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# PREDATORS

**OF THE PRESS FREEDOM 2013**

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# AFRICA

**ERITREA** - ISSAIAS AFEWORKI

**GAMBIA** - YAHYA JAMMEH

**EQUATORIAL GUINEA**- TEODORO OBIANG NGUEMA

**RWANDA** - PAUL KAGAMÉ

**SOMALIA** - MILICES ISLAMISTES ARMÉES (AL-SHABAAB, HIZB-AL-ISLAM)

**SWAZILAND** - MSWATI III

**ZIMBABWE** - ROBERT MUGABE

**NIGERIA** - THE ISLAMIST GROUP BOKO HARAM

## INDICTMENT



### ERITREA - ISSAIAS AFEWORKI, PRESIDENT

*Born in February 1946, you grew up in Eritrea, got a university degree from Ethiopia's University of Addis Ababa and then received political and military training in China. After 30 years of resistance against Ethiopian domination, you entered Asmara in 1991 and became the Republic of Eritrea's first president in 1993. Yesterday a liberation hero, today you are a ruthless dictator who oppresses his people, refuses to allow opposition parties, does not apply the constitution and says elections will not be held "for decades."*

Issaias Afewerki, Reporters Without Borders accuses you of committing the following crimes:

- Ordering, together with then information minister Naizghi Kiflu, the closure of all of Eritrea's privately-owned press and the arrests of at least 13 journalists, newspaper owners and editors in September 2001.
- Imposing an unrelenting censorship and terror on the state media – including Eri-TV, radio Dimtsi Hafash (Voice of the Masses) and the pro-government daily Hadas Eritrea – which are the only media allowed in Eritrea.
- Masterminding and allocating major financial and technical resources for the jamming of the satellite signal of Radio Erena, an independent exile radio station broadcasting to Eritrea from Paris.
- Responsibility for the surveillance and harassment of the few foreign media correspondents based in Asmara until they all left.

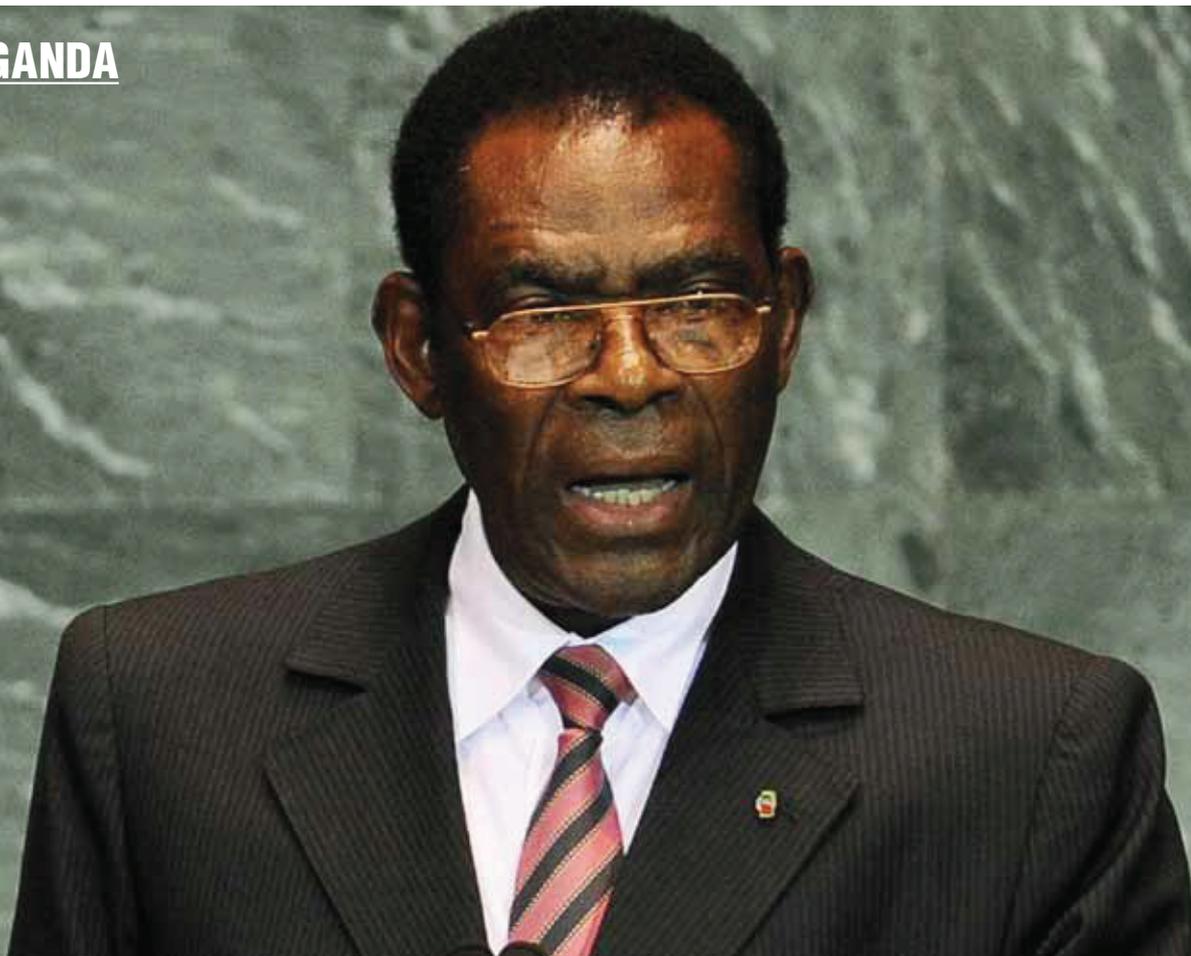
You share this responsibility with Ali Abdu, your acting information minister for nearly ten years (who fled the country in November 2012), and his close collaborator, Amanuel Hadgu.

- Responsibility, since 2001, for many other arrests of journalists, as a result of which your country is now Africa's biggest prison for news providers. About 30 of them are currently detained.
- Imposing inhumane conditions on detained journalists – including detention in secret locations, underground cells, use of steel containers as cells, and torture – causing many deaths. So far, seven of them have died or taken their own lives in detention because of the injustice of the treatment you imposed. They are Medhanie Haile, Yusuf Mohamed Ali, Said Abdulkader, Fessehaye "Joshua" Johannes, Dawit Habtemichael, Mattewos Habteab and Sahle Tsegazab, also known as Wedi Itay.
- Treating the international community, media and opinion with contempt when asked about the fate of journalists imprisoned in your country, saying: "There were never any. There aren't any. You have been misinformed." (Al Jazeera, 2008)

You should be called to account for these gross violations of freedom of information, which contravene article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.



## PROPAGANDA



### EQUATORIAL GUINEA - T. OBIANG NGUEMA, PRESIDENT

#### Official version

"The press is not subject to any form of censorship whatsoever."

#### Reality

A small oil-rich country in the Gulf of Guinea known as "Africa's Kuwait," Equatorial Guinea has been Teodoro Obiang Nguema's personal fiefdom for the past 34 years, a record in political longevity.

A few newspapers are the only privately-owned media, while the state-owned media are subject to very strict political censorship. RTVGE, the national radio and TV broadcaster, gets its orders from the information ministry. Since the start of 2011, it has not been allowed to mention the uprisings in the Arab world.

Juan Pedro Mendene, the presenter of a programme called "Detente," was suspended for a brief ironic allusion to Muammar Gaddafi during the Libyan uprising. "I am Detente's guide, not the Libyan guide," he said on the air. A few minutes later, Federico Abaga, the secretary of state for information, radio and television, stormed into the studio, told a technician to disconnect

Mendene's microphone, and ordered Mendene to leave.

A month before that incident, one of the country's few bloggers, Juan Tomás Ávila Laurel, went on hunger strike and then fled to Spain, saying he had been the victim of "harassment."

The country has no journalists' union or press freedom organization, and the international media have just one correspondent in the capital, who is closely watched.

President Nguema was reelected at the end of 2009 with 96.7 percent of the votes in polling that many international media including the Spanish daily El País were prevented from covering. Is there a lack of pluralism? No, officials reply. The high percentage won by the president in elections is "the result of support for his policies," they say.

The regime has used high-profile PR operations such as hosting an African Union summit in June 2011 and the African Nations Cup in January 2012 to improve its image, but they were not accompanied by any relaxation in censorship.

