing House, Reporters Sans Frontières, the International Federation of Journalists, the Inter American Press Association, news stories and other sources. A whole lot of sources, it seems. They list only 28 journalists killed in Iraq in 2007.

Reporters without Borders lists only 50 killed media professionals in 2007. INSI lists 57 casualties in 2007.

The BRussels Tribunal lists 300 deceased media professionals since the illegal invasion until now, of which 271 are Iraqi Nationals. 6 died of “non-violent” causes. All the others are violent deaths. The number for 2007 stands at 72 killed media professionals, of which 71 are Iraqis. The latest casualty being an Iraqi newspaper correspondent, Abdul-Khaliq Nasser, who was fatally wounded in a rocket attack in Mosul on 28th September 2007.

All the mainstream media worldwide take over the ridiculous figures of CPJ and RSF. Here’s what one usually reads in an article about yet another killing of a media professional:

“According to [Reporters Without Borders](#) at least X journalists and media assistants have been killed in Iraq since the start of the war in March 2003; two are missing and 13 are currently being held hostage. Their number may be higher than the CPJ figure quoted above because it includes media assistants as well as journalists.”

“The CPJ count is the most widely cited number in reporting on journalist deaths in Iraq . But the CPJ tally of 61 is misunderstood and incomplete because it excludes dozens of journalists and news organization employees killed or who otherwise died on assignment in Iraq.”, [Eason Jordan writes in the IHT on 08 February 2006](#).

The US Administration, the Brookings Institution, you name it, they all use CPJ, RSF and ICasualties figures of killed mediaprofessionals. One would expect that lists of murdered colleagues are compiled with the greatest care, given the importance official bodies attach to these figures. That is not the case. The negligence with which the lists are compiled is revolting. It is another sign of either self-censorship or deliberate downplaying of casualties, something we’re seeing happening with the surveys of civilian casualties in Iraq . The media don’t use the scientific [studies of the Lancet or the credible polls of ORB](#), the media use the ridiculous figure of Iraq Bodycount, an organisation that lists only what the Western media reports. A clear case of inbreeding. A clear case of imitating “His Master’s Voice”.

Please have a look at some figures. These include Journalists, Media workers and unconfirmed cases.

SINCE 2003:

CPJ

[Committee to Protect Journalists](#)

Not reported: 132 violent deaths

RSF

[Reporters Without Borders](#)

Not reported: 92 violent deaths

INSI

[International News Safety Institute](#)

Not reported: 68 violent deaths

ICAS

[Iraq Coalition Casualty Count](#)

Not reported: 163 violent deaths

NEWSEUM

[Freedom Forum Journalists Memorial](#)

Not reported: 170 violent deaths

In 2007: (until 29 September)

CPJ

[Committee to Protect Journalists](#)

Not reported: 45 violent deaths

RSF

[Reporters Without Borders](#)

Not reported: 20 violent deaths

INSI

[International News Safety Institute](#)

Not reported: 14 violent deaths

ICAS

[Iraq Coalition Casualty Count](#)

Not reported: 42 violent deaths

[Freedom Forum Journalists Memorial](#)

Not reported: 44 violent deaths

Al-Iraqiya director general Habib al-Sadr [told AFP](#) last month that at least 75 members of his staff have been killed since he took over the channel in 2005 and another 68 wounded. The *BRussells* Tribunal list of killed media professionals has less than 1/3rd of this number in its database. So by extrapolation we could conclude that we have listed only about 1/3rd of the real casualties of media professionals in the Iraq war. Why is this claim not being further investigated? Habib al-Sadr's words are meant for sceptic people who think that the *BRussells* Tribunal figures have been artificially inflated.

Do I sound too harsh for the Western media organisations? I don't think so. I've written to CPJ and received a meaningless answer. I wrote to RSF and received no answer. I've written to many media outlets and received no reaction. I've also sent them a previous article: "[At least 78 media professionals killed in Iraq in 2006.](#)", dated 21 February 2007. No reactions, no comment.

By the way: after further research, I discovered that at least 90 media professionals have been killed in 2006, not 78. Here is the number of killed media professionals by year, according to different press accounts.

Iraq war deadliest conflict for media professionals.

