

LOCAL LEVEL JOURNALISM AND DEMOCRACY INDICATORS IN LATIN AMERICA

Fernando J. Ruiz



**THE WORST AREAS
TO PRACTICE JOURNALISM
IN THE SECOND SEMESTER
2007**

The map shows Latin America with a color-coded legend: Red (Worst), Orange, Yellow, Light Blue, Dark Blue, and Green (Best). The red area covers Cuba, and the orange area covers Argentina. Other countries are in yellow, light blue, dark blue, or green.

During the succession currently underway, Cuba is maintaining control over public communications.

In almost every country in the region, presidents criticize media outlets and journalists on a regular basis, as well as journalism in general.

The revenue bonanza many Latin American countries are enjoying is strengthening government-owned media.

In the context of a worsened institutional culture, Argentina maintains a government communications model that has proved successful at preserving governability and winning elections.



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-*Las palabras son acciones: historia política y profesional del diario La Opinión de Jacobo Timerman*, (Words are action: Political & professional history of the La Opinión newspaper belonging to Jacobo Timerman), 1971-77, Perfil Libros, Buenos Aires, 2001.

-*El señor de los mercados. Ambito Financiero, la City y el poder del periodismo económico*, (The master of the markets: Ambito Financiero, the City & the power of the financial press), El Ateneo, Buenos Aires, 2001.

Local Level Journalism and Democracy Indicators in Latin America

By Fernando J. Ruiz

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

■ In Mexico, most cases of attacks on journalists are still linked to government authorities and police or military forces. However, the most serious -and cruel- cases are linked to drug trafficking.

■ There is a judiciary awakening taking place in Latin America. “Today, at this moment, there are 82 people in prison, including some intellectual authors”, said Alberto Ibargüen, President of IAPA’s Commission Against Impunity.

■ During the succession transition it is currently undergoing, Cuba is maintaining control over public communications. Raúl Castro’s leadership has not displayed any signal of openness as far as official media are concerned, while keeping high levels of repression against dissident communications within the island.

■ In almost every country in the region, presidents criticize media and journalists on a regular basis, as well as journalism in general. This trend does not recognize ideological frontiers and seems to be *in crescendo*.

■ There are also dozens of governors and hundreds of mayors in all Latin America who take part in this criticism of the press. As the quality of government recedes, from the federal to the local level, the possibility of critical discourse being coupled with violent practices against journalism rises. The growing amount of investigations into the murders of journalists frequently reveals mayors –or people in their entourage- as their intellectual authors.

■ The revenue bonanza many Latin American countries are enjoying is strengthening government-owned media. Other countries, like Bolivia, are seeing a growth in government-run media financed by Venezuelan state resources.

■ Civil society practically has no role in the discussion over the adoption of digital television in Latin America. Mexico chose the American system, ATSC. Brazil picked the Japanese system –ISDB-, while Uruguay opted for the European DVB. The rest of the countries have not yet defined their choice. More important than selecting one system or the other, what is urgent is the creation of a debate framework in which not only government employees, broadcasting companies and current licensees can debate. The current discussion between these three parts may stop new technologies from producing the democratizing effect the media system needs. There must be a fourth leg to this stool: civil society.

■ There is a growing recognition among politicians of a non-government non-profit part of the media industry, aside from commercial and government media.

■ The conscience clause is growing. Many countries in the region are establishing conscience clauses, which recognize a journalist’s right not to undertake actions that go against their conscience as part of their professional work. The new Bolivian Constitution has incorporated it, and the recent ethics code approved by Bolivia’s Asociación Nacional de Prensa (ANP, National Press Association). It has just been added to the ethics code of FENAJ, Brazil’s journalists’ union; it is also part of a law proposed by Chile’s Colegio de Periodistas, and it is in a law promoted by congressional representative Fabiola Morales in Perú.

Situation and Debates in the MERCOSUR Countries

Brazil

The reaction on display by the Judiciary in many Latin American countries has showed results in Brazil. The former mayor of Coronel Sapucaí, in Mato Grosso, was sentenced to 17 years in jail for being the mastermind behind the assassination of journalist Samuel Román, in April 2004. Four of the ten people accused in this trial were murdered, while the rest remains at large. The slain journalist had denounced the mayor.

However, violence still stalks the press. Two journalists were shot, although none died. Last September 19th, a 19 year-old shot Amaury Ribeiro Jr -a journalist for *Correio Braziliense* and widely recognized within that profession in his country- in a bar 45 kilometers from Brasilia, while he was expecting a source. That newspaper was involved in 2007 in articles on the violence raging in the so-called Entorno, the districts that surround Brasilia.¹ Ribeiro was publishing a series of articles on the possible relations between drug trafficking, sexual exploitation of children and the murders of youths in Brasilia's outskirts. He had published the first article, on the killing of two teenagers, on September 4. According to the ARAJI press release, "Amaury discovered a true civil war controlled by drug traffickers. More than 40 minors have been killed since the year began". The other journalist participating in said investigation, Morilo Carvalho, received phone threats that same day.² The media company published a communiqué expressing that "this act of violence will not hinder this newspaper's determination to denounce organized crime in the capital of the Republic and its surroundings, while being no less vigilant as to the physical integrity of the company's professionals".³

ABRAJI -the organization of professional Brazilian journalists- proposed "media companies invest their efforts in investigating the attack on Amaury and in covering the causes and consequences of the criminality and violence that are terrorizing our cities."⁴ A few days later, the newspaper assembled a team of twelve journalists to investigate the attack and the subject the journalist was investigating.⁵ This is another example of the trail left by Project Arizona that is still circulating in Latin America. To the moment, there have been similar initiatives in the Northern Mexican border, in Colombia and in Peru. Beginning this semester, Brazil has joined this effort.⁶

According to an ARAJI press release , a second consequence of this attack, , was that days later, in order to stamp down on drug trafficking, security forces began special operations in the area through a combined effort of the Distrito Federal (Federal District) and the state of Goiás.

The other journalist who suffered a shooting attack was Joao Alckmin, last November 22nd. It happened in inner Sao Paulo state, an area of recurring violence against the press. This journalist was criticizing organizations related to gambling and the local police. He had suffered an attack on his life four months earlier.

Brazil is also witnessing the trend towards strengthening government media. The government has just created a public television station, *TVE Brasil*, which began broadcasting on December 2. This initiative has created a debate, since some fear it will be used as a propaganda tool. Brazilian editors signaled their fears in the latest IAPA report: "Another potential problem is the federal government's decision to establish a public television station which, with taxpayer money and under the pretense of accommodating plural and diverse information sources and opinions, could become a vehicle for political, and eventually electoral, advertising for the government. This TV station is in the implementation stage." There are voices defending the Lula government's project in opposition to that argument: "The same groups that denounce this supposed intention on Lula's part are those who do not believe public television is necessary in this country, 'because it hogs resources and lacks an audience'. Now, if it lacks an audience, what would the President gain from using it in his favor? To whom would he propagandize? Wouldn't it be better to use the communications tools he already has, such as government advertising (over a billion reales, if direct and indirect administration are combined), the requisite for allotted time for his speeches on national television –mandatory-, or the very journalistic shows on commercial television, which are permanently eager to interview the country's top leader? All of this without considering the vast power of the pen he holds in his hand. Everyone knows the historic willingness of commercial broadcasters to support governments that make their life easier, such as introducing favorable regulatory measures, tax exemptions, cheap financing through government banks and lots of advertising".⁷

¹ *Correio Braziliense*, 12/4/2007

² ARAJI (Associação Brasileira de Jornalismo Investigativo – Brazilian Association of Investigative Journalism). 9/20/2007. (http://www.abraji.org.br/?id=90&id_noticia=549)

³ *Observatorio da Imprensa*, 9/20/2007.

⁴ ARAJI, 9/22/2007. (http://www.abraji.org.br/?id=90&id_noticia=550)

⁵ ARAJI, 9/27/2007. (http://www.abraji.org.br/?id=90&id_noticia=552)

⁶ The Arizona Project was born in 1976 after the murder in Arizona of journalist Don Bolles. He and other colleagues had created IRE (Investigative Reporters and Editors) the preceding year. After Bolles' death, IRE decided to push for a collective investigation to reveal what his killers wanted to silence. For five months, volunteer print and television journalists investigated and produced reports spread in their media. The corruption scheme was revealed, and the murderers were convicted.

⁷ Gabriel Priolli, "Por un debate menos rastaquera", *Observatorio da Imprensa*, 12/18/2007

Another important novelty in Brazil regarding the relation between journalism and democracy is that FENAJ (Federação Nacional dos Jornalistas) –the country’s main reporters’ union- reformed its ethics code. Among other things, it introduced the conscience clause, which consists of a journalist having the right to refuse “any task which does not agree with the principles established in this ethics code or that go against his convictions”. The text clarifies that said right may not be used “as an argument, reason or excuse for the journalist to abstain from hearing from people with different opinions than his” (article 13).⁸

Argentina

Argentina maintains a government communications model that has proved successful at preserving governability and winning elections. It is a centralized scheme, where off-the-record statements from the government leadership are the norm; there are no open press conferences and there is constant criticism of the media and journalists. There are also a significant dedication towards influencing and controlling the public agenda. Cooption of the media is active, mainly through the sharing of information only with select journalists, government advertising and other methods, such as licenses or other government decisions to favor certain outlets.⁹

The media, on their part, have not engaged in a common effort in order to avoid the clearest displays of open discrimination generated by this model. Many politicians around the world consider this model to be the right way of relating with the media in the modern world. However, Argentina has an extreme version, due to the little concern demonstrated so far by the government towards institutional quality. Too little time has passed in order to ascertain which will be the communications model of the just-inaugurated Cristina Fernández administration.

Argentina’s provinces see a repetition of the limits on journalism seen in the inner areas of other Latin American countries. However, levels of violence are lower than in the provinces of Peru or Brazil’s states. The governors replicate media cooption, managed at the national level, at the provincial level. However, this is in the context of a poorer institutional culture.