## IN THE HEAD OF



### **RWANDA - PAUL KAGAME, PRESIDENT**

*"They say my slight build, intellectual's glasses and neat suits give me the smooth look of a modern politician but can't hide the fact that I used to be a warlord. And yes, I sometimes display the brutality and coldness I acquired during my days as a guerrilla in the bush. So what? And yes, the reconciliation process we began when I became president after the 1994 genocide has also served to bolster my authority and neutralize the opposition. So what?"*

*Anyway, neither the media, nor the United Nations nor the human rights groups have the necessary moral authority to criticize me. The human rights groups? I am sure they wouldn't even know where to locate Rwanda on a map.*

*And the media? Those that dare criticize me are just new versions of the genocidal "Radio Mille Collines." And the so-called Rwandan journalists who say the climate is oppressive and flee the country by the dozens are just mercenaries and tramps.*

*Anyone is welcome to ask me a question at a news conference as long as it is not embarrassing. The information ministry and High Media Council keep a close eye on things and, if necessary, can always charge someone with "insulting the President of the Republic."*

*Two insolent women journalists, Agnès Uwimana Nkusi and Saidat Mukakibibi, were sentenced to 17 and seven years in prison in early 2011 for daring to criticize me. A year later, we were extremely magnanimous and reduced their sentences to four and three years. That didn't cost us much!*

*And Jean-Léonard Rugambage? The deputy editor of that rag Umuvugizi? It's all over for him. He was found murdered in his car outside his Kigali home in June 2010. It seems he was investigating the intelligences services and their attempt to murder an exiled general in South Africa. An investigation that clearly came to a sudden end!"*

**INDICTMENT**



**SOMALIA - AL-SHABAAB, ISLAMIST MILITIA**

*The Islamist militia known as Al-Shabaab (“The Youth”) is led by Sheikh Moktar Ali Zubeyr but its most visible representative is its spokesman, Sheikh Ali Mohamud Rage. African Taliban who use deadly violence, they were the most radical, hard-line wing of the “Islamic Courts” government that seized power in 2006. Al-Shabaab has since then established itself as the biggest and best organized of Somalia’s rebel groups. After fighting the troops that Ethiopia stationed in Somalia from 2006 to 2009, it is now combatting Mogadishu’s African Union-backed government.*

Reporters Without Borders accuses the Islamist militia Al-Shabaab of the following crimes:

- Waging a campaign of terror, bombings and targeted killings of leading members of Somali civil society accused of serving the interests of the “Crusaders”, meaning westerners.
- Responsibility for most of the 45 murders of journalists since 2007, which have turned Somalia into one of the world’s deadliest countries for media personnel.

- Seizing control of around 10 radio stations in 2010 in order to ensure that they broadcast nothing but political and religious propaganda.
- Issuing directives to journalists on how to cover the news.
- Banning cinema, video games and radio music.
- Contributing to the chaos in Somalia by waging a guerrilla war against the fragile federal government since 2009.
- Despite having withdrawn from Mogadishu in mid-2011, continuing to control parts of the country and creating zones off limits to journalists, where they are unwelcome and liable to be arrested arbitrarily and executed.

You should be called to account for these gross violations of freedom of information, which contravene article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

## IN THE HEAD OF



### SWAZILAND - KING MSWATI

*"I, King Mswati III, am proud to be Africa's last absolute monarch. I use and abuse my royal prerogatives, collecting wives (so far I have 13 of them) and amassing riches while my subjects die of thirst. I got a private jet for my birthday and, in return, I give limousines to my close relatives. Life is short so I've decided to enjoy myself.*

*I'm delighted to have an effective government. Effective in terms of governance and implementing health programmes? No, forget that. Around 40 per cent of the population is infected with HIV, poverty is on the rise, the economy is not viable and foreign investors have thrown in the towel. But that doesn't keep me awake at night. I mean it is effective at controlling the information put out by the press and discouraging those idiotic journalists who think they can criticize me. That kind of effective!*

*My aides issue reminders to journalists on my behalf. In 2010, my brother, Prince Mhalaba, said journalists who kept on writing bad things about our kingdom would be killed. Two years before that, my justice minister, Majahekhaba Dlamini, issued a public*

*warning that journalists who criticized the government would be arrested and charged with terrorism. The "suppression of terrorism" law provides for sentences of up to 25 years in prison. That should dissuade them.*

*Intimidation is an effective policy. Self-censorship is now routine. It is hard to imagine anyone criticizing me or other senior officials nowadays. Two journalists, Mfomfo Nkambule of the Times of Swaziland, the country's only privately-owned newspaper, and Mario Masuku of the Times Sunday, were forced to stop writing their columns in 2009.*

*When a handful of idiots took the street to demand my departure in 2011 and 2012, we arrested the Swazi and foreign journalists who went to cover their pseudo-demonstrations. When the editor of the magazine The Nation was found guilty of contempt of court in 2013, he was sentenced to a fine of 200,000 emalangeni (more than 16,000 euros) or two years in prison if the fine was not paid. Enough to silence him and encourage his colleagues to do the same."*

## INDICTMENT



### ZIMBABWE - ROBERT MUGABE, PRESIDENT

*At 89, you share the title of world's oldest head of state with Saudi Arabia's King Abdallah ben Abdelaziz Al Saud and Singapore's President Sellapan Ramanathan. You have been your country's president for the past 26 years, since 1987. Before that, you were prime minister, the post you assumed when Zimbabwe became independent in 1980. You are an inflexible head of state, one who is hostile to the international community and reluctant to compromise with the opposition, although it is now part of a power-sharing government.*

Robert Mugabe, Reporters Without Borders accuses you of committing the following crimes as Zimbabwe's president during the past ten years:

- Suppressing freedom of expression ahead of the next elections, the date of which is still unknown.
- Preventing the creation of any independent radio or TV station in Zimbabwe, thereby ensuring that the state-owned Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) keeps its monopoly of broadcasting.
- Exercising strict control over the state media, with the help of your entourage.
- Constantly harassing the privately-owned print media.
- Dubbing the foreign media persona non grata in Zimbabwe.

- Preventing the power-sharing government from functioning properly, thereby blocking media reforms.

- Introducing laws that have drastically curtailed media freedom. They include the 2002 Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA), which was designed to finish off the independent press, above all The Daily News, then Zimbabwe's most widely-read newspaper. They also include an Orwellian 2007 law that lets the authorities intercept communications without asking the courts.

- Placing reporters and editors under surveillance, as you did, for example, after your government's electoral difficulties in 2008, in order to assess their loyalty to the ruling Zanu-PF party.

- Having opposition activists and journalists arrested after the same electoral difficulties and subjected to grotesque trials on charges of participating in a "terrorist" conspiracy to overthrow your presidency.

- Encouraging impunity for the 2007 murder of Edward Chikomba, a freelance cameraman who used to work for ZBC. His body was found on 31 March 2007, two days after he was kidnapped by suspected intelligence agents. No serious investigation has ever been carried out.

You should be called to account for these gross violations of freedom of information, which contravene article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

## IN THE HEAD OF



## NIGERIA - THE ISLAMIST GROUP BOKO HARAM

*"Western education is a sin ! What does that mean to you? It's the definition of 'Boko Haram', the Islamist group of which I, Abul Qaqa, am the spokesman. The group, founded in 2002 by Muhammad Yusuf in Maiduguri, capital of Borno State in north-eastern Nigeria, has been making a name for itself in Africa and throughout the world. Its original name in Arabic is Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati Wal-Jihad (the Congregation of the People of Tradition for Proselytism and Jihad).*

*We do not beat around the bush. Our goal? The application of Sharia law throughout Nigeria. How do we go about it? Through kidnappings, bombings and suicide attacks aimed at the United Nations, churches and symbols of the federal government such as police stations.*

*The media are also a target, with good reason ! We have warned journalists and news organizations on many occasions to be professional and objective in their reports. We are at war with the Nigerian government*

*and, unfortunately, the media have not been fair and objective enough for our liking.*

*We were behind the coordinated attacks in Abuja and Kaduna on the offices of several newspapers including ThisDay, The Moment and The Daily Sun in April last year. We were also responsible for the murder of Zakariya Isa, a cameraman with the state-owned Nigeria Television Authority (NTA) in October 2011. He was shot several times outside his home as he returned from the mosque. Despite denials by his colleagues and the intelligence service, we are certain that lowlife spied on us on behalf of the Nigerian security services.*

*We don't like nosy parkers. In January 2012, the Kano correspondent of Channels TV was killed when he tried to interview victims of a series of suicide attacks that we had just carried out in the city. You may think we killed him to stop him from filing a report. How right you are."*

# AMERICAS

**COLOMBIE** - "OTONIEL" AND LOS URABEÑOS – PARAMILITARIES

**CUBA** - RAÚL CASTRO

**HONDURAS** - M. FACUSSÉ BARJUM, ENTREPRENEUR ET PROPRIÉTAIRE TERRIEN

**MEXIQUE** - MIGUEL TREVIÑO MORALES ALIAS Z-40

## INDICTMENT



### COLOMBIE - “OTONIEL” AND LOS URABEÑOS – PARAMILITARIES

*Darío Antonio Úsuga, also known as “Otoniel”*

*You were a member of the People’s Liberation Army (EPL), a Maoist guerrilla group, during the 1980s. When it broke up in 1991, you joined the paramilitary self-defence groups, which had close links with the late Pablo Escobar’s Medellín Cartel. Although officially “demobilized” in 2007, the paramilitaries did not disarm and continue to act in cahoots with the drug traffickers. You took control of the criminal gang Los Urabeños in 2009, together with your brother, Juan de Dios, who was gunned down in 2012.*

Reporters Without Borders accuses you and your paramilitary group, known as “Los Urabeños,” of the following crimes:

- Instigating terror campaigns against journalists and human rights activists in 337 municipalities in central Colombia and on the Caribbean coast, and in the Cali and Medellín metropolitan areas in particular, where you have managed to establish a hold.
- Using death threats in early 2012 to force journalists and correspondents for national and regional media based in the cities

of Medellín, Montería and Sincelejo to censor themselves or to stop working or in some cases, to flee the region or the country.