(List: 29 September 2007)

Year

Iraqi media workers killed

Non Iraqi

Total

2003

6

19

25

2004

51

6

57

2005

55

1

56

2006

88

2

90

2007

71

1

72

Total:

271

29

300

Of which 6 have died of “non-violent” causes.

Let’s have a closer look at the figures for 2007. Let’s have a look – as an example – at the media professionals that CPJ doesn’t include in its list. Conclude for yourself if these deaths would have to be included or not. And think about why they have not been included. There is a link to the media that have reported these killings.

Khoudr Younes al-Obaidi

Freelance journalist

12/01/2007

[Armed men opened fire on Khoudr Younes al-Obaidi in the evening of 12 January as he returned to his home in Mosul, police said. The journalist, who was as a stringer for several titles, worked mostly for Al-Diwan, the press organ of local tribes. No motiv](#)

Yassin Aid Assef

Al Sabah’s correspondent

14/01/2007

[killed by a bomb while out covering a story in Baghdad](#)

Falah Khalaf Al Diyali

journalist of the daily Al Saha

15/01/2007

[shot dead by unidentified gunmen on 15 January in the city of Ramadi](#)

Unknown

employee of the governmental daily Al Sabah

16/01/2007

[Four employees of the governmental daily Al Sabah were killed in an especially horrifying manner from 12 to 16 January. Two, whose names have not been revealed, were kidnapped from the newspaper's offices in Baghdad on 12 January and were found with their throats cut the next day near Al Nouman hospital.](#)

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Unknown

security guard Al Sabah

16/01/2007

[A security guard's body was found on the newspaper's roof on 16 January. The newspaper, which did not want to give out his name, said he was probably shot from a distance with a hunting rifle while patrolling the building's roof.](#)

Salih Mehdi

Mustaqbal radio station

17/01/2007

http://www.iraqslogger.com/index.php/post/2215/18_Iraqi_Journalists_Killed_in_2007

Mohammed Nuri

Reporter Iraqi Media Network, assassinated in the Ninewa governorate

20/01/2007

http://www.iraqlogger.com/index.php/post/2215/18_Iraqi_Journalists_Killed_in_2007

Baha' Hussein Khalaf

Reporter Iraqi Media Network, assassinated in the Ninewa governorate

20/01/2007

http://www.iraqlogger.com/index.php/post/2215/18_Iraqi_Journalists_Killed_in_2007

Dhiala' Mugotar

editor in chief of the Protection of Consumers business magazine, is assassinated in Adhamiya

24/01/2007

http://www.iraqlogger.com/index.php/post/2215/18_Iraqi_Journalists_Killed_in_2007

Munjid Al-Tumaimi

Freelance photographer

28/01/2007

http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id_article=20929

Sabir Amid Mahdi

reporter, killed in a car bombing in the Babel governorate

2/02/2007

http://www.iraqlogger.com/index.php/post/2215/18_Iraqi_Journalists_Killed_in_2007

Suhad Al-Khalidi

Reporter for Iraqi Media Network, killed by US troops when their patrol passes by her car in Hilla

4/02/2007

http://www.iraqlogger.com/index.php/post/2215/18_Iraqi_Journalists_Killed_in_2007



An Accident of War The family of Iraqi journalist Suhad Shakir Fadhil display a picture of her with candles after she was likely mistaken for a bomber by Western security and shot dead

Unknown

security guard

7/02/2007

[Three guards working for the government funded al-Iraqiya TV were killed by fire of foreign security guards in central Baghdad, a media source said. Foreign security guards accompanying a delegation shot and killed three guards working for al-Iraqiya TV.](#)

Unknown

security guard

7/02/2007

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Hussein Al Zubaydi

journalist with the weekly al-Ahali

19/02/2007

[killed by gunmen in unclear circumstances in Baghdad](#)

Rasoul Abdul Hussein

reporter, killed together with his wife in Diwaniya

21/02/2007

http://www.iraqlogger.com/index.php/post/2215/18_Iraqi_Journalists_Killed_in_2007

Youssef Sabri

Iraqi TV journalist for Biladi TV, a privately-owned station affiliated with al-Dawa