Paraguay

President Nicanor Duarte Frutos has added his name to the group of presidents who included journalism in their list of public enemies. “Those are the ones who now wish to impart classes on ethics and morality. They think that with ink, flashes and cameras they can beat coloradismo”, he said. Days later, he announced “the enemy of Paraguay is not the opposition, but anti-colorado journalism”.¹⁰

Radio journalist Alberto Palma was murdered on August 21 in Mayor Otaño, Itapúa department. “Again suspicions fall on drug traffickers of the Itapúa area with the complicity of the police.”, stated IAPA. The RWB press release stated: “the death threats he received rose after he aired information on the intensification of drugs and gasoline trafficking in the border area with Brazil and Argentina”. The same text said “attacks on media professionals are on the rise in Itapúa”.¹¹ The Foro de Periodistas Paraguayos (FOPEP, Paraguayan Journalists’ Forum), informed that Palma -who was of Chilean origin- “was close to being expelled from the country in 2004, due to alleged residency issues, in a situation Palma himself qualified as a ploy by regional authorities in order to shut down his journalistic work” (see box).¹² Amambay department is another region where journalists are in danger.

The next presidential elections, which will be held in April 2008, will surely strain relations between the political establishment and the media.

Jorge Elías: “El hombre que sabía demasiado” (The man who knew too much), 11/9/2007. (Programa Impunidad/SIP)

(Last dialogue between Alberto Palma and Radio Chaco Boreal)

-Meaning, you are returning to Peru.

-No, I am returning to Chile.

-Sorry, Chile.

-Regrettably, here you cannot fight against the mafia –said Palma. Liberals are the ones who are running two phony radio stations; I denounced them and now I have the problems I have. This is why I am no longer in Otaño; I am elsewhere, waiting for money from my family. I leave disillusioned. I dare not go to the police, because they are dealt with through their wallets.

In the eyes of attorney Nelson Ramos, the Palma murder has the signs of a settling of accounts. “We are in the presence of

some power group –he concluded-; what we need to know is where it comes from. That would clarify things a bit more”. Ramos began working on two hypothesis: drug trafficking and accusations against apparently illegal radio stations that seem to belong to Liberal leaders linked to gasoil trafficking. Palma had his own radio station, Mayor Otaño FM, but due to “political reasons” he was left without a license. He lost his equipment in December 2006, when authorities seized it. From then on, he worked with Radio Chaco Boreal. He did not hesitate in sharing information with print media. In his last months, with no apparent source of income, he worked as a photographer of social and family events.

⁸ The new edition of the code may be seen at: (http://www.fenaj.org.br/federacao/cometica/codigo_de_etica_dos_jornalistas_brasileiros.pdf)

⁹ ADC has already published a study on government advertising in Argentina. The NGO Poder Ciudadano has also been very active in that country in researching and publishing information on government advertising. For the first time a study is being made, led by the Asociación por los Derechos Civiles (ADC; Civil Rights Association), on government advertising in the following countries in the region: Colombia, Costa Rica, Honduras, Peru, Uruguay and Chile.

¹⁰ RWB, 11/14/2007

¹¹ RWB, 8/24/2007

¹² FOPEP. (<http://www.fopep.org.py/comunicados/1>)

Uruguay

A new law on community media, defined as “public-interest services independent from the State, provided by civil associations for non-profit purposes”, was approved. Uruguay thus begins a path to be followed closely by many Latin American countries, which have a huge amount of media in a semi-legal status. According to the new law, a third of the radio electric spectrum will be reserved for community radio and television stations. It also contemplates a more transparent assigning of licenses. Uruguay was also host to a meeting of IFEX, the International Freedom of Expression Exchange, in mid-October 2007. Thirty-two organizations from around the world –thirteen from Latin America- signed a joint statement in which they raised

awareness of the danger to the media of “parallel powers”. The text defines “parallel powers” as such: “Organised crime, drug-traffickers, gangs, armed groups, paramilitaries, abusive regional/local powerful figures (caciques) linked to economic, political and other groups - are a reality throughout the continent. The effects of these groups include threats, attacks, disappearances, killings, and the closure of media organizations, all of which leads to self-censorship as a mechanism for journalists’ self-protection, as well as the silencing of journalists. This permanently damages society by violating their guarantees and rights to freedom of expression, information and communication.” The initiative contemplates planning and developing regional campaigns.

Situation and Debates in Chile

Legislative activity has increased concerning journalism-related issues. According to the October 2007 IAPA report, “The main threats to press freedom in Chile are in the legislative arena. There are currently 16 press-related bills under consideration and of these, five or six could have significant repercussions. In addition to legislative proposals, members of the Chamber of Deputies have set up investigative and special committees to address press-related issues.” The Special Investigative Committee on

Government Advertising, created in the national Parliament, also published its conclusions. There are also projects intended to reform the Journalist’s Statute.¹³ Another parliamentary commission, the Special Commission on Media Outlets, was created in 2007. This legislative activism coincides with the trend in regional political classes towards augmenting controls over media outlets, which they consider factual powers, with a lower political legitimacy than groups legitimized by the popular vote.

Situation and Debates in Central America and the Caribbean

Violence against journalists is on the rise in **Honduras**. President Manuel Zelaya’s statements against the press seem to be gaining in vitriol. The News Director for *Radio Cadena Voces*, Dagoberto Rodríguez, left the country after the police warned him “a group of hitmen was planning to assassinate him in the next 72 hours”.¹⁴ The press release published by the radio station mentioned “direct threats from President Manuel Zelaya Rosales of closing *RADIO CADENA VOCES* because of its critically constructive and independent editorial position”. The radio station’s statement informed that “Zelaya told one of our reporters in August of this year that if he were the Venezuelan leader Hugo Chávez, he would have closed this communications outlet long ago”.¹⁵

Two weeks earlier, on October 18, a journalist and comedian from the same radio station, Carlos Salgado –nicknamed “Frijol, el Terrible” was murdered.¹⁶ A few days later, a man suspected of committing the crime –allegedly a paid hitman- was detained, freed and two days later arrested again. RWB said “the increasingly execrable climate between the Manuel Zelaya Administration and the media unfortunately contributes to this situation”.¹⁷ On his part, the President is strengthening his own communications apparatus. He began editing a weekly, *Poder Ciudadano*, and announced that in 2008 a government-run television station would be created and *Radio Nacional de Honduras* would be beefed up.

¹³ Final report of the Special Commission: (http://www.alterinfos.org/IMG/pdf/Informe_de_la_Comision_especial_investigadora_sobre_avisaje_del_estado.pdf)

¹⁴ *Proceso Digital*. 11/1/2007. (<http://www.proceso.hn/2007/11/01/Term%C3%B3metro/Periodista.hondure.C/1938.html>)

¹⁵ “Comunicado público”, *Proceso Digital*, 1/11/2007. (<http://www.proceso.hn/2007/11/01/Term%C3%B3metro/Periodista.hondure.C/1938.html>)

¹⁶ To see Carlos Salgado’s work, “El Frijol Terrible”: <http://frijolelterrible.blogspot.com/>

¹⁷ RWB, 10/19/2007

In **Nicaragua** there is also hostility from the government towards several media, such as the newspaper *La Prensa* or *Canal 2*, and increasingly against *Nuevo Diario*. In **El Salvador**, the leadership of the main leftist party, the FMLN (Farabundo Martí de Liberación Nacional) heavily criticized two of the country's main newspapers, *El Diario de Hoy* and *La Prensa Gráfica*. According to the October 2007 IAPA report, "The FMLN issued complaints and organized a public attack against the paper [*La Prensa*] in Congress and on radio and television." A radio journalist was also murdered in El Salvador. Salvador Sánchez was assassinated on September 22. A few days later, a man suspected of the murder—a member of mara Salvatrucha—was arrested. According to RWB, "he had been stabbed by members of the gang two years earlier, after he had witnessed one of their crimes".¹⁸

A 23 year-old radio journalist from the department of Petén - located in the so-called 'corridor of violence' - in Northern **Guatemala** was murdered near the end of 2007.¹⁹ According to RWB, "Northern Guatemala is particularly afflicted by organized crime and drug trafficking".²⁰

The press faces less serious problems in **Costa Rica**, which enjoys an exceptional democratic tradition within the region's context. The October 2007 IAPA report states "There were no significant developments threatening press freedom during this period, but some issues were resolved in court." It goes on to describe the following case: "On March 25, the Costa Rican Metrology Laboratory, which is part of the Finance Ministry, attempted to impose the metric system on the media, along with "official" style guidelines on punctuation of numbers and other issues, imposing penalties such as fines and even the closure of a company that fails to comply. The law is aimed at standardizing weights and measures in consumer goods, but the agency wants to equate the media with tuna cans and other such items."

Panama's Penal Code was finally reformed after several years of public discussion. According to the October 2007 IAPA country report, the reform stands out for the following: "Under the category known as "crimes against honor," injuria (insulting or offensive words or actions) and calumnia (false accusations of a crime) — if committed through the print or broadcast media using a computer system — will be punishable by 12 months in prison or an equivalent fine in the case of injuria and by 12 to 18 months in prison or an equivalent fine for calumnia. The offender can avoid criminal responsibility for "crimes against honor" by issuing a public retraction, provided that the aggrieved party agrees to this. If the aggrieved party is a government official, no criminal penalty will apply, but

this would not rule out civil liability in the case. Also, someone charged with calumnia will be exempt from penalty if the accusations that gave rise to the charge are proven true. The same standard will only apply to a defendant in an injuria case if the statements were not in reference to the marriage or private life of the aggrieved party." According to IAPA, there are 34 journalists facing lawsuits on crimes against honor in Panama.