- Hiring young criminals, some of them juvenile delinquents known as “combos,” to intimidate, threaten or even kill those who dared to cover your activities.
- Involvement in the murder of Clodomiro Castilla Ospina, the editor of the magazine El Pulso del Tiempo and a presenter on radio La Voz de Montería, in Montería on 19 March 2010.
- Repeatedly designating journalists as “military targets.”
- Inspiring or encouraging other criminal gangs that have emerged from the paramilitary movement such as Los Rastrojos, which have a presence in the south of the country. In 2011, Los Rastrojos declared 11 indigenous community radio stations in the department of Cauca to be “permanent military targets.”

You should be called to account for these gross violations of freedom of information, which contravene article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

## IN THE HEAD OF



## CUBA - RAÚL CASTRO, PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL OF STATE, "TIRED PREDATOR"

*Although nearly 82, I secured a new five-year term as president in February 2013. It will be the last one. It is time for me to stand down after making some concessions... in a manner of speaking, at least. I definitely want to make some economic concessions, allow the creation of small private companies, and even lift travel restrictions for my fellow citizens, including traitors such as that unruly blogger Yoani Sánchez. But, for the time being, forget about allowing an independent press and loosening the controls on the Internet.*

*Think about it. Too much information flowing freely in Cuba could encourage protests and sedition. Our system is collapsing, as I've said several times at internal meetings. But the Revolution is supposed to be irreversible, as my elder brother always used to say, and it's thanks to this kind of language that the regime has survived until now.*

*If I legalized independent newspapers and radio stations tomorrow, if I allowed broadband Internet and if I ratified the two UN conventions on civil and political rights that I signed in 2008, the collapse would just come all the faster. Dig our own grave? No way. But we have little room for manoeuvre. Freedom of infor-*

*mation and pluralism are recognized everywhere else in Latin America, at least on paper. Except in Cuba. It's pretty tricky, especially as I am this year's president of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC).*

*Of course, it wasn't very subtle of me to have kept this poor Calixto Ramon Martínez Arias of Hablemos Press in detention for seven months just for providing information about dengue and cholera epidemics that we later had to confirm. And it's not very clever to lock up this Granma journalist, Luis Antonio Torres, whose reporting I had even praised, or the netizen Angel Santiesteban-Prats. When I am going to be able to release those two? Keeping them in detention is absurd, I know. But political survival has a price.*

*So? So I allow my State Security to harass and beat up independent journalists and bloggers. For no reason, just to intimidate. So I stick by my decision not to provide my fellow citizens with fast Internet connections even if the new ALBA 1 fibre-optic cable would allow it. And I leave it to my successor to lift the lid in five years' time. After the Castro brothers, the deluge.*

## IN THE HEAD OF



### HONDURAS - M. FACUSSÉ BARJUM, BUSINESSMAN LANDOWNER

*Although nearly 90, I'm still regarded as the most powerful man in Honduras. I've served as a liaison between the military and business community through the Association for Honduran Progress (APROH), which I founded and headed until 2001. As the uncle of a former president, I wield a great deal of influence over the political class and I was one of the main backers of the June 2009 coup d'état.*

*Since the coup, 25 journalists have been killed, human rights defenders have been hounded and freedom of information has acquired a very variable geometry.*

*And that's all to the good. I don't like inquisitive journalists meddling in my affairs or losers disputing the land I own. As the head of an agro-industrial consortium called Quimical Dinant, I own 8,000 hectares of land in the Bajo Aguán region and more in the Zacate Grande peninsula. Thanks to my private militias and with help from the police and army, I know how to silence all these*

*recalcitrants who dare to talk about land conflicts and agrarian reform.*

*In June 2010, I had soldiers dispatched to La Voz de Zacate Grande, a community radio station that had been formed a month earlier. The station's manager, Franklin Meléndez, was injured in a March 2011 shooting attack that was blamed on my militiamen. But the police, who are good sorts, advised him not to file a complaint.*

*The young freelance journalist Karla Zelaya was kidnapped and tortured in Tegucigalpa in October 2012 after the stupid bitch was warned not to talk about the Aguán. And this Jesuit radio station, Radio Progreso, is still as insolent as ever. Why didn't the soldiers who "protected" it on the day of the coup just close it down for good? Now, let's wait for the November 2013 elections. Politicians and media can be bought, can't they?*

# INDICTMENT



## MEXIQUE - MIGUEL TREVIÑO MORALES ALIAS Z-40, AND THE ZETAS DRUG CARTEL

Dear Mr. Morales, alias Z-40

*Born on 18 November in Nuevo Laredo in Tamaulipas state, you spent some time in Dallas while you were growing up, where you forged important criminal links on both sides of the border. You joined the Gulf Cartel led by Osiel Cardenas Guillen in 1999, the year that its leader recruited former soldiers to form a new armed wing of his organization, known as Los Zetas, which was charged with eliminating members of rival cartels. Los Zetas became more and more independent during the federal government's anti-drugs offensive between 2006 and 2012. The death in 2012 of Heriberto Lazcano, known as "Lazca" or "Z-3", put you in charge of the new cartel.*

Reporters Without Borders makes the following allegations against the Los Zetas gang:

- using violence, you were instrumental in helping to make Mexico the continent's most dangerous country for journalists, of whom 86 have been killed and 17 have disappeared since 2000.

- being implicated in kidnapping and murdering journalists and human rights activists and extending your criminal influence in

the states of the north-west and the Gulf of Mexico, namely Coahuila, Tamaulipas, Nuevo Leon, San Luis Potosi and Veracruz.

- being partly responsible for the notorious reputation of Veracruz state, which alone accounts for the deaths of nine journalists and the disappearance of two others since 2010 and is now ranked among the 10 most dangerous places in the world for journalists.

- accumulating through your criminal activities a mercenary force in the pay of corrupt authorities implicated in these tragedies.
- in the territories mentioned above, maintaining a climate of fear conducive to impunity through kidnappings and acts of barbarism.

- forcing local news operations to practise self-censorship and journalists to go into exile by your abuses.

- using corruption to put pressure on the families of your victims and thus silencing them.

You should be answerable for these gross violations of freedom of news and information, which contravene article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