14/03/2007

[was among the 22 killed from a car bombing at a Baghdad checkpoint in the al Dawra district in the south of Baghdad. He was reportedly at the checkpoint to film Shia pilgrims leaving the capital for the holy city of Karbala.](#)

Hussein al Jaburi

editor of the daily al-Safir

16/03/2007

[He died from his injuries in a hospital in Amman, Jordan on 16 March where he was taken for treatment after being ambushed outside his Baghdad home on 11 February.](#)

Hamid al-Duleimi

producer on the TV channel al-Nahrain

19/03/2007

[His body was found dead in the Baghdad morgue. He had been abducted two days previously as he left the channel's studios.](#)

Hamid Mohammed Salih

program director for the Dijlah radio station, is assassinated in the Jami'a district

19/03/2007

http://www.iraqlogger.com/index.php/post/2215/18_Iraqi_Journalists_Killed_in_2007

Mohammed Jassim Yousif

reporter for the Iraqi Media Network, assassinated west of Baghdad

31/03/2007

http://www.iraqlogger.com/index.php/post/2215/18_Iraqi_Journalists_Killed_in_2007

Khamel Mohsin

well-known to Iraqis as a TV and radio presenter during the Saddam Hussein era.

3/04/2007

[kidnapped by gunmen as she left her office in the university district on 3 April. Her body was found the next day. She had worked for Radio Sawa since Saddam's removal.](#)

Husain Nizaer

journalist trainee – Baghdad TV

5/04/2007

[killed and at least 12 people were wounded in an attack on the satellite TV station yesterday in which a truck laden with explosives was driven at the building and then gunmen opened fire.](#)

Iman Yussef Abdallah

radio mouthpiece of the Mosul workers' union

12/04/2007

[Gunmen shot dead Iman Yusef Abdallah and her husband in an eastern area of the city, the Iraqi Association for the Defence of Journalists' Rights said. Their bodies were later set alight in their vehicle.](#)

Unknown

Staff employee of Radio Dijla

3/05/2007

[gunmen attacked staff at the independent radio station in a predominantly Sunni area of Baghdad, killing two and wounding five, and then bombed the building and knocked the station off the air](#)

Aqeel Abdul-Qader

writer working for al-Raad.

9/05/2007

[A police source told Reuters that the men were targeted because of their work, and that they were actually dragged from the car first and tortured before being shot.](#)

Nibras Razzaq

Driver

9/05/2007

[The killed journalists were Raad Mutashar, chairman of Kirkuk writers' union and owner of al-Raad media institution, which publishes a number of papers, and Imad Abdul-Razzaq al-Obeidi and Aqeel Abdul-Qader, both writers working for al-Raad.](#)

Aidan Abdullah al-Jamiji

in charge of Kirkuk television's Turkoman language section

26/05/2007

[the body of Aidan Abdullah al-Jamiji, who was in charge of Kirkuk television's Turkoman language section and was a well-known local musician, was found on 26 May in the boot of his car. The car had been torched and dumped near a cemetery in the northern c](#)

Mohammed Hilal Karji

Journalist for Baghdad TV

7/06/2007

[kidnapped June 7 outside his home while on his way to work in the Yousifiyah region south of Baghdad, and his bullet-ridden body was found in a morgue the following day, an official](#)

[at the station said.](#)

Unknown

correspondent for the Egyptian daily Al-Ahram

19/06/2007

[At least 78 people were killed and 224 wounded, including a correspondent for the Egyptian daily Al-Ahram, in a car bomb explosion targeting the Shi'ite Khillani mosque in a crowded area of central Baghdad on Tuesday afternoon](#)

Zeena Shakir Mahmoud

former radio broadcaster, was writing about women's affairs for the Al-Haqiqa newspaper

24/06/2007

[Zeena Shakir Mahmoud was shot to death on her way home from work in Mosul. Although she worked for a Kurdish paper, she was a Sunni Arab.](#)

Rahim Al-Maliki

Reporter Al-Iraqiya and poet

25/06/2007

http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id_article=22723

Sarmad Hamdi al-Hassani

Journalist for Baghdad TV

27/06/2007

[Hassani, 43, was seized from his home in Baghdad's Jamia neighborhood on June 27, his body found the next day, the official said.](#)

Hamed Abd Farhan

veteran journalist who had worked for the Iraqi News Agency for over 30 years, as well as several local newspapers and magazines