In the **Dominican Republic**, IAPA related critical speech by the authorities with the common practice of initiating lawsuits against the press, even though they have little traction in the Judiciary. IAPA stated "there is a persistent trend toward intolerance of the critical function of the press by representatives of some sectors who want a bland, complacent journalism that gives up its scared mission to deal with all issues of general interest even if they affect special interests or the sensitivity of some spokesmen. This effort to crush the independent media is seen mainly in frequent lawsuits for alleged libel and defamation. Most of these cases are dismissed, but the repeated lawsuits divert media executives from what should be their main function (...)"

In **Haiti**, criminal gangs are still the main enemies of journalists. Detentions and penalties have noticeably increased on the part of the Judiciary in this last semester. On August 30, two members of the gang that in July 2005 tortured and murdered journalist Jacques Roche were sentenced to life in prison. They claimed they killed him because the entire amount of ransom money was not paid. By November, two members of criminal gangs had been arrested for the recent murder of journalist Alex Joseph, slain in May 2007. On December 12, two members of the "Sleep in the woods" gang were also sentenced to life in prison for the 2001 murder of a journalist. This latest crime, according to Reporters Without Borders (RWB), allegedly involves public authorities, although no sentences were handed.

This growing judicial action may be a demonstration of the political will of President René Preval, who in August 2007 supported the creation of the Independent Commission for the Support of Investigations Related to the Assassinations of Journalists (CIAPEAJ in French). The NGO SOS Journalist, the main organization involved in the defense of journalists in the country—led by Joseph Guyler Delva-, is an active participant. Nine professionals form the commission, and it has begun monitoring cases in the judiciary related to these crimes. The commission has access to police and judicial files, and it may interview all government employees it deems necessary.

This Commission has raised expectations of improvement, but the risks have not diminished. In fact, the very President

¹⁸ RWB, 10/16/2007

¹⁹ See UNDP, December 2007. Guatemala. (http://www.iansa.org/regions/camerica/documents/Informe_Estadistico_Violencia_en_Guatemala.pdf)

²⁰ RWB, 12/14/2007

of the Commission had to abandon Haiti for a few weeks due to threats made to his cell phone. In days prior to the threat, Guyler Delva had met with the OAS Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression, who visited Haiti in September. Rapporteur Ignacio Álvarez, in a press release, stated that “there has been an improvement in the situation of freedom of expression in the country” (Press Release 108/07), which is something also pointed out by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) regarding the general situation of human rights in Haiti.

Cuba. The succession currently underway in Cuba since mid-2006 has incentivized the dictatorship to exert even more controls over public communications. Cuba now counts forty-eight years without freedom of the press. It would be unlikely that its leaders would agree to open the media just at such a critical moment, its first presidential succession in half a century. In fact, in the last semester Fidel Castro has given only one interview to a journalist: Randy Alonso, the host of *Mesa Redonda Informativa*, Cuban television’s main political show.²¹ On his part, Raúl Castro, who is now the island’s leader, does not seem to have granted an interview to a journalist during the second semester of 2007.

The annual edition of the “Ejercicio Nacional de Vigilancia y Prevención Cederista” (Annual Exercise of CDR Vigilance and Prevention), which has been held since the nineties, began in June 2007. This year, one of the objectives was persecuting all Cubans who possess satellite dishes unauthorized by the government. Güines municipality, which coordinated the exercise, pointed out that “this is an integrating exercise –said Naivit Nevot Hernández-, where they will do a preventive ideological-political task, man by man”.²² In an article in *Granma*, signed by Lourdes Pérez Navarro, titled “Riqueza a costa de los valores” (“Wealth at the expense of values”), it is reported that “these individuals contribute to enable what was announced in the ‘Bush Commission to destroy the Cuban Revolution’, which assigns vast sums to broadcast the counterrevolutionary television signal to Cuba”. She refers to some twelve people detained in a “shake-up against piracy and the illegal distribution of satellite signals”: “these unscrupulous individuals, mostly without a work permit, were illegally carrying out this activity for which the Ministry of Work and Social Security does not grant a working license on an individual basis”. The journalist concludes by calling for punishing the culprits: “No crime may remain unpunished. Much less when a group of individuals, in hopes of illegitimately increasing their wealth, play into the enemy’s hands by violating current judicial regulations, which are destined to protecting the sovereignty

and cultural, educational and patriotic values of our nation” (05/13/2007). The October 2007 IAPA report states: “In the last few months several police raids have been reported in Havana neighborhoods against parabolic antennas and the appropriation of cable television signals. Its aim is to dismantle the redistribution centers, confiscate equipment and fine the offenders. Cubans, mainly in Havana, look to these services as an alternative for information and entertainment to the programs of the official media.”

Internet censorship has also grown. According to the October 2007 IAPA report, “At least four officials and journalists in the provinces of Camagüey, Las Tunas and Santiago de Cuba have been dismissed for inappropriate use of e-mail and redistribution of improper matters.” The same text states “On August 13, an official letter suspended direct access to Internet for journalists of official media and the electronic addresses of the ICRT. The letter suggests that media executives carefully select the people authorized to access Web pages and to check news material.” There are more and more official Cuban journalists with their own blog, which would raise the difficulties of censorship, although it seems that government professionals are still not intending to transgress regulations. However, independent blogging is on the rise. According to IAPA, “The independent blogs in Cuba, mostly written under pseudonyms, deal their subjects with confident and caustic references about today’s situation in Cuba. The authors connect to the web in private cybercafés or using passwords bought in the black market. Their pages can be found at foreign sites such as Blogspot.com.”²³

The training of journalists in Cuban universities also answers to the ideological objective of building socialism. According to a chronicle by Camagüey’s *Radio Cadena Agramante*, titled “Ratifican estudiantes de Periodismo en Camagüey su apoyo irrestricto a la Revolución” (“Camagüey journalism students reaffirm their unrestricted support for the Revolution”), it is said that “Sheila Delgado Guerra, chief of the FEU (Federación Estudiantil Universitaria, University Student Federation) brigade of training journalists, read the collective commitment, where a complete identification with the responsibility assumed by them in the historic moment the Revolution is undergoing, their loyalty to the Party and the social project we are building is verified”.²⁴ The Cuban media has abundant news items reflecting the same “official” attitude among graduates of journalism degrees.

The risks on the lives of journalists are also rising in Cuba, given that as they are incarcerated and sentenced to long terms, their health begins to deteriorate and health care is very limited – particularly if these prisoners of conscience stay rebellious while in jail. On the other hand, the crime of “pre-delinquent social dangerousness” was used to

²¹ Randy Alonso interviews Fidel Castro. (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9C3dHjQpWDo>)

²² *Radio Güines*, 6/27/2007. ([http://www.mayaweb.cu/secciones/locales/EjercicioNacionaldeVigilanciaguines\(27-06-07-05\).htm](http://www.mayaweb.cu/secciones/locales/EjercicioNacionaldeVigilanciaguines(27-06-07-05).htm))

²³ IAPA, October 2007 report. (<http://mercury.websitewelcome.com/%7Esiapiapa/informe.php?id=9&idioma=sp>)

²⁴ *Radio Cadena Agramante*, 9/20/2007. (http://www.cadenagramonte.cu/al_dia/septiembre_06/200906_05.asp)

“The most humane and hard chronicles, the texts that better show the shaking of reality and the waves of daily life in Cuba, are written today by independent journalists and a breathtaking and diverse staff of reporters without literary aspirations living under the direct fire of dictatorship” (Raul Rivero, *El Nuevo Herald*, 17/6/2007).

condemn at least four journalists in recent months. In an article in *Granma*, official jurors described what that crime consists of: “Social dangerousness exists in the objective pursued by the agent, which is nothing but supporting every effort by the enemy to destroy the Fatherland”.²⁵

On December 10, 2007, the popular Cuban presenter Carlos Otero, host of “Carlos y punto”, which was broadcast on *Cubavisión* on Sunday nights, requested asylum in the United States. He was on a trip to Canada with his wife and two of his three children, where they were going to shoot a special show for official television. There was no official information from within Cuba for almost a week, but a few hours after international agencies broadcast the news, a majority of the population of Havana already knew of it, as a Spanish journalist managed to confirm”.²⁶ The first official communiqué came only on December 16. According to an *AFP* wire, a newsreader read without prior announcement an official note that stated the show “would no longer” be on the air, since the host had decided to “abandon his audience” and “had heard siren songs coming from the United States”. According to Andrea Rodríguez, of the *Associated Press*, “throughout the years, many artists abandoned Cuba without the authorities reading press releases such as this one”.²⁷ The *Notimex* agency, from Havana, also claimed the official reaction was “an unusual event in cases of defections”.²⁸ An *EFE* wire also referred to the “unusual note”.²⁹

The common response to defections is never to speak again of those who left. The silence offered by the official press was the regime’s answer to the escape of a cyclist and a Basketball player during the 2006 Pan-American Games held in Brazil. The same happened when three musicians also stayed in Brazil in 2007; or in the same month when the political counselor of the Cuban Embassy in Mozambique requested asylum to the Spanish government

led by Rodríguez Zapatero. Any tracking of these names through google.com.cu will not turn out any results that would inform Cuba on those defections.

The only case that was aired internally by the official press was the failed escape of two of its most important boxers, also during the recent Pan-American Games. Upon their return to Cuba, the boxers claimed they had been cheated by German businessmen; which was the theory disseminated by the official press. In this case, there was not only an article by Fidel Castro in his “Reflections of the Commander-in-Chief”³⁰ –articles that carry his signature since his health deteriorated and he exited the public arena-, but there was also an interview in *Granma* with the two boxers, in which they suffered the inquisitive and dismissive questions of the official journalist, Julia Osendi. For example, Osendi asked one of them: “as a boxer made by the Revolution, who is part of the Cuban people, what do you feel after having lost those two gold medals the Cuban delegation so needed, not having been in the weighting, having –to a certain extent, right?- betrayed that boxing team, because you left them there, because of lack of discipline or whatever it was?” She later insisted: “Do you not think you have let the people down already?” The interview took place in the format a complete judicial trial, including an accusation, a narration of the facts and even the “confession” by the accused. One of the boxers, Erislandy Lara, thus “confessed”: “I am a 24 year-old youth, anyone has a right to make mistakes, and we were wrong and here we are. We have reflected and we are here with the fatherland”. The other boxer, Guillermo Rigondeaux, chose this other formula: “we are sorry, we are willing to do anything, because there is no turning back, we are already in the fatherland, in the Revolution, and we have to pay for this crime we committed.”³¹

²⁵ “Nuestra protección de la independencia y la economía”. (<http://www.granma.cu/codigo/009-e.html>)

²⁶ Fernando García, correspondent for Barcelona’s *La Vanguardia*. (<http://www.lavanguardia.es/lv24h2007/20071213/53418262597.html>)

²⁷ *Telemundo 51*, 12/17/2007. (<http://www.telemundo51.com/noticias/14873559/detail.html>)

²⁸ *AOL Latino Noticias*, 12/16/2007. (http://noticias.aol.com/articulos/_a/acusan-de-traidor-a-humorista-cubano/20071216224209990001)

²⁹ *Yahoo España*, 12/17/2007. (http://es.noticias.yahoo.com/efe/20071217/twl-la-television-cubana-califica-de-act-e1e34ad_1.html)

³⁰ Fidel Castro, “La repugnante compraventa de atletas”, *Granma*, 7/27/2007.

³¹ Interview conducted by Julia Osendi. *Granma*, 8/9/2007.

(<http://www.granma.cu/espanol/2007/agosto/juev9/entrevista-boxeadores-guillermo-rigondeaux-erislandy-lara.html>)

Situation and Debates in Mexico

The rule of law is facing a crisis in Mexico. Of the thirty-two states the country has, there were very serious incidents on the lives of journalists in sixteen of them. Nothing seems to stop the same from happening in the other sixteen. The responsibility of drug trafficking in this crisis is doubtlessly at the core, but it may be contributing -at least in reference to the amount of attacks on journalism- to hiding other actors also hostile to the press. By reviewing the concrete attacks made public by different international and local organizations who publish alerts, it may be concluded that of the total of denounced attacks or threats of attacks, less than 20% came from drug trafficking, according to information given by the victims or the referenced organizations. Intimidations by drug traffickers, which are stopping some denunciations by journalists from being made and the lack of alerts being published influence this figures. Thus, drug trafficking organizations may lose their presence in the records.

Brief kidnappings (“levantones”), beatings and threats frequently go unnoticed. In the alert records, public authorities and the security forces are the ones heading the ranking in amount of attacks. The police, for example, have been particularly violent towards the press this last semester. The most violent case happened in Coahuila state, where four journalists covering a military operation against drug traffickers were detained, beaten and then accused. Even though the amount of attacks by drug traffickers is in the minority in comparison with other hostile actors, it becomes the central culprit in the most serious attacks, such as murder. Drug dealing appears to explain the totality of deaths in the murder statistics for the second semester. On August 6 2007, a journalist survived after being shot four times. “I defended myself with stones, but I could not do it anymore”, said Alberto Fernández Portilla, director of *El Semanario del Istmo* and a radio newscast.³² Martha Izquierdo, who is also the correspondent in that area for *Reforma* -Mexico’s most important newspaper- works with him in the website www.bbmnoticias.com. This journalist has just won the National Journalism Prize for an investigation denouncing police abuse, kidnappings and blackmailing suffered by Central American immigrants passing through Oaxaca in their journey to the United States. Therefore, this is a critical area: mafia groups coexist with professional journalism.

On October 8, 2007 and also in the Isthmus area in the state of Oaxaca, the distributor and two employees of

Oaxaca’s *El Imparcial* were murdered. The mention of the well-known drug gang Los Zetas, composed of ex members of the Mexican Army’s elite, was recurrent in several of the press releases published by alert organizations. That newspaper had begun receiving threats two months earlier, when two of its journalists, Felipe Ramos and Gonzalo

Domínguez, informed of the existence of a mass grave where seven bodies were found. Another of the directors of that area edition said: “Coincidentally, Ramos and Domínguez used in their reporting the same vehicle the victims were travelling in, a unit with the plate RT84 503. However, the day of the attack was used in the newspaper’s distribution”.³³

“Back then, we used to ask that murders and attacks on journalists were established in the federal orbit, with the hope that, away from state governments, the cases would be solved and the attackers would be jailed. Now that it is members of organized crime attacking the press, it is up to federal authorities to investigate. It is proven that, just like with state justice, nothing happens in federal justice. That’s where the cases of my slain colleagues are.” Adela Navarro Bello, Director of Zeta (Tijuana)

After the murder of the employees, the staff resigned their posts en masse and that area edition was cancelled. “There is no one who dares, let’s not even speak of distributing the paper anymore, not even for free”, told Luis David Quintana, one of the directors, to Cencos-Artículo 19-IPYS. The correspondents of other media in that area have also been threatened. Police officers had already attacked Gonzalo Domínguez, director of that area edition, for having accused them of participating in immigrant trafficking, which is another of the lucrative illegal businesses in the Isthmus area. Benjamín Fernández Pichardo, director of the newspaper and the previous President of the Mexican Editors’ Association, had already had his house shot up in 2005.



“Back then, we used to ask that murders and attacks on journalists were established in the federal orbit, with the hope that, away from state governments, the cases would be solved and the attackers would be jailed. Now that it is members of organized crime attacking the press, it is up to federal authorities to investigate. It is proven that, just like with state justice, nothing happens in federal justice. That’s where the cases of my slain colleagues are.” Adela Navarro Bello, Director of Zeta (Tijuana)

³² *Noticias de Oaxaca*, 8/6/2007. (http://www.noticias-oax.com.mx/articulos.php?id_sec=2&id_art=55034&id_ejemplar=1499)

³³ “Violencia genera renuncias masivas de El Imparcial del Istmo”, 10/19/2007 (<http://www.notasdelosur.org/?cat=21>)

Situation and Debates in the Andean Countries

Venezuela

There is a likely relation between the non-renewal of *Radio Caracas Televisión* (RCTV)'s license to broadcast and the defeat of President Hugo Chávez in the constitutional reform referendum. That relation lies in that the government decision to take RCTV off the air activated the university student movement, a political player that was seemingly key in the electoral defeat.

This referendum on the constitutional reforms was the defining event in relations between the government and the media during the second semester of 2007. The two most questioned articles of the proposed text for the constitutional reform were 337 and 338, both new (see box), which would give the President the power to establish emergency rule without time limits and to suspend access-to-information rights.³⁴

IAPA had planned to hold its October 2007 meeting in Venezuela, but it failed to find hotels willing to risk lodging an international organization severely criticized by President Chávez. "Even though there is no evidence of direct government pressure, there is a climate favoring corporate self-censorship", stated IAPA.

After the disappearance of RCTV, the cable channel *Globovisión* became the only critical voice on television, although it has limited national reach. "The government has systematically denied *Globovisión* licenses for new frequencies and blocked its over-the-air broadcasts", according to IAPA report, which added that "*Globovisión* also faces 19 lawsuits, six administrative sanction procedures and several criminal investigations by the Public Prosecutor's Office, all of which are inadmissible and clearly political."

Alberto Federico Ravell, director of *Globovisión*, was asked the following in an interview: "Do the people really have access to 'unbiased and objective' information from this station?" He answered: "Of course they do, and here's an example: *Globovisión* has become the channel chosen by Venezuelans to demand things. You have never seen a pro-government rally clamoring for its rights on a government-run station, saying that they lack water and proper streets in their neighborhoods, that there are no roads in their villages, that resources are not reaching the poorest in Venezuela. They have no fear, no shame and feel no embarrassment in appearing in *Globovisión*'s screen to expose the stinging problems they have. And as this channel becomes as balanced as possible, it will have more chavista and squalid viewers."³⁵

Miguel Henríquez Otero, editor of the newspaper *El Nacional*, stated in a press conference that "independent media will disappear with the constitutional reform proposed by President Chávez", given that "the reform directly threatens private property, because it includes expropriation without a sentence, meaning that the government may seize whatever it feels like and then it will engage in lawsuits; that's how it can take over the media". According to the October 2007 IAPA report, print media are particularly afflicted by "the currency exchange regime imposed by the government since February 2003, which is presenting delays in the granting of currencies to pay for the import of paper pulp for the newspaper and other press-related supplies unavailable in Venezuela".

IPYS-Venezuela conducted a poll on the obstacles in exercising journalism. The top three problems were "the closure of official sources of information" (23%), "fear of attacks in the streets" (20%), and "government threats" (18%). An interesting question included in the study was "Which of the following events would you say influenced you the most in reconsidering whether to publish certain information or not?" The answer that topped the rank, with 30% of the answers was "the announcement that RCTV's grant would not be renewed"; then "the application of the Ley Resorte (Social Responsibility in Radio and Television Law)", with 27% and in third place "layoffs of columnists and journalists for political reasons", with 20%.³⁶

A study led by the Media Monitoring Group (MMG), an initiative of Sweden's Goteborg University and Universidad Católica Andrés Bello (UCAB) dedicated to analyzing coverage of the campaign for the referendum, detected higher polarization of the media than there was in the 2004 elections.³⁷ The Nordic academic, Stein Ove Gronsund, pointed out that "for example, *Telegen* and *Venevisión* are fairly balanced, but like the rest of the stations, they suffer from single-source journalism. This is one reason behind polarization in Venezuela, because one thinks that media like *Globovisión* and *RCTV Internacional* are bombarding the people with very selective information, and therefore public television has to do the same. The aggressive intervention of journalists is another chapter of Venezuelan journalism, given that on occasion the journalist carries too much weight and becomes a participant. We have analyses of variables such as Yes Actor, No Actor and Other Actor, and the journalist is often the protagonist". These academics found two media that escape this logic: "There are two honorable exceptions: one is *Canal i*, which

³⁴ RWB, 11/28/2007

³⁵ *A través de Venezuela*, 9/6/2007. (<http://www.atravesdevenezuela.com/html/modules.php?name=News&file=print&sid=5430>)

³⁶ *Noticias confiscadas: Cómo la censura y la autocensura en Venezuela impiden que el público conozca lo que tiene derecho a saber*, IPYS. (http://www.ucab.edu.ve/ucabnuevo/Infocracia_CIC/recursos/ipys_autocensura.pdf)

³⁷ Grupo de Monitoreo de Medios 2007 (GMM). (http://ucab.edu.ve/ucabnuevo/Infocracia_CIC/recursos/estudios.pdf)

Comparative box of the disputed articles in the Venezuelan Constitution

Current Constitution	Government-sponsored reforms
<p><i>Article 337.</i> The President of the Republic, at a meeting of the Cabinet of Ministers, shall have the power to decree states of exception. Expressly defined as such are circumstances of a social, economic, political, natural or ecological nature which seriously affect the security of the Nation, institutions and citizens, in the face of which the powers available to cope with such events are insufficient. In such case, the guarantees contained in this Constitution may be temporarily restricted, with the exception of those relating to the right to life, prohibition of incommunicative detention or torture, the right to due process, the right to information and other intangible human rights.³⁸</p>	<p><i>Article 337.</i> The President of the Republic, at a meeting of the Cabinet of Ministers, shall have the power to decree states of exception. Expressly defined as such are circumstances of a social, economic, political, natural or ecological nature which seriously affect the security of the Nation, institutions and citizens, in the face of which the powers available to cope with such events are insufficient. In such case, the guarantees contained in this Constitution may be temporarily restricted or suspended, with the exception of those relating to the right to life, prohibition of incommunicative detention or torture, and forced disappearances.</p>
<p><i>Article 338.</i> A state of alarm may be declared when catastrophes, public calamities or other similar events occur, seriously endangering the security of the Nation or its citizens. Such state of exception shall last for up to 30 days, and may be extended for an additional 30 days.</p> <p>A state of economic emergency may be declared when extraordinary economic circumstances arise, such as to affect seriously the economic life of the Nation; the duration of this state of emergency shall be 60 days, with the possibility of extension for the same period.</p> <p>A state of internal or external commotion may be declared in the event of an internal or external conflict seriously endangering the security of the Nation, its citizens or its institutions. Such state of commotion shall last for up to 90 days, and may be extended for an additional 90 days.</p> <p>The National Assembly has the responsibility of the approval for the extension of the states of exemption. An organic law shall regulate states of exception and determine the measures that may be adopted based on them.</p>	<p><i>Article 338.</i> A state of alarm may be declared when catastrophes, public calamities or other similar events occur, seriously endangering the security of the Nation or its citizens.</p> <p>A state of economic emergency may be declared when extraordinary economic circumstances arise, such as to affect seriously the economic life of the Nation; the duration of this state of emergency shall be 60 days, with the possibility of extension for the same period.</p> <p>A state of internal or external commotion may be declared in the event of an internal or external conflict seriously endangering the security of the Nation, its citizens or its institutions. Such state of commotion shall last for up to 90 days, and may be extended for an additional 90 days.</p> <p>The National Assembly has the responsibility of the approval for the extension of the states of exemption. An organic law shall regulate states of exception and determine the measures that may be adopted based on them.</p>

represents the two parts, with a very good journalistic format. Curiously, I had not expected this due to the owner's history, but the truth is that it is a balanced TV project.³⁹ The other is *Unión Radio*, which stood out as exemplary after the first week, since it reflects daily news in its coverage". According to Ove Gronlund, "government channels persist in their contribution to media polarization. I have no comment on *TVES*, but it cannot happen. *VTV (Venezolana de Televisión)* has suppressed the opposition from its newscast, but it has augmented its neutral coverage".

The Minister of Communications and Information, William Lara, questioned the Media Monitoring Group, claiming Swedish money is being used to "finance alleged analyses of the contents of State media when, in fact, they are pretexts used to propagandize against the Bolivarian

Revolution, using rotten lies like that proposed by Norwegian citizen Stein Ove Gronlund, who accuses State media of intending to black out part of Venezuelan society".⁴⁰

In its campaign for the approval of the constitutional reform, the government used the structure that finances local media for its own purposes. In one press release a month before the vote took place, Miguel Ugas –Director of Alternative and Community Media at the Ministry of Popular Power for Communications and Information- explained that the operation termed "Taking the streets in defense of reform" would include the states of Zulia, Lara, Táchira and Carabobo. "We intend to put on display the willingness of the MAC social movement to support the reform, and nothing better than incentivizing awareness and organizing on the part of our people, so they can take part in the new

³⁸ This article preserves the right to access information, as does the new Bolivian Constitution in article 138, which states: "(...) the declaration of a state of siege shall not in any case suspend the guarantee of rights, nor of fundamental rights, the right to due process, the right to access information and the rights of detained persons". (Emphasis ours).

³⁹ The owner is Venezuelan Wilmar Ruperti, a shipbuilding and oil tycoon, who has grown notoriously since 2003 with business involving the government.

⁴⁰ *Vive TV*, 11/27/2007. (http://www.vive.gob.ve/inf_art.php?id_not=5421&id_s=6&id_ss=2&pag=1)

political, economic, social and cultural structure being built in Venezuela".⁴¹ The government has pushed for the creation of government-leaning local media throughout the country.

A Reporters Without Borders (RWB) press release, published a few days before the referendum, the media situation was described as follows: "*Globovisión*, which is restricted to broadcasting in the capital and the surrounding region, has since 27 May been the only national terrestrial broadcast TV channel to take a critical position towards the government. Backed by Eleazar Díaz Rangel, director of the main national daily newspaper, *Últimas Noticias*, President Chávez controls most of the broadcast media, including a score of radio stations, the state-owned TV stations *VTV* (on which he hosts the Sunday programme "Aló Presidente"), *Telesur*, *Vive TV*, *Asamblea Nacional* and *Tves* (which took *RCTV*'s terrestrial frequency) as well as the national phone operator *CANTV*.

The president can at any time legally force all the broadcast media to provide simultaneous live retransmission of his speeches for as long as he likes under a system known as "cadenas." Since the start of the year, he has also promoted and funded the launch of about 60 alternative and community newspapers."⁴² Despite chavismo having an ever stronger communications arm, according to IAPA "the government's channels only cover 20% of the broadcast spectrum."

After President Chávez's defeat, an attempt to promote the depolarization of the media has begun. In its December 23 editorial, *El Universal* pointed out that "a clear display in that sense may return liberty to those who are deprived of it because of their ideas. The existence of political prisoners is inadmissible in terms of democratic coexistence. It is also unacceptable to have open lawsuits against fellow citizens for reasons that in many cases leave no doubt are more persecution than of true justice. Many Venezuelans, for the same reasons, have abandoned the country. An official signal in that sense would be defining in achieving the desired reunification. Families, friends and all of Venezuela, in spite of a few opposing voices, are expecting these positive signals".⁴³

There was also criticism towards the communications policy from within officialdom. A chavista governor, who won his state by a wide margin, said: "we turned communications into information, not propaganda. I am not in the position to comment on other regions of the country, but I think we lost the battle when the dispute fell in the media terrain, meaning the terrain of propaganda", stated

Gilmer Vitoria (governor of Trujillo state). "What the citizenry requires is information, and the media must be used to inform and not propagandize. These people defend the propaganda business so that people will not find out about reality. It is the principle of advertising taken to politics", said the successful governor.⁴⁴ The most curious fact about this interview is that a journalist from the Ministry of Communications and Information conducted it, and it was published on said agency's website.

The depolarization of the media may be the novelty in 2008. In journalistic terms, it means that, in pressrooms, professionalism should have more preeminence over politics than it has had so far. Several Caracas newspapers for example, have an ombudsman. They can help in building a new style of Venezuelan journalism.

Colombia

There are several contradictory processes taking place simultaneously in this country, which leads to enormous confusion. There are simultaneous processes of paramilitary demobilization, persisting drug trafficking and assassinations targeting industries, as well as irregular negotiations with guerrilla fronts for the release of hostages. On the one hand, there are tendencies towards civilizing the conflict, or even towards a post-conflict situation. However, on the other hand an enormous amount of violence remains, which turns practically the whole territory registered in this report into a red zone. In this context, journalism exists in great insecurity in practically the whole territory.

In a recent poll of journalists, conducted by the University of the Savannah Media Observatory, 34% of professionals claim to have been threatened at least once.⁴⁵ A big part of this pressure on reporting is not reflected in the records for different reasons: "the journalist underestimates the threat, is unaware that what happened was a violation of his right to report, is afraid of coming forward, does not trust the authorities, is not backed by the outlet to which he belongs or lacks sufficient information on the procedures to follow, among other things", according to a FLIP report.⁴⁶

Carlos Cortés Castillo, Executive Director of FLIP, stated on May 4 2007 that "a first reading of the statistics would indicate that the state of freedom of the press in Colombia has, all things considered, improved. Governments, in general, employ superficial discourse: the less journalists lying in cemeteries, the more freedom of expression there will be in the streets. However, they fail to understand the

⁴¹ MINCI, 10/30/2007. (http://www.minci.gov.ve/noticias_medios_nacionales/26/16383/medios_alternativos_y.html)

⁴² RWB, 11/28/2007

⁴³ "Nuestra tribuna", *El Universal*, 12/23/2007. (http://www.eluniversal.com/2007/12/23/opi_art_nuestra-tribuna_650527.shtml)

⁴⁴ Carlos Ibarra, "Perdimos la batalla cuando la polémica cayó en el terreno mediático", MINCI, 12/12/2007 (http://www.minci.gov.ve/entrevistas/3/17041/perdimos_la_batalla.html)

⁴⁵ "La voz de los medios", *Revista Semana*, 11/19/2007, p. 64.

⁴⁶ Informe especial: "El periodismo en Buenaventura", FLIP, 9/12/2007.

dimension of the self-censorship issue, and the widespread fear in the face of threats or murders”.⁴⁷

During all of 2007, several journalists have abandoned their workplace due to security reasons. At least seven journalists have been forced to temporary exile – some for the second time. Among the exiled, there are not only journalists from the inner country, but also some of the better known, such as Darío Arizmendi of *Radio Cadena Caracol*, Gonzalo Guillén, Colombia correspondent for Miami’s *El Nuevo Herald*, or Holman Morris, of the Bogotá TV show “*Contravía*”, winner of the CEMEX-FNPI New Journalism Prize. Because of this, several journalists have different “security arrangements” granted by authorities that may consist, based on the determined risk level, of police patrols by the journalist’s home, one or several guards, bulletproof vests, armored vehicles, temporary relocations or other protection mechanisms.

Coverage of the armed conflict, drug trafficking activities and administrative corruption are subjects sparking violence against the press. Armed gangs carefully scrutinize reporting and frequently see no difference between reporting and complicity. Journalists specializing in certain war sources are perceived as their accomplices, which makes an opening to pressuring and threats. Sometimes these are clandestine, but other times recriminations reach official levels. A few days before the elections, FARC sent journalists in Arauca a pamphlet “demanding the communiqué and its annexes be published in three newscasts for two days”, according to *Semana* magazine.⁴⁸ FARC owns a website called ANNCOL (*Agencia de Noticias Nueva Colombia*), to which there are links to the *Café Stereo* radio station, the weekly *La Voz* –which belongs to Colombia’s Communist Party- and *Telesur*. Guerrilla leaders frequently criticize *El Tiempo*’s coverage, as well as radio stations *Caracol* and *RCN*’s. In the same website, www.anncol.nu, there is a PDF book with a chapter dedicated to a critical description of “The role of the media”.

On his part, Police chief General Oscar Naranjo, said a *Telesur* journalist “is involved in a kidnapping, because his role is not to record proof of hostages being alive in a FARC encampment”.⁴⁹ He was talking about journalist William Parra, of *Telesur*, who was allowed by FARC to interview one of the police officers they retain as hostages.⁵⁰ Parra was Press Secretary to President Ernesto Samper (1994 – 1998). In response to General Naranjo’s statement, Parra said: “I wish to clarify that what General Naranjo is saying

about my belonging to FARC or being a militant for that organization is not true. I do not even hold sympathy for them. My job is limited to a uniquely and exclusively journalistic objective (with captain Solórzano).” Colombian Senator Piedad Córdoba, who was a “facilitator” in the hostage liberation negotiations, reported she spoke with guerrilla commander “Raúl Reyes”, so that Parra could interview captain Solórzano.⁵¹ FLIP stated “it is unacceptable to accuse journalists of being close to illegal armed groups only because they are a source of journalistic information. In doing their work, journalists have the right to speak with sources outside of the law. If the State knows of possible crimes committed by journalists, it should start the necessary judicial investigations, without speculating”. FLIP emphasized the case of the *Telesur* journalists, who “have been the object of stigmatizing statements, official journalistic vetoes and intimidation. Aside from obstructing the informational task, it is a risk to this journalistic team. This risk increases considerably in the present political context.”⁵²

President Uribe made statements critical of journalists, which provoked a reply from the main freedom of expression organizations in the continent. Reporters Without Borders (RWB) addressed him in a public letter, in which it told him that “A journalist’s forced departure is a setback for press freedom and this is why your comments have done great harm.”⁵³ A few days later, RWB also stated that ““We recognise his right to defend himself against the accusations made against him, but there is no justification for these vehement attacks that endanger journalists, as demonstrated by the threats received by Coronell, who was already forced to leave the country with his family in 2005, and by Guillén, who has had to go abroad now.. President Uribe’s person attacks are one thing, and death threats from paramilitaries who claim to support him are another. The government should have every reason to demonstrate its goodwill by being more active in its pursuit of those who threaten the lives of journalists, especially the sinister *Aguilas Negras*.”⁵⁴ The President of Colombia also received a letter from the Journalists’ Protection Committee (JPC), in which he was told: “your strident and personal comments resulted in multiple death threats against both journalists and forced one of them to be exiled” (10/11/2007). FLIP, the local organization, restated its opinion previously expressed in an April 2006 press release: “the President of the Republic has the fundamental right to express freely, and as Head

⁴⁷ FLIP, 5/4/2007. (http://www.flip.org.co/secciones/documentos/07-05-09_doc.html)

⁴⁸ *Revista Semana*, 8/9/2007. (http://www.semana.com/wf_InfoArticulo.aspx?idArt=105467)

⁴⁹ RWB, 11/27/2007

⁵⁰ See part of the documentary that includes the interview, titled “Voces de la selva”, at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vIL5DA5gmwE>

⁵¹ *El Tiempo*, 11/26/2007. (http://www.eltiempo.com/tempoimpreso/edicionimpresa/politica/2007-11-26/ARTICULO-WEB-NOTA_INTERIOR-3832097.html)

⁵² FLIP, 11/27/2007. (<http://www.flip.org.co/veralerta.php?idAlerta=265>)

⁵³ RWB, 10/4/2007

⁵⁴ Las ‘*Aguilas negras*’, grupo conformado por desmovilizados de las autodefensas, ya azotan 5 regiones”, *El Tiempo*, 10/31/2006.

of State and of Government, he has also the right and the duty to communicate constantly with citizens (...) In undertaking that duty and that right, he may defend his administration and reply to criticism coming from the opposition, civil organizations or the media". However, "as the Constitutional Court has pointed out, in his condition as a public employee who must guarantee the fundamental rights of all Colombians, he must 'abstain from any statement that may damage or risks said category of rights. This obligation is even more relevant given that these are the subjects of special constitutional protection".⁵⁵

Journalist Gonzalo Guillén replied to President Uribe: "stating that I am a professional slanderer, that my professional life of 32 years has been 'dedicated to infamy and libel' and that I have dedicated my professional life to persecuting you. I have never said anything about you which was not properly confirmed (from at least two sources), I have never persecuted you nor have you ever presented any kind of demand or reply to any publication of mine". In his letter, the *Nuevo Herald* journalist said: "I hold you responsible for what may happen to us as a consequence of your disproportionate and senseless attacks. You may not use your condition as head of the country, with all the power you can exert over the media and public opinion, to go out recklessly and arbitrarily to place a journalist -who is only doing his job, informing, even if you do not like it- as a hitman's target." Guillén returned to Colombia in December 2007. He sued the President.

The good news is that there was progress in finding out who was the mastermind of some crimes on journalists. The details of the horrendous crimes perpetrated during previous stages of the Colombian conflict are being revealed through free versions being given in the judiciary by former paramilitaries –a result of peace agreements reached with the government. Among those are several committed against journalists. One paramilitary leader confessed to being the mastermind behind the 2004 assassination of a journalist in César department, who was calling for the population not to pay for the "vaccines" the paramilitaries demanded.⁵⁶ "I was tired of so much talk, I told him the reason to stop criticizing us, he wouldn't listen so the order to execute him was sent out", said the boss of the crime gang. The journalist was stabbed in the chest in his sleep. Another paramilitary chief admitted to having murdered journalist José Emérito Rivas in April 2003, in the very conflictive port city of Barranbermeja. During 2006, another member of the paramilitary confessed to

being the killer of an Arauca journalist murdered in June 2002. The armed gang had defined and sentenced him as a "military objective".

On the other hand, journalism defense organizations protested the liberation of the killer of journalist Orlando Sierra, deputy director of the Mañizález daily *La Patria*, slain in 2002. The hitman stated in the trial that he had killed Sierra by mistake. The court sentenced him to 29 years in prison, but was freed after 67 months.⁵⁷ Alejandro Santos Rubino, director of the weekly *Semana*, stated "the release of Orlando Sierra's killer is the perfect incarnation of the structural problems in Colombian justice. A murdered caught in the act after shooting his victim is sentenced to 29 years in prison but ends up doing only five, thanks to all the cuts and privileges granted in the Criminal Code. This is something truly regrettable, which only reflects how impunity has been legalized in Colombia." The Judiciary's explanation is as follows: "the process recognized a mistaken killing, because Luis Fernando Soto Zapata said he made a mistake. Besides, he accepted the charges: he behaved well in prison and he worked. The other factor is that he has no criminal record. As a judicial operator what you do is comply with the law and the sentences of the constitutional court", stated Carlos Eduardo Bohórquez, First Sentence Execution Justice of Tunja.⁵⁸

The recent October 28th elections were also a moment of particular tension for the press. Guerrillas in several areas intended to promote armed strikes, and were demanding the media spread their press releases. FLIP drew a map of fifty municipalities in the country where risk for the press was highest for the Electoral Observation Mission.⁵⁹ There were also doubts on the role of community radio during the electoral campaign and a certain debate on the concept of *proselytism*. According to the first press release by the Ministry of Communications, community radio could not "include interventions by candidates, political debates nor propaganda for the current political faceoff in its programming." In the face of criticism, there was a clarifying release, which redefined the concept of *proselytism* and lifted the prohibition on political *communications*. Although that press release tried to mark the frontier, the distinction was not too clear: "political shows are different from proselytizing shows in that the first are used by parties and political movements to spread their ideas, deeds and proposals with an institutional tone, with purely informative ends and never seeking electoral support to be a result of them".⁶⁰

⁵⁵ FLIP, 10/4/2007. (<http://www.flip.org.co/veralerta.php?idAlerta=257>)

⁵⁶ (<http://www.derechos.org/nizkor/colombia/doc/larrota.html>)

⁵⁷ Another journalist-killer left prison in Brazil. The man convicted of torturing and murdering Rio de Janeiro-based journalist Tim Lopes was given leave from prison during the day to find work. After leaving the first day, he never returned. (ABRAJI, 9/3/2007)

⁵⁸ "Asesinó a Orlando Sierra y pagó cinco años de cárcel", *La Patria*, 6/10/2007. (http://www.lapatria.com/Noticias/ver_noticia.aspx?CODNOT=23120&CODSEC=4)

⁵⁹ See *Mapa de Riesgo por Violaciones a la Libertad de Prensa* (Risk Map of Violations of Freedom of the Press). (<http://www.flip.org.co/veralerta.php?idAlerta=255>)

⁶⁰ Circular N° 13. Ministerio de Comunicaciones (Ministry of Communications). Colombia. (http://ww.mincomunicaciones.gov.co/mincom/src/user_docs/Archivos/normatividad/2007/Circulares/Circular013de2007.pdf). There was also a debate in Bolivia around the concept of *proselytism* in community media. (RWB, 7/2/2007)

Ecuador

The second semester of 2007 saw less animosity in relations between the government and the press than the first one did. The CPJ did not send out a single alert; RWB only released one, in July, on President Rafael Correa's decision not to give any more press conferences. The Constitutional Assembly began on November 30; until the end of 2007 there was no conflict on relations between journalism and democracy. However, President Correa maintains a line critical of the media. According to IAPA, the "number of epithets" is still growing, with terms such as "incompetent," "defamatory," "lying," "corrupt," "muddling," "mafia-like," "journalistic pornography," "human wretchedness," "savage beasts," and "idiots who publish trash." Correa, like many other politicians in the world and in Latin America, has incorporated criticism of journalism as one of the pillars of his public discourse.⁶¹ They define journalism as an actor with its own economic and political interests, and accuse it of lacking professionalism. In the midst of the discussion over a Tax Equality Law, President Correa said: "those who protest against taxes are the owners of *El Comercio*, *El Universo*, *Teleamazonas*, *Gamavisión*, (...). Let's not let ourselves be used, let's not fall into the trap, let us defend our Citizens' Revolution". Important Ecuadorian journalists share this critical vision. There are several journalists among the assembly members elected by the government side, including Rolando Panchana, host of one of the country's most important newscasts, and the well-known Francisco 'Paco' Velasco. Paco Velasco's *Radio La Luna*, of Quito, was one of the decisive factors in the 2005 collapse of the Lucio Gutiérrez administration. Velasco recently said: "what we are expecting is that media communications will help with transparency, but it will be the citizens who will be given priority, because the media sometimes spread disinformation. This is the citizens' –not the media's– revolution".⁶² The Secretary of Communications, Mónica Chuji, resigned her post to run for in constitutional election and won. The Constitutional Assembly has become the axis of political life in the country, and it is very likely that discussions over the political role of journalism in Ecuadorian democracy will surface during the first semester of 2008.

Peru

According to alerts released by IPYS during the second semester of 2007, the most dangerous areas of Perú are the Amazonian departments of Loreto (ten attack alerts) and San Martín (seven alerts), the coastal and port area of

Ancash (ten alerts), followed by the Andean department of Huanuco (five alerts). In all 2007, and according to alerts released by Office of Journalists' Human Rights –part of Peru's National Journalists' Association–, it is some provinces in Ancash, Lima and Huanuco departments that lead the ranking in number of attacks.

A huge amount of attacks comes from mayors and their cliques, as well as from local police forces. In the country's departments, local politics is very aggressive towards the press. On its part, the Lima-based national press receives considerably less threats than local press outlets. The last threat registered against the country's main newspaper, Lima's *El Comercio*, happened in May 2006, when a Lima lawmaker attacked one of its photographers.

There is great pressure on the press coming from different social groups, something not as visible in other countries. Aggression by unions, peasants' organizations, local companies, different demonstrators and residual parts of guerrilla groups are common in different regions of the country. The destruction of coca plantations, the seizing of land parcels and other demonstrations are conflicts in which different actors try to force the press towards a favorable representation in the media. A coca planters' leader summed this intention in the straightforward phrase: "(those) who speak ill of the coca planters will be stoned to death".⁶³ This higher visibility and variety in attacks is possibly linked to Peru's having one of the best alert and monitoring systems in Latin America. The more recording capacity increases, the more and more diverse violations against freedom of the press.

According to IAPA, there were several judicial advances in the second semester of 2007. In particular, in front of a delegation from that organization, President Alan García "showed himself in favor of creating a National Chamber to solve cases of crimes against journalists and freedom of expression". Within the framework of the IAPA-led Project Impunity, the delegation visited the city of Pucallpa –where radio journalist Alberto Rivera Fernández was murdered in April 2004– for the fourth time in four years. There were irregularities revealed in the judicial process there: "In meetings held with prosecutors and judges in the case at Ucayali Superior Court, it was determined that there was an apparent conflict of interest concerning Miriam Calmet Caynero, the lead judge, because her legal representative in a family case was one of the defense attorneys for Víctor Valdez Villacorta, the provincial chief from Coronel Portillo who is being tried for masterminding the killing along with former Ucayali Superior Court lead judge Solio Ramírez Garay and others." In December 2007, the Oficina de Control de la Magistratura Judiciary Control

⁶¹ See Correa's position on journalism during the interview conducted by Argentinian journalist Jorge Lanata. (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ntpWSQZvK_k). The President's weekly "radio chains" may be consulted at www.presidencia.gov.ec

⁶² ECUAVISIA, 11/7/2007. (<http://www.ecuavisa.com/Desktop.aspx?Id=958&e=769>)

⁶³ RWB, 11/9/2007

Bureau, OCMA) began a disciplinary process against the Uyacali Superior Court members, because they “diluted the process and apparently have not acted in a diligent way so that it would be carried out within a reasonable time frame”.⁶⁴

Last August 15’s earthquake in Pisco ended with a local radio station losing its license. The station is *Radio Orión Canal 15*, directed by Eloy Yong Meza. Military forces occupied it, while national authorities withdrew its license –which had expired. According to the IPYS alert, “even though the truthfulness of Yong’s accusations is in doubt and his radio station has no license, the intervention of military forces in a communications outlet is irregular. Last September third, the Ministry of Communications notified *Orión Canal 15* that its license to broadcast had been cancelled for not requesting renewal in time. Yong appealed the resolution”.⁶⁵ The newspaper *Correo de Ica* described that radio station’s attitude: “a very different case is what happened in Pisco province, the largest city devastated by the earthquake and originated in *Radio Orión*. First they began by alarming the population –two days after the quake- by claiming another tsunami was coming, provoking the population living close to the sea to flee to safer places, leaving their houses abandoned and exposed to robberies in the homes of those who believed what the radio was saying. The Army had to improvise speaker wagons in which they told the populace that the claims were false. Then, in an irresponsible manner, they began encouraging the population to loot the military base, since –as they guaranteed on the radio-, there were food stocks there not being distributed to the general population. An opportune denial on the part of the Army prevented blood from reaching the river. However, the announcement that created the most anxiety was the statement that the earthquake had measured 8.4 degrees, and that the government had covered it up in the intention of not qualifying it as a catastrophe so as to not have to pay each Pisco dweller the huge sum of fifty thousand dollars, besides having to build a new home for each. A chaotic, shaken, hungry and desperate city is capable of believing such uncanny things as the ones we just related, and it is there where equanimity on the part of those who manage or direct a news outlet must prevail.”⁶⁶ The well-known journalist Cecilia Valenzuela also made a critical report on

the Pisco station’s attitude on the *Frecuencia Latina* channel.⁶⁷

Bolivia

The last semester of 2007 saw the highest levels of tension between different political players after the approval of the new Constitution – which affected journalism’s activities. Additionally, the constant pointing of fingers by President Evo Morales and other government employees towards journalists and media went on. Doubtless, the tagging of the media as political actors contributes to their demonization.⁶⁸ In street rallies by different political parties, it is common for journalists perceived as being spokespersons for rival parties to be attacked. As RWB explains, “the press, both public and private, has become hostage to increasingly violent political tensions”.⁶⁹ “The government –with the President himself at the helm-, needs to be very cautious when it launches accusations against the media. He must be because those who listen to him consider attacking this supposed enemy to be of service to him”, claims an editorial in the La Paz newspaper *La Razón*, which belongs to the Spanish group PRISA. In that same editorial, it is added: “the one who can demand the least (of the media) is the President of the Republic, who, as a prominent coca planters’ leader unknown in the public eye was given all avenues to defend his position, defend his ideas and finally take a seat in Parliament, as well as in national politics where, undoubtedly, he made a name for himself. This was not a favor from the press, but its obligation to give a place to whom was moving spirits and showing new faces in the midst of a national crisis.”⁷⁰ RWB and other organizations have asked President Evo Morales to moderate his critiques, but they have not achieved a change in word choice, much as it happens with other Presidents from the region, of similar or antagonistic political positions.⁷¹

If 2008 sees progress in a recall referendum to decide on the continuity of the President, what is most likely is that the polarization process will be even more aggravated and journalism will become –with fewer shades of gray than it has so far- into an open propaganda tool of opposing political factions. The Venezuelan experience –from its first constitutional assembly to the recall referendum of 2004- serves as a historical background to gaze at the Bolivian

⁶⁴ IPYS, 12/20/2007

⁶⁵ IPYS, 9/13/2007. (<http://www.ipys.org/alertas/atentado.php?id=1239>)

⁶⁶ “Irresponsabilidad en el aire”, *Correo del Ica*, 9/13/2007. (http://www.correoperu.com.pe/correosur/ica/pasado/columnistanota.php?col_id=19&id_notas=346&day=11&mes=3&ano=2007)

⁶⁷ Watch a report by Cecilia Valenzuela, at the *Frecuencia Latina* station, analyzing what are considered ill practices by *Radio y Televisión Orión Canal 15*. (http://www.frecuencialatina.com.pe/multimedia/videos/pop_videos.asp?video=/reportajes/multimedia/videos/video48872.wmv)

⁶⁸ A recent CPJ report describes polarization, Carlos Lauría. “El momento histórico en Bolivia”, CPJ, 9/25/2007

⁶⁹ RWB, 10/25/2007

⁷⁰ “Las amenazas contra la prensa”, *La Razón*, 11/28/2007. (http://www.la-razon.com/versiones/20071128%5F006104/nota_245_512525.htm)

⁷¹ RWB, 11/12/2007. The October 2007 IAPA report points out the continental exception: “President Tabaré Vazquez has moderated his personal attacks on media outlets and journalists.” On the other hand, the IAPA report on Paraguay refers to “continuous verbal attacks by the highest authorities (...)”

near future. While Venezuela may be entering a phase of media depolarization, it is possible that Bolivia is going in the opposite way.

There are initiatives in the journalistic field that may help moderate positions. A National Media Observatory (ONADEM) was created, which began making studies that will contribute to defend the professionalism of Bolivian journalists. In a recent ONADEM study on “One year of the Constitutional Assembly in the Bolivian Press”, it is revealed that most news items are usually superficial, that the factions in the conflict get a great capacity to spread their positions and that the Executive also has a great capacity of spreading its own. On the other hand, the constitutional assemblymen have decreasing public voices”.⁷² On the other hand, it can be seen how many media outlets work as representatives and spokespersons

for their places of origin. The ANP objective of sanctioning the code to prove “its members are committed to the exercise of independent, truthful, balanced, non-ideological, high quality and society-focused journalism. Preserving the credibility and prestige of print media is up to the associates of ANP keeping honest practices in serious, responsible and highly reliable journalism”.⁷³ In that way, they intend to have a more solid position in front of questions posed by government officials against journalism. The same October 2007 IAPA report pointed out “Some of the government’s complaints may be justified due to the biased, irresponsible manner in which certain television channels and radio stations have covered various stories. Some sensationalistic media outlets harp on mistakes made by authorities or feature them more prominently than other news stories in order to portray the government in a negative light.”

Journalism-related articles in the new Bolivian State’s Political Constitution (DECEMBER 2007)

Article 107:

I. The State shall guarantee the rights to communications and information.

II. The State shall guarantee all Bolivians the right to freedom of expression, of opinions and of information, as well as the rights to clarification and response, and the right to freely transmit their ideas through any broadcast media, without previous censorship.

III. The State shall guarantee press workers their freedom of expression, the rights to communications and information. These rights shall be exercised according to the principle of responsibility, through ethics and self-regulation codes from journalistic organizations and media outlets, as well as their law.

IV. The conscience clause for information workers shall be granted.

Article 108:

I. Social media outlets shall contribute to the promotion of the ethic, moral and civil values of the country’s many cultures, with the production and transmission of multilingual educational programming and alternate languages for the handicapped.

II. Information and opinions broadcast through social media outlets shall respect the principles of truthfulness and responsibility.

III. Social media outlets may not constitute monopolies or oligopolies, in neither direct nor indirect ways.

IV. The State shall support the creation and sustenance of community media outlets in equal conditions and opportunities.

Article 131:

II. La Acción de Protección de Privacidad no procederá para levantar el secreto en materia de prensa. Privacy Protection Actions shall not be used to reveal press-related secrecy.

Article 138:

In the case of danger to State security, foreign threats, internal commotion or natural disasters, the President of the State shall have the capacity to decree a state of exception, in all or part of the territory as needed. The declaration of state of exception may not suspend guarantees of rights, nor fundamental rights, the right to due process, the right to information and the rights of private citizens to liberty.

⁷² Onadem/UNDP. November 2007. (<http://www.unirbolivia.org/images/stories/flashonadem/ONADEM-PNUD.swf>)

⁷³ ANP, Bolivia (<http://www.anpbolivia.com/nosotros.php>)

Explanation of the Map of Local Level Journalism and Democracy

Argentina

Brown: In *San Luis*, the provincial government controls the main media. The media in *Santa Cruz*, *Formosa* and *La Rioja* depend enormously on government advertising.

Violet: The rest of the country. At the national level, Argentina has not outlawed the crime of libel and slander against government employees, and is keeping abundant gag practices, both at the national and the local level.

Brazil

Red: *Sao Paulo*, where a journalist was shot in the inner state and another journalist was murdered in the previous semester. *Brasilia*, where a journalist was shot. *Pará* is the second most dangerous state according to the FENAJ ranking. *Rio de Janeiro*, third most dangerous state according to the FENAJ ranking. *Matto Grosso do Sul*, third most dangerous state according to the FENAJ ranking. *Santa Catarina*, fourth in the FENAJ ranking. *Mato Grosso*, third most dangerous state according to the FENAJ ranking.

Violet: The rest of the country. At the national level, Brazil has a penalty for crimes against honor, it has mandatory enrolment (suspended temporarily) and it has gag practices.

Paraguay

Red: *Itapúa*, where a journalist was murdered in the last semester and another shot in the first semester. *Amamba*, where danger to journalists is still high.

Violet: The rest of the country, since there are gag laws and practices at the national level.

Uruguay

Yellow: It as penalties for journalists and contempt, but no gag practices.

Chile

Yellow: It as penalties for journalists and contempt, but no gag practices.

México

Red: In *Oaxaca*, a journalist was murdered in October 2006 and another one was shot. This semester a newspaper distributor and two of his employees were murdered, after which the staff quit en masse; another journalist was shot four times. A climate of intimidation continues in *Tamaulipas*, while *Hora Cero* built fences to defend itself against government-supporting demonstrators. In *Sinaloa*, the police attacked journalists. In *Mérida*, the director of *Por esto* was kidnapped four times. In *Coahuila*, a journalist disappeared in the second semester of 2006; this

semester the police arbitrarily detained four journalists. There was a kidnapping and a beating of a journalist in *Morelos*, while the police attacked two journalists. In *Zacatecas*, the police attacked two journalists for *Página 24*. In *Nuevo León*, two journalists are missing since May 5th 2007. Two journalists were killed in Veracruz during the second semester of 2006. In the *Distrito Federal* a journalist was killed in the second semester of 2006. In *Chihuahua*, a journalist was killed in August 2006. In *Michoacán*, a journalist disappeared in November 2006. In *Guerrero*, a journalist was killed in the second semester of 2006, with another one in the first semester of 2007. In *Tabasco*, a journalist disappeared in the first semester of 2007. In *Sonora*, a journalist was kidnapped. In *Baja California* a climate of threats and intimidation continues.

Brown: The rest of the country. The generalization of violence has shaken the exercise of journalism throughout the country.

Centroamérica y Caribe

Red: In *Haiti* there were three murders of people linked to the media in the last year. A radio station was shot up in Port au Prince. Some important journalists had to seek temporary exile. In the *Dominican Republic* two journalists were killed in the second semester of 2006. In *Honduras* a journalist was killed this semester and a journalist's lawyer

was killed in December 2006. In *Guatemala* a journalist was killed this semester and another one in the first semester of 2007. In *El Salvador* a journalist was killed in the second semester of 2007.

Black: *Cuba*, where the laws and the State block the exercise of journalism.

Violet: *Nicaragua*, *Costa Rica* and *Panama*, which have what this report considers gag laws and practices.

Venezuela

Brown: Journalism is exercised in a very polarized situation, which severely conditions it.

Colombia

Red: *Valle del Cauca* ranks first in FLIP's number of attacks; it includes municipalities qualified by FLIP as having extraordinarily high risks. *Bogotá* is second in the FLIP attacks ranking. *Santander* ranks third in the FLIP attacks ranking and includes municipalities qualified by FLIP as having extraordinarily high risks. *Tolima* ranks fourth in the FLIP attacks ranking; *Atlántico* ranks fifth and includes municipalities qualified by FLIP as having extraordinarily high risks. In *Chocó* a journalist was killed in January 2007. It includes municipalities qualified by FLIP as having extraordinarily high risks. *Arauca* includes municipalities qualified by FLIP as having extraordinarily high risks. *Caquetá* has municipalities qualified by FLIP as having extraordinarily high risks. *Sucre* has municipalities qualified by FLIP as having extraordinarily high risks. *Bolívar* has municipalities qualified by FLIP as having extraordinarily high risks. *Magdalena* has municipalities qualified by FLIP as having extraordinarily high risks. *César* has municipalities qualified by FLIP as having extraordinarily high risks. *Antioquía* has municipalities qualified by FLIP as having extraordinarily high risks. *Amazonas* has municipalities qualified by FLIP as having high risks. *Putumayo* has municipalities qualified by FLIP as having high risks. *Huila* has municipalities qualified by FLIP as having high risks. *Meta* has municipalities qualified by FLIP as having high and moderate risks. *Boyacá* has municipalities qualified by FLIP as having high risks. *Cundinamarca* has municipalities qualified by FLIP as having high risks. Norte de *Santander* has municipalities qualified by FLIP as having high risks. *Cauca* has municipalities qualified by FLIP as having high risks. *Nariño* has municipalities qualified by FLIP as having extraordinarily high risks.

Brown: The ten remaining departments. The presence of a variety of powerful, armed groups shakes the exercise of journalism throughout the country.

Ecuador

Violet: The crime of contempt exists; the President sued a journalist for that crime in May 2007.

Perú

Red: In *Cajamarca* a journalist was murdered on March 17th 2007. *Loreto* saw ten IPYS attack alerts during the second semester of 2007. In *Ancash* there were ten IPYS attack alerts in the second semester of 2007. *Santa* province leads the ANP attacks ranking. In *San Martín* there were seven IPYS attack alerts during the second semester of 2007. There were five IPYS attack alerts in *Huanuco* during the second semester of 2007. *Leoncio* province in that department ranks second in the ANP attacks ranking.

Violet: All of Peru, since it has the crime of contempt and a penalty for crimes against honor. It also has gag practices.

Bolivia

Brown: Journalism is practiced in a polarizing situation that severely shakes it.

Guyana

Red: All of it. Four newspaper workers were murdered in 2006.

LOCAL LEVEL JOURNALISM AND DEMOCRACY INDICATORS IN LATIN AMERICA SECOND SEMESTER 2007



UNIVERSIDAD AUSTRAL
FACULTAD DE COMUNICACIÓN



Find the explanation to this map in the previous page