# ASIA

**AFGHANISTAN, PAKISTAN** - MOLLAH MOHAMMAD OMAR

**CHINA** - XI JINPING

**NORTH KOREA** - KIM JONG-UN

**LAOS** - CHOUMMALY SAYASONE, PRESIDENT

**PHILIPPINES** - PRIVATE MILITAS

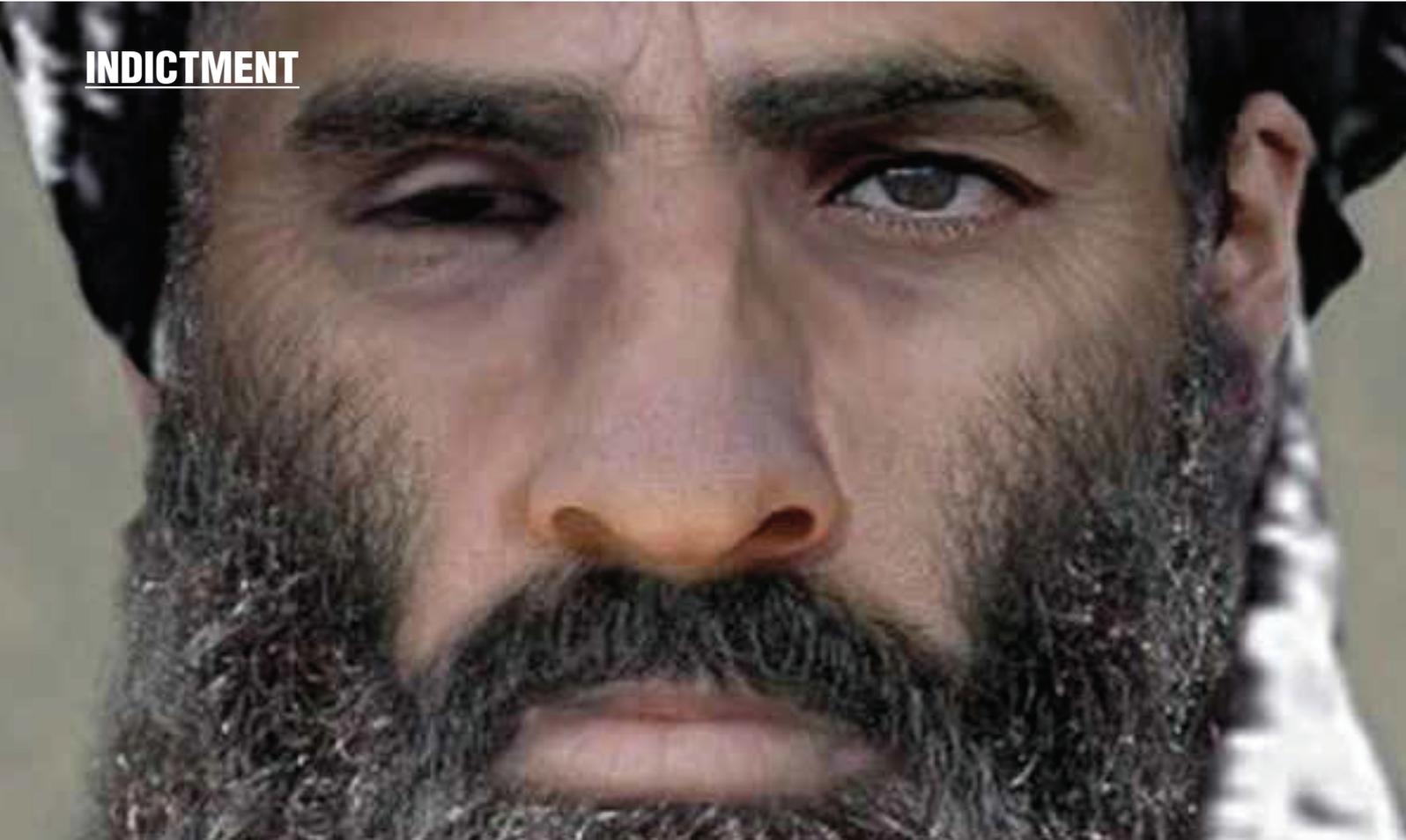
**PAKISTAN** - BALOCH ARMED GROUPS

**PAKISTAN** -THE INTELLIGENCE SERVICES

**SRI LANKA** - THE RAJAPAKSE BROTHERS

**MALDIVES** - LEADERS AND MEMBERS OF EXTREMIST RELIGIOUS GROUPS

**VIETNAM** - NGUYEN PHU TRONG



## INDICTMENT

### **AFGHANISTAN - MULLAH MOHAMMAD OMAR, TALIBAN CHIEF**

*Mullah Mohammad Omar, Reporters Without Borders accuses you of the following crimes as self-proclaimed Commander of the Faithful, Servant of Islam and head of the Taliban leadership council (Rahbari Shura).*

Under your leadership, the Afghan Taliban and Pakistani Taliban (Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan):

- Have imposed terror and created information “black holes” in the south and east of Afghanistan and in western Pakistan.
- Constantly threaten news providers and their families, in order to impose the strictest self-censorship.
- Have encouraged the abduction of foreign journalists who have gone to cover events on the ground in Afghanistan since the US-led coalition forces intervened in 2001.
- Have ordered targeted shootings and executions of foreign and local journalists such as Deewa Radio correspondent Mu-

karram Khan Atif.

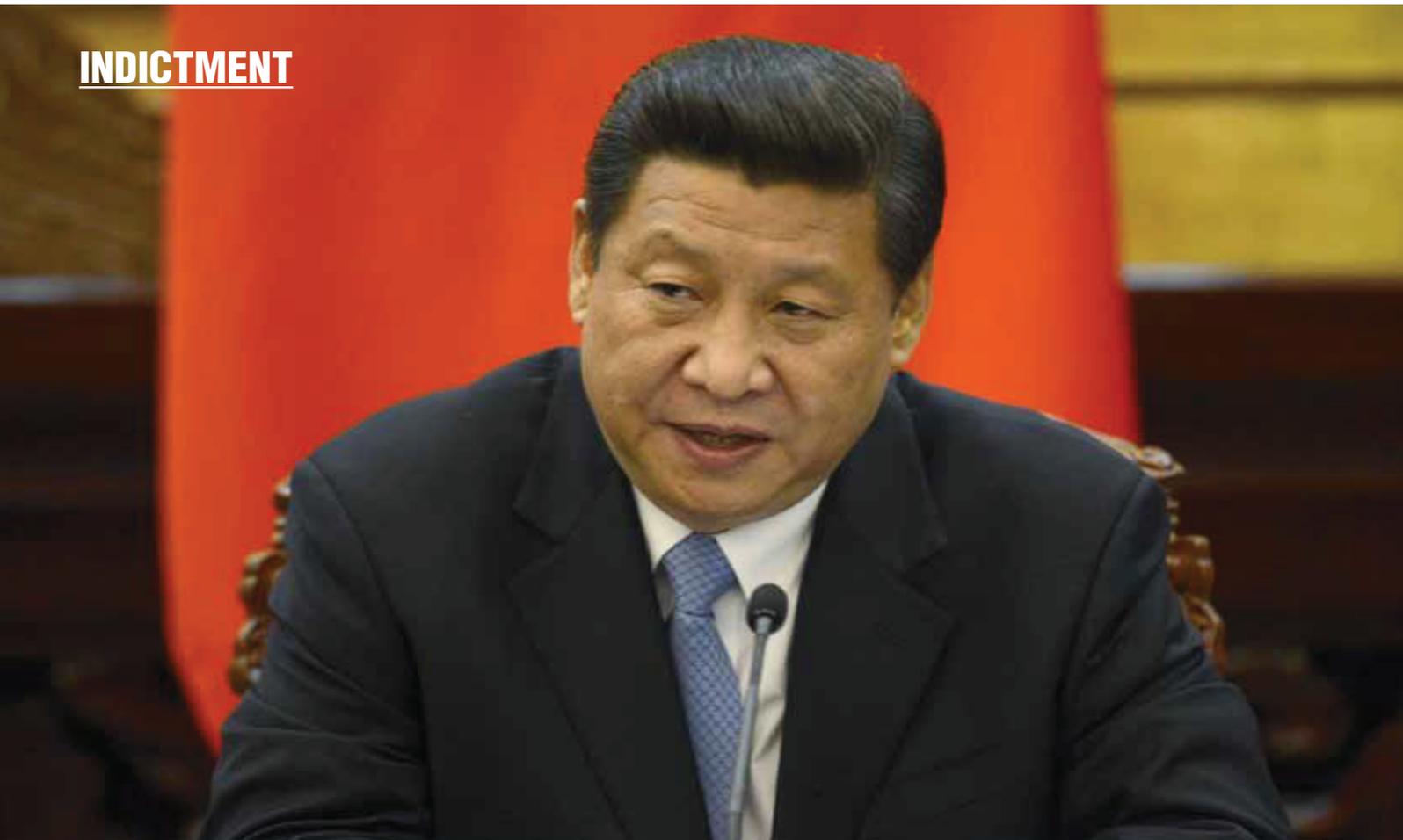
- Have caused the deaths of many journalists – such as Jafar Vafa of radio Kaley Ghosh, Rupert Hamer of the UK’s Sunday Mirror and Michelle Lang of the Calgary Herald – by the use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs), which have helped to install a climate of terror.

- Tried to murder the teenage blogger Malala Yousafzai in Pakistan’s Swat Valley.

- Committed many other crimes against the media, including US journalist Daniel Pearl’s murder in 2002.

You should be called to account for these gross violations of freedom of information, which contravene article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

## INDICTMENT



### **CHINA - – XI JINPING, PRESIDENT OF THE PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF CHINA, GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE CHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY**

*With my appointment— or rather, my appointments – the People’s Republic of China has made a great leap forward. Committed to reforming and opening the country, in keeping with the guiding principles developed by the Party, I will ensure China’s economic development and global standing.*

*Some of our fellow citizens oppose this march of progress. From the time of the 18th Congress of the Chinese Communist Party in November, 2012, during time I was carried to the movement’s summit, to the 12th National People’s Assembly in March 2013, when I was named president of the People’s Republic, these so-called journalists and bloggers have tried to sully some comrades’ images, my own among them.*

*These dissidents who systematically and blindly criticize our actions are trying to undermine the Party’s credibility as a way to sap its legitimacy. By what right do they describe the air quality in Beijing, our management of flood emergencies, the corruption of local officials?*

*I have had to undertake major housekeeping among these “journalists,” “cyber-dissidents” and self-proclaimed human rights “defenders.” I do not hesitate to strengthen censorship in order to bring them to heel. The case of the disappeared New Year’s editorial in the Nanfang Zhoumo newspaper – what a way to call*

*for political reforms! – showed me that journalists and citizens can maintain their resistance by taking it to the Web.*

*Try as they may, I can count on the support of devoted compatriots. I must thank Charles Chao and Ma Huateng, presidents of the Sina and Tencent companies, for the efficiency of their companies’ surveillance – and suppression – of information posted on their online social networks, Weibo and QQ.*

*At the same time, I am strengthening measures to disable software that allows my fellow citizens to bypass the electronic Great Wall, which the Party has invested so much money to build and maintain.*

*Meanwhile, we need stronger actions to stop the defamatory attacks of the foreign press, which considers it objective journalism to investigate Liu Xiaobo, Tibet and my supposed personal fortune. Thus, I have ruled that the Chinese print and broadcast media are prohibited from using unauthorized information from foreign media or websites.*

*With their “scoops,” The New York Times, Bloomberg and the BBC are trying to destroy the Chinese dream, the people’s dream. Despite their attempts, we will achieve our goals by standing by the people – and keeping a very close eye on them.*

## IN THE HEAD OF



## **NORTH KOREA - KIM JONG-UN, FIRST CHAIRMAN OF THE NATIONAL DEFENCE COMMISSION, FIRST SECRETARY OF THE WORKERS' PARTY, SUPREME LEADER OF THE POPULAR DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF KOREA.**

*A little over a year ago, no-one had heard of me. However, I am the grandson of the eternal president, Kim Il-sung, and the rightful heir of my father Kim Jong-il. Since I took over the reins of power on my father's death in December 2011, it has been up to me to spread the word of the Workers' Party more widely throughout the world and to build a personality cult around myself so that the Korean people would not be left orphaned.*

*Journalists and news organizations, such as our esteemed Korean Central News Agency, must of course continue to fulfil their duty in proclaiming loudly and clearly our efforts to thwart the enemy's attempts to snuff out our motherland, as vigorously promoting our economic development.*

*In order to publicise abroad my accomplishments and the deep thoughts that I produce daily, we shall be launching a number of websites and satellite media. Aimed entirely at an overseas*

*audience ! There is no question of allowing my beloved people access to the subversive websites, and seditious television channels and newspapers scattered across a corrupt world that is run with an iron grip by the United States and its Korean and Japanese puppets.*

*Journalists in our country have enough on their minds already, without having to read slanderous comments about me every day. It so happened that a journalist, despite working under the strict supervision of a party comrade, misspelled the name of my revered father while reporting on the activities of the Workers' Party or transcribing one of my speeches. He was summoned by the party committee at the place where he worked and, after being questioned and conducting self-criticism before the committee, he was punished with three months in re-education camp. He didn't do too badly. Others have needed two years in a camp to purge their lapses in concentration.*

## IN THE HEAD OF



### LAOS - CHOUMMALY SAYASONE, PRESIDENT

*I've been president of the Lao People's Democratic Republic for the past seven years. As head of the ruling Lao People's Revolutionary Party, I control all the national media with an iron hand. Why should I allow the emergence of objective and independent media reporting?*

*My links with Vietnam have been strengthened since my last meeting in December 2012 with Nguyen Phu Trong, the general secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam, a man I admire for his domestic political successes and, in particular, his ability to control the media and crush dissent. I did my bit by celebrating the Year of Vietnam-Laos Friendship in 2012. The Laotian media hailed my visit to Vietnam, following the lead set by Sieng Paxaxon Khong Sounkang Phak (People, the Voice of the Party Central Committee), the single party's mouthpiece, as well as by Kongthav Pativat, by radio and TV, and by the national news agency Khaosane Pathet Lao (KPL). Our media performed their duties perfectly, writing articles in favour of the country's*

*development and construction. I'm proud of my obedient journalists. I've trained them well.*

*I work closely with the ministry of information, culture and tourism, which is responsible for direct supervision of the news media. We meet with media editors several times a month to discuss recently published articles and identify the next stories to be covered. Thanks to this spirit of cooperation, the print and broadcast media are able to convey my vision of "national security" and "public decency," which take precedence over human rights.*

*As long as there is no sign of any significant alternative media or citizen initiative emerging online, and as long as journalists don't make a big fuss about the continual postponement of implementation of the 2008 law on access to state-held information, everything will be for the best in the best of all possible worlds.*



## PHILIPPINES - PRIVATE MILITIAS

Armed thugs used by corrupt politicians, paramilitary groups or just hired hit-men, you, the members of your country's private militias, are guilty of threatening and murdering journalists with complete impunity. The police and judicial authorities are powerless to stop you. More than three years have gone by since the Ampatuan family's private militia slaughtered 32 journalists on 23 November 2009, but no one has been convicted of these murders. Thanks to the prevailing corruption and the close links between certain politicians and organized crime, you usually manage to get off scot-free.

Reporters Without Borders accuses the Philippine private militias of committing the following crimes:

- Carrying out targeted murders on the orders of corrupt politicians, either as members of paramilitary groups or as hired killers who are paid just a few thousand dollars per hit.
- Murdering more than 60 journalists in the course of the past 10 years.
- Murdering 32 journalists in one fell swoop in Maguindanao pro-

vince on 23 November 2009. Carried out by members of the Ampatuan family's private militia, this is regarded as the world's biggest-ever massacre of media personnel.

- Threatening news providers with the aim of imposing a climate of terror and self-censorship.

- Obstructing justice in many cases, including the Ampatuan massacre, and threatening and intimidating the families of victims.

- Maintaining impunity by corrupting judicial officials, politicians and participants in trials.

- Transforming the metropolitan regions of Manila (on Luzon Island) and Cagayan de Oro (on Mindanao Island) into no-go areas where complete impunity reigns.

You should be called to account for these gross violations of freedom of information, which contravene article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

# INDICTMENT



## PAKISTAN - BALOCH ARMED GROUPS, INCLUDING THE BALOCHISTAN LIBERATION ARMY, BALOCH LIBERATION FRONT AND BALOCH MUSALLAH DEFA ARMY

*Balochistan has undergone several periods of open armed conflict since the Pakistani armed forces intervened to end Qalat's independence in 1948. Fighting resumed again in 2004. Since then, this region has been turned into one of the world's most dangerous regions for journalists by you, the armed separatist groups and the militias created to defend the central Pakistani government.*

Reporters Without Borders accuses you, the Baloch armed groups, of the following crimes:

- Imposing terror, creating information "black holes" in southwestern Pakistan and turning the city of Khuzdar into one of the world's most dangerous places for the media.
- Constantly threatening news providers and their families in order to force them to censor themselves.

- Threatening news media and their reporters with reprisals if they give you "negative" coverage or if they refuse to report your activities and public statements.

- Carrying out bombings, the aims of which have included killing journalists who go to cover the targeted events.

- Killing many journalists, including Mehmood Ahmed Afridi of the newspaper Intikhab, Abdul Haq Baluch of ARY News TV, Abdul Qadir Hajizai of Vsh TV, and Faiz Muhammad Sasoli of the daily Aaj Kal and the Independent News agency.

You should be called to account for these gross violations of freedom of information, which contravene article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.





**Case of Syed Saleem Shahzad**

In May 2011, the body of investigative reporter Syed Saleem Shahzad was found in his abandoned car 100 km north of Islamabad. The Asia Times Online journalist, who wrote about Islamic militancy and Al-Qaeda, had been missing for two days. Pakistani journalists and a number of NGOs suspected the ISI to be behind his death. Sources close to the journalist said he had reported receiving warnings from security agencies in the past because of his reports.

**Official version**

“Allegations against the armed forces of Pakistan and the ISI are part of a bigger game which is aimed at destabilizing the Pakistani state.”

**The reality**

Several witnesses who testified to the commission investigating the journalist’s murder said they were convinced the ISI was implicated. The fact there was no CCTV footage, not even from roadside security posts, suggests an elaborate scheme to eliminate incriminating evidence. This is not the way terrorist or militant groups operate – they always claim responsibility for their actions.

Reporters Without Borders recorded 21 kidnappings traceable to the intelligence services between 1999 and 2006.

## IN THE HEAD OF



## SRI LANKA - THE RAJAPAKSE BROTHERS

**Mahinda Rajapaksa**, Sri Lankan president and defence minister

**Gotabaya Rajapaksa**, defence secretary

Statement by President Rajapaksa:

My government, i.e. the Rajapaksa family, naturally respects journalists and freedom of the press. In fact, I regularly tell them about my vision for their profession when we meet over a working breakfast. In this way they benefit from my benevolence and wisdom and identify the news stories they should follow up and those they should steer clear of, bearing in mind their own safety.

Prevention is better than cure. Don't most crimes against the media go unpunished, despite the aggressiveness of my police force? Men and women who work in the media can rely on my unwavering support when they are attacked. Such attacks often occur after they have criticised my policies. That is mere coincidence.

Consider the case of the Sunday Leader journalist Faraz Shaukatally. After I had the newspaper's management replaced and all its toughest journalists left the country, his insistence on continuing to work as an investigative journalist almost cost him his life. I ordered close protection for him. The grateful chap made a point of thanking me on my presidential website:

The sensitive suggestions made recently to Tamil journalists will help us to understand each other, I am sure. Judge for yourselves. Criticism of my government in the newspaper Uthayan has almost stopped. Only hypocritical media organizations and NGOs with a hidden political agenda would dare to claim that the main reasons criticism had stopped was that their printing presses had been set on fire or their journalists put in hospital.

These killjoys have the ear of the U.N. Human Rights Council in Geneva. Needless to say, Sri Lanka will take no notice of the council's recommendations. And anyone who publishes them can expect to have problems. The Tamil service of the BBC, which has been heavily censored, knows all about that.

Such foreign news organizations are all the more irritating since they have accomplices in our own ranks and even depend on Sri Lankan journalists. Sandaruwan Senadheera, Sunanda Deshapriya, Frederica Jansz or any of the many Sri Lankan journalists based abroad will not succeed in undermining Sri Lanka by publishing misleading stories about myself or my government. Let them stay in exile.

I reiterate that, as far as human rights, freedom of press and freedom of news and information are concerned, Sri Lanka is an excellent example of tolerance and pluralism.

## INDICTMENT



## MALDIVES - LEADERS AND MEMBERS OF EXTREMIST RELIGIOUS GROUPS

*Since the army and police mutiny on 7 February 2012, which overthrew President Mohamed Nasheed, extremist religious groups have been trying to use their capacity for causing harm to extend their influence in the country. With the presidential election in July a matter of weeks away, they have been taking a tougher stand.*

Reporters Without Borders accuses the leaders and members of these fanatical groups of the following:

- intimidating media organizations and bloggers and threatening them with physical harm in order to force them to exercise self-censorship.
- misusing freedom of expression to impose a religious agenda, while denying such freedom to others;
- debasing political debate in order to encourage attacks on freedom of expression;
- influencing politicians with the aim of promoting repressive legislation, particularly in the area of blasphemy;

- arbitrarily accusing journalists, bloggers and others involved in news and information, as well as the publications they work for, of breaking the law for daring to call for a debate on religious issues;

- contributing to the censorship of publications and the blocking of access to websites that offer a different opinion;

- using the religious argument as a political and social weapon, not only against those who campaign for freedom of expression and information, but also anyone involved in news and information identified as an enemy;

- resorting to violence, and even murder, to silence dissident opinions.

Reporters Without Borders calls for the officials and members of these armed groups to be brought to justice by the appropriate authorities for these gross breaches of freedom of information.

They should be called to account for these flagrant violations, which contravene article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

## IN THE HEAD OF



### VIETNAM - NGUYEN PHU TRONG

*I am very familiar with the media and journalism since I myself worked as a journalist between 1967 and 1996, and then served as the editor of Tap Chi Cong San (Communist Review), the Communist Party's theoretical journal. It is not the function of the media to carry out propaganda against the state. Journalists must only report factual information and should not make comments promoting a multiparty system in their editorials or online. Foreign media organizations such as Radio Free Asia, VOA or the BBC are quick to broadcast such comments to our citizens in the guise of "independent" news and information that does not meet with our approval.*

*In Vietnam, journalists are able to carry out their work so long as they do not criticize the party. Last February, the journalist Nguyen Dac Kien broke the rules of his newspaper, Family and Society, which consequently dismissed him. By refusing to confine his report to the content of my speech and expressing an opinion*

*on what I said, the journalist violated journalistic ethics and was effectively trying to destabilise the political establishment.*

*Those calling for reform over the past few months are guilty of political, ideological and moral sabotage. When I took office, the editor of the party daily Nhan Dan also condemned appeals for pluralism.*

*Some people have nonetheless continued to relay harmful information and political opinions anonymously, despite the decree I issued obliging journalists to disclose their sources and banning the use of pseudonyms. That did not stop me from dishing out a total of 100 years' imprisonment for bloggers and cyber dissidents over the course of the past 12 months. About 30 languish in our prisons. I believe my record is much better than that of my predecessor, Nong Duc Manh.*

# EUROPA

**AZERBAÏDJAN** - ILHAM ALIEV

**AZERBAÏDJAN** - VASIF YUSIF OGHLU TALIBOV

**BÉLARUS** - ALEXANDRE LOUKACHENKO

**RUSSIAN FEDERATION, REPUBLIC OF CHECHNYA** - RAMZAN KADYROV

**RUSSIAN FEDERATION** - VLADIMIR PUTINE - PRESIDENT

**ITALY** - CAMORRA (NAPLES), 'NDRANGHETA (CALABRIA), SACRA CORONA UNITA (PUGLIA), COSA NOSTRA (SICILY)

**KAZAKHSTAN** - NOURSOULTAN NAZARBAÏEV

**UZBEKISTAN** - ISLAM KARIMOV

**TURKMENISTAN** - GOORBANGOULY BERDYMOKHAMEDOV

## IN THE HEAD OF



## **AZERBAĪDJAN - ILHAM ALIEV, PRESIDENT**

*Because I inherited Azerbaijan from my Dad, it was long assumed I was just an amiable guy with little aptitude for the harsh realities of politics. A big mistake! I have everything under control. If a journalist refers to me, my wife or my associates in less than laudatory terms, he will soon learn what I am made of. Death threats, kidnappings – my thugs stop at nothing. But that doesn't prevent us from sometimes acting with tact. With the help of sex tapes and rumours, smear campaigns are often enough to bring our opponents to heel.*

*Directly or indirectly, I control all the TV stations. We have banned the BBC, Radio Free Europe and Voice of America from FM broadcasting in Azerbaijan since 2009 because they were trying to make trouble. My men have hounded the opposition press so much that there's little left – just enough for us to be able to tell the outside world that Azerbaijan is a democracy.*

*Still, I couldn't care less about a democratic façade because if you give democrats an inch, they take a mile. The street protests in the spring of 2011, prompted by the Arab Spring, gave me a scare. I had the leading opposition bloggers arrested but the rumblings continue. It's a pity because now we are getting ready for a new election, a presidential one in October, so do you imagine I'm going to let people do as they wish? That wouldn't be worthy of an Aliyev.*

*Maybe they thought I was a softy when I took over from Dad, but the time for softness is long gone. The opposition newspaper Azadlig managed to keep going for years despite arrests, abductions, threats and beatings, but now it's on the brink of asphyxia. At last! I am always calling for tougher legislation. It is especially easy at the moment – all you have to do is copy the laws being adopted in Russia. I still tolerate the Internet but I've told the security services to be on the lookout. At the least sign of trouble, we block all the irksome websites and jail everyone.*

*Anyway, our coffers are overflowing with so many petrodollars we no longer need to bother with even a pretence of democracy. Silence is like praise, it can be bought. Our generosity has won over many formerly fierce critics at home and abroad. Last January, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe tried to pass a resolution "on the human rights situation in Azerbaijan." We got our way. It was rejected. Obviously. What were they thinking? Business is too important. There was too much at stake for me to let the troublemakers talk. Fortunately, Dad taught me how to make dissidents shut up.*

**IN THE HEAD OF**



**AZERBAÏDJAN - VASIF YUSIF OGHLU TALIBOV, SUPREME COUNCIL PRESIDENT, NAKHCHIVAN AUTONOMOUS REPUBLIC, AZERBAIJAN**

*President Ilham Aliyev and I have always been fantastic accomplices. My friend, the president, gives me carte blanche to rule as I wish in the isolated region of Nakhchivan and I use my freedom as a laboratory for the repressive methods that he then applies in the rest of the country. I have acquitted my duties so well that he awarded me the “medal of glory” in 2010.*

*Separated from the rest of Azerbaijan by a strip of Armenian territory, the autonomous republic of Nakhchivan is often described by commentators as “Azerbaijan’s North Korea.” I think they exaggerate. If I concentrate all power in my hands, it’s because our parliamentarians have really wanted to reelect me every five years since 1995. To please my friends, I appoint ministers, promulgate laws, control the justice system and run the all-powerful security agencies. But politics bore me. To reimburse myself for all my sacrifices, I am obliged to monopolize the region’s most profitable business activities.*

*Politics are exhausting. I just want things to run smoothly, so I issue lots of decrees. I have, for example, banned my fellow citizens from drying their washing on balconies and from celebrating marriages after 11 pm. In a zeal for neatness, I often make*

*my ministers sweep the street outside their offices. For the sake of nocturnal peace, I had most bars and tea houses closed in in 2005. People were using them to talk too much. There was too much sterile debate and criticism of me. You see my point? No more cafés.*

*I’m good at getting people to toe the line. After all, I’ve acquired some very good experience for my dictator’s CV in the course of more than 15 years in office. The local media no longer tell me anything I don’t want to hear. One of Nakhchivan’s two TV stations is state-owned and my brother owns the other. The two radio stations and the many local newspapers that I subsidize fall over themselves to lavish me with praise. I just need to find a way to stop people watching Turkish satellite TV stations.*

*In other words, no independent media in my region. The opposition newspapers printed in Baku do not reach Nakhchivan. The Internet is provided by a local state monopoly and, at the least sign of trouble, we block suspicious websites. A handful of fanatics nonetheless persist in talking about corruption, human violations and use of torture. What cheek! They are asking for a good hiding and that’s what we give them.*



## **PROPAGANDA**



# **PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CHECHNYA, RUSSIA - RAMZAN KADYROV**

### **Official version**

“Those who come here rarely tell the truth. They often come with orders to criticize Chechnya and criticize me. We have done a lot since the war but there are few journalists who say that.” (Interview with RWB, March 2009)

### **The reality**

Poor Ramzan Kadyrov! According to him, visiting Muscovite and foreign journalists systematically distort the truth. Few of them deny that this Russian republic’s undisputed chief of since April 2007 has restored a semblance of order after the devastation of two wars. But he finds it intolerable that many of them point out that a high price has been paid for this superficial stability, the creation of an autocracy that is extremely brutal with those who question the official “consensus.” It is based above all on a personality cult, obedience to Kadyrov and strict Islam.

### **Official version**

“The activity of the media must be more varied. TV stations must (...) put more emphasis on programmes designed to reinforce Chechen national traditions, our society’s moral foundations. I would also advise newspapers and websites to review their editorial policies (...) The least lack of respect for discipline and the law should be condemned, delicately [or] in certain cases with all the required severity.” (Address to journalists, April 2013)

### **The reality**

Kadyrov has no reservations about dictating editorial policies to the media. He has also created the position of “media curator,” whose job is to “coordinate the activities of the media in the execution of these instructions.” To ensure unfailing loyalty, the regime uses both fear and money, creating newspapers that are funded from the government budget in order to sustain the illusion of flourishing media. But with few exceptions, these newspapers just praise Kadyrov’s achievements and devotion to the people, and praise his late father, Akhmad Kadyrov.

### **Official version**

“If objective criticisms are published in your newspapers, we will welcome them and we will try to address the omissions in our work.” (Address to journalists, April 2013)

### **The reality**

The Chechen authorities are unfortunately the only ones who can distinguish between criticism that is “objective” and criticism that isn’t. While the press is officially encouraged to seek the causes of problems, such a search is only conceivable if undertaken as part of a “constructive” and good-natured dialogue with the authorities. Caustic remarks are tolerated only if the target is Moscow or junior officials, especially if they are no longer in great favour and the journalist calls for Kadyrov’s wise mediation. But journalists who dare to highlight structural problems or criticize the government directly receive immediate warnings that can quickly turn into direct threats or intimidation of family members.

### **Official version**

“[Journalists who are afraid to criticise me] should resign or should be fired (...) A journalist should dare to pose all questions.” (Interview with RWB, March 2009).

### **The reality**

The trauma of the war and fear of the authorities guarantee all-out self-censorship. Critical references to President Kadyrov are the biggest taboo. A big social networks fan, Kadyrov posted a message on Instagram on 1 April 2013 congratulating the independent Moscow-based newspaper Novaya Gazeta on the 20th anniversary of its launch. Internet users are still wondering if it was an April Fool joke, especially as human rights activists suspect that Kadyrov had a major role in the murders of leading Novaya Gazeta reporters Anna Politkovskaya and Natalia Estemirova.

## PROPAGANDA



## RUSSIAN FEDERATION - VLADIMIR PUTINE - PRESIDENT

### Official version

"The constitutional right of citizens to freedom of expression is inalienable and inviolable." (February 2013)

### The reality

If just one word were needed to describe Vladimir Putin, who was catapulted into the presidency in 2000 after a decade of dilution of authority, it would have to be "control-freak." His first two terms were marked by stern "top-down authority," his formula for rebuilding a strong and not necessarily impartial state. The media have not escaped. Directly or indirectly, all the national TV stations have been brought back under Kremlin control since 2000.

Since his return to the presidency in May 2012, Putin's rhetoric has become even more militaristic and Cold War-like. Media critics? Manipulated by the US state department. Pussy Riot and their ilk? Anti-Semites who undermine public decency and destroy the country. Human rights NGOs? Foreign agents.

Nonetheless, as memories of the Soviet Union fade, the burgeoning middle classes are identifying less and less with Putin's forceful and deliberately paranoid discourse, and are making their feelings known. The unprecedented wave of protests against election fraud in 2011 and 2012 has highlighted the emerging confidence of a civil society that insists on no longer being despised. Tongues are loosening in the media and on the Internet.

However, in the face of the Russian public's calls for respect and democracy, the government has responded with repression. A spate of draconian laws has been adopted in record time. Legislation regulating human rights NGOs and unauthorized demon-

strations was toughened, while defamation was reintroduced into the criminal code after being decriminalized in November 2011.

In the name of "protecting minors," a federal agency has been told to compile a blacklist of "pernicious" websites that can be blocked without reference to the courts and without any possibility of defence. And the Duma is not stopping there. Plans are under way to vastly extend the scope of what is regarded as "high treason" and "state secrets." Tools for circumventing online censorship are to be banned. And "offending the feelings of believers" is to be penalized drastically. The desire to control is as plain as ever.

### Official version

"The media's active and responsible attitude and a truly independent and courageous journalism are more than ever desired and indispensable for Russia." (Address to the Union of Journalists, April 2013)

Whether indispensable or not, independent journalism is a risky activity in Russia. No fewer than 29 journalists have been murdered in direct connection with their work since Putin became president. Physical attacks and murders occur with regularity and are encouraged by the impunity enjoyed by their perpetrators.

After a particularly intense wave of violence from 2008 to 2010, Putin and Dmitry Medvedev both gave personal undertakings to combat impunity. With no effect. Mikhail Beketov, who suffered lasting injuries in a November 2008 attack, died in April 2013 without seeing his assailants brought to justice. The identity of those who ordered the murders of Anna Politkovskaya and Khadzhimurad Kamalov, and the attack on Oleg Kashin, is still unknown.

## IN THE HEAD OF



### ITALY - CAMORRA (NAPLES), 'NDRANGHETA (CALABRIA), SACRA CORONA UNITA (PUGLIA), COSA NOSTRA (SICILY)

*We may fight among ourselves over territory, areas of influence and dominant positions in the various organized crime markets, but we form a united front against our common enemy – journalism. In the 1990s, we used a bullet in the head or in some cases “accidents” to eliminate a few journalists. We were never held to account for these deaths and we probably never will be. Impunity for our crimes is as well organized as our networks of influence.*

*We have more than enough imagination when it comes to silencing those who still dare to defy us. Anonymous letters, threatening texts, vandalised cars, ransacked homes and obscene emails are our appetisers. Then we move on to physical threats – beatings, small bombs and setting fire to homes or property. At the same time, we start targeting the families of our victims. And yet the general public still believes that we observe a “code of honour.”*

*Many journalists have given up. But unfortunately there are still some obstinate ones, whose courage is astonishing. We have forced them to live in hiding, under police protection and unable*

*to move about freely. Those who live like this, with a permanent threat hanging over them, include Lirio Abbate, Giuseppe Maniaci, Roberto Saviano and Rosaria Capacchione.*

*We wisely put a stop to the murders a few years ago. We are still capable of killing journalists, of course, but corrupting the media is much smarter. Our ability to wield pressure and influence has become more effective over the years. The wealth we have accumulated exceeds the GDP of some regions or smaller neighbouring countries and we have no difficulty in acquiring news media. Not only newspapers but also local radio and TV stations, whose survival increasingly depends on our generosity. We have managed to impose a level of self-censorship that is unique in Europe. Only our Bulgarian colleagues have gone further.*

## PROPAGANDA



### KAZAKHSTAN - NOURSOULTAN NAZARBAÏEV, PRESIDENT

*"Today we can state unequivocally that freedom of expression in Kazakhstan ... is fully guaranteed." (April 2012)*

In Kazakhstan, led since its independence by Nursultan Nazarbayev, media pluralism has never been very healthy. Today, its life is in danger. The system created more than 20 years ago by the undisputed leader of Central Asia's most prosperous republic is in turbulent waters. Persistent rumours about Nazarbayev's health have fanned a bitter behind-the-scenes succession battle. The government responded harshly to an unprecedented wave of labour unrest in the strategic oil sector.

The crackdown culminated in the bloody repression of a riot in the western town of Zhanaozen in December 2011, an event that led to an unprecedented information blackout skilfully imposed at local, regional and national levels. The price paid by independent and opposition media, already under pressure, is higher than ever: prosecutions, assaults, summonses by the security services and other attempts at intimidation increased in the ensuing months, leading up to the outright closure of the main national opposition news organizations in December 2012.

The decriminalisation of defamation, promised many times, has been shelved. Under Kazakh law, any offence against the honour or dignity of the president, magistrates or servants of the state in the performance of their duties is punishable by imprisonment. A special law was passed "sanctifying" the "First President of the Republic of Kazakhstan", in other words Nazarbayev himself. The latest manifestation of this growing personality cult was the celebration with great fanfare of First President's Day on 1 December 2012. The day was declared a holiday and Nazarbayev was hailed throughout the country with cries of "One country! One destiny! One leader!"

"One can post online whatever is in his or her mind ... It's never possible to identify the author of some stuff. Every state should strengthen its national so called "right" content to counteract those spreading destructive ideas and to help people distinguish between the good and the evil. Preventing people from using the Internet is inefficient". (April 2012)

The Web has not escaped the authorities' desire for control. In 2012, Kazakhstan joined the ranks of countries that are "under surveillance" by Reporters Without Borders as a result of its use of online censorship. A security council attached to the president's office keeps an updated list of sites to be blocked because they are regarded as "extremist" or "destructive".

Such definitions are extremely loose and are often applied disproportionately. In June 2011, a court in Astana ordered the blocking on the grounds of "extremism" of the entire blog platform LiveJournal, highly popular in Kazakhstan. Since December 2011, Internet café users are closely monitored – they must produce an identity document, they are monitored by video and a record is kept of all sites they visit, which the café manager must make available to the security services.

The authorities' response to the Zhanaozen unrest showed their capability to make blatant use of tools to control the Internet. The epicentre of the dispute was completely cut off from the rest of the world -- Internet and communications were cut within a radius of at least 65 km. In the rest of the region, including the regional capital Aktau where protests continued for several days, it was difficult or even impossible to send or receive text messages or access the Internet using a cell phone. Access to Twitter and independent news sites was blocked throughout the country.

## PROPAGANDA



## UZBKISTAN - ISLAM KARIMOV, PRESIDENT

### Official version

“The press is not incisive enough” (address to parliament, January 2010). This is a recurring source of concern for the Uzbek dictator. Despite having decimated the opposition, he began urging the media in 1996 to be “critical of the government’s actions.”

### The reality

President since 1991 and “reelected” in 2007 with 88 per cent of the votes, Karimov stops at nothing in order to enforce his implacable authority and reduce critics to silence. This includes arbitrary imprisonment, detention in psychiatric hospitals and widespread use of torture. Journalists who try to take him at his word can pay dearly. At least ten are currently detained. They are not allowed to hope. Just as Mohammed Bekzhanov was about to complete a 13-year spell in jail, he was given an additional five-year sentence.

### Official version

“You must not get carried away by euphoria, boast of achievements or put anyone on a pedestal but instead (...) reflect the realities of life in a truthful and objective way.” (Address to journalists, June 2012)

### The reality

Karimov is everywhere in the media, boasting of his government’s “achievements” and warning the public against “destructive forces” that threaten “national values.” Anyone daring to

underline the prevailing optimism by challenging the bullish official statistics or by seriously investigating social problems takes a big risk. The photographer Umida Akhmedova and the radio host Khayrullo Khamidov learned to their costs that covering poverty, women’s issues and religious practices is construed as “insulting the Uzbek people.”

### Official version

“We fully support our citizens’ desire to freely use the Internet (...) I would like to repeat this: we absolutely do not accept the erection of walls and restrictions around the world of information, leading to isolation.” (June 2011).

### The reality

Independent and opposition websites have long been inaccessible in Uzbekistan and the regime continues to plug the holes – creating a new entity for monitoring communications, bringing mobile phone operators to heel and blocking tools for circumventing online censorship. Is this just cynicism or is it a worrying case of senility? The old dictator did it again on 5 April 2013, saying: “Surrounding the Internet with an iron curtain or banning it is impossible. It is even impossible to imagine.”

Nonetheless, Karimov’s comments are not always so far removed from reality. In his June 2012 address to journalists, he said, “choosing this profession (...) requires courage and self-sacrifice.” We couldn’t have put it better.

## PROPAGANDA



### TURKMENISTAN - GOURBANGOULY BERDYMUKHAMMEDOV - PRESIDENT

#### Official version

"I am in favour of creating new political parties and organizing independent media." (January 2012)

#### The reality

Berdymukhammedov has talked of reforms ever since taking over as president in December 2006 but the gulf between discourse and reality could not be bigger in what is one of the world's most totalitarian regimes. On paper, the one-party system has been scrapped and two new parties have been formed, but in reality both are government creations and their existence did not prevent Berdymukhammedov from being "reelected" with 97 per cent of the votes in 2012.

In January 2013, Turkmenistan finally gave itself a media law, which, officially at least, proclaims freedom of expression and bans censorship. Berdymukhammedov ordered the national newspapers to no longer name him as founder and owner. But it is just window-dressing. The state still reigns supreme over all the Turkmen media, using them to relay its propaganda and punishing the least deviation from the official line.

Radio Azatlyk reporter Ogulsapar Muradova's death under torture in 2006 has not been forgotten. The exact number of journalists and human rights defenders detained in prisons and psychiatric clinics is not known.

#### Official version

"Satellite dishes spoil the appearance of our cities." (May 2011)

#### The reality

Berdymukhammedov declared war on satellite dishes in 2008. Ever since, he has often called for a reduction in their number, for the sake of "urban aesthetics." In practice, Russian, Turkish and Arab satellite TV stations offer the Turkmen public one of the only ways to escape the state media's stifling propaganda. Even Russian broadcasts that are retransmitted in Turkmenistan are vetted first.

A handful of websites based abroad, including Khronika Turkmenistana, Gündogar, Ferganews and Radio Azatlyk, are the only ones

that provide uncensored news. But they are inaccessible for most of the population, whose only online access is through Turkmenet, which offers a totally expurgated Internet. The cost of an ADSL subscription is prohibitive and a close watch is kept on the handful of Internet cafés that recently opened.

The only hope is the spread of mobile Internet, which allowed ordinary citizens to learn about a deadly explosion at an arms depot in a suburb of the capital in July 2011. But the authorities cracked down hard on those who circulated the information.

#### Official version

"The confidence of society, citizen activism (...) respect for freedoms and human rights are not only crucial conditions for the development of civil society but also essential premises for the creation of a real democracy." (January 2012)

#### The reality

At least Berdymukhammedov recognizes in passing that Turkmenistan does not yet have a "real democracy." But he seems in practice to be more interested in reinforcing his personality cult than in allowing criticism and has dashed the hopes raised by the suppression of the more eccentric aspects of the reign of his predecessor, Saparmurad Nyazov, also known as "Turkmenbashi" (Father of the Turkmens), whose official dentist he was.

The days and months are no longer named after members of the Nyazov family but the new president has himself officially called "Arkadag" (Protector). His smiling portrait has replaced his predecessor's everywhere, his books are bestsellers and his father is glorified for having brought up a man who is "infinitely loyal to the people."

The local media are without doubt impatiently awaiting the next "holy book" which Berdymukhammedov is supposedly working on at the moment. It is meant to replace "The Rukhnama," the collection of precepts by the late Nyazov that is obligatory reading at all school levels. Such is the "Era of supreme happiness" that Berdymukhammedov proclaimed at the start of his second term.

# MIDDLE-EAST

**SAUDI ARABIA** - ROI ABDALLAH IBN AL-SAOUD

**BAHRAIN** - HAMAD BEN AISSA AL KHALIFA

**IRAN** - ALI KHAMENEI, SUPREME LEADER OF THE ISLAMIC REVOLUTION

**IRAN** - MAHMOUD AHMADINEJAD, PRESIDENT

**ISRAEL** - ISRAEL DEFENCE FORCES

**SYRIA** - BACHAR EL-ASSAD, PRESIDENT

**SYRIA** - JABHAT AL-NOSRA AND ITS LEADER ABU MOHAMED AL-JOLANI

**EGYPT** - THE RULING MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD

## IN THE HEAD OF



### **ARABIE SAOUDITE - KING RABDALLAH IBN AL-SAOUD**

*Almost 90 years old, I am Saudi Arabia's sixth monarch and the third most influential person in the world. That's the opinion of Forbes magazine, not my own.*

*Since I acceded to the throne in 2005, I have hesitated between openness and repression. It's true that I have allowed my subjects to hold local elections (they will have to wait a bit longer for a presidential ballot), but I have not gone overboard in granting civil liberties.*

*Ok, I had opposition activists and journalists arrested. So what? Should a monarch like me give up total control of the media? That is the price of maintaining the dynasty at the head of the kingdom. Invoking the security argument to crack down on dissident opinion, and its expression, is the House of Saud 's secret way of maintaining stability. Our own and the country's.*

*Journalists practise self-censorship? Good. The role