27/06/2007

[Gunmen assassinated an Iraqi journalist near his house in the Turath district of southern Baghdad, a source from the Iraqi Journalists Union said. Most recently he worked in the media bureau of the Baghdad Municipality.](#)

Louaï Souleimane

Reporter Nineveh

28/06/2007

http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id_article=22809

Ali Watan

Journalist for Samawa local TV

7/07/2007

[killed in the clashes that erupted between security forces and fighters of the Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr's Mahdi army in the southern Iraqi city of Samawa during the last two days](#)

Unknown

translator for Reuters

14/07/2007

[Gunmen shot dead an Iraqi who worked as a translator for Reuters in Baghdad this week. Family members said they did not want to reveal the name of their son.](#)

Adnan Al-Safi

correspondent for the Al-Anwar satellite channel

25/07/2007

[shot by a sniper's bullet in the Utaifiya district of Baghdad](#)

Abdul Khaliq al-Habir al-Anbaki

caricaturist in al-Mutamar newspaper

26/07/2007

[killed along with his 11-member-family in the car bombing attack that took place on Thursday in Karrada, central Baghdad](#)

Anwar Abbas Lafta

CBS translator

26/08/2007

[killed by gunmen who stole him from his home. His body was found in the morgue last night](#)

Amir al Rashidi

cameraman who works for Al-Iraqiya

3/09/2007

[Unidentified gunmen killed Amir al Rashidi, a cameraman who works for Al-Iraqiya, in the centre of Mosul on Monday night](#)

Muhannad Ghanim Al Ubeidi

Journalist Radio Dar al-Salam Mosul

20/09/2007

[Unidentified gunmen have killed Muhannad Ghanim Ahmed, who worked for the privately owned Radio Dar al-Salam, in the eastern Al-Muharibeen district of the city.](#)

Jawad al-Daami

Iraqi television presenter working with the private Al-Baghdadiyah channel

23/09/2007

[He was ambushed in the western Baghdad neighbourhood of Al-Qadisiyah as he was driving through the area on Sunday. Gunmen opened fire on his car and Daami was killed instantly.](#)

These 45 Iraqi media professionals deserve to be remembered, especially by organisations that claim to defend their interests. Looking at these figures is a good reason for journalists not to use CPJ's tallies anymore in an article about the killing of a journalist. It's not a decent thing to list only 36 % of the reported casualties and leave out 64%. There can be no valid reason to underreport so grossly.

But there's more. The most striking absent journalist in CPJ's database is Yasser Salihee (or Yassir Al-Salihi). Knight-Ridder reporter, Yasser Salihee, 30, was killed on June 24, 2005 while driving his car. He came into a Baghdad road intersection where every exit had been blocked by U.S. Humvees. He died of a single shot to the head. A [report](#) by Salon.com, which interviews the supposed sniper -but does not identify him- paints the incident as an unpremeditated, accidental killing. But details of the scene and the events revealed later have the [hallmarks of a staged assassination](#). At the time Salihee entered the intersection, all other exits were blocked. And as he approached, another car already in place began 'turning' in front of Salihee to bring him to a halt in the killing zone and ensure a perfect shot. The windshield of his car appears to be pierced by only one bullet -the fatal one. Four fingers of his right hand were missing -possibly in vain self-defense. At the time he was killed, he was investigating the activities of the death squads in Iraq . There are reasonable doubt about this incident being a murder or an accident. Yet CPJ doesn't even list Yasser Salihee in their special [unconfirmed cases for 2005](#). He just disappeared from CPJ's database. That is very remarkable and very suspicious. And certainly not impartial.

I would like to plead for a serious count of killed media professionals who died in this bloody war. Or is the life of an Iraqi media worker less worth than that of his colleagues in the West, where killed journalist are meticulously counted?

I would also like to plead for the creation of an independent journalists organisation that can really defend the interests of journalists in Iraq, and is not linked in one way or another to the mainstream media that are owned by the very same people who have advocated for this war to take place, who keep on defending the occupation and remain silent about the catastrophic situation that is being rightfully defined by ever more people as a genocide.

Dirk Adriaensens is member BRussells Tribunal Executive Committee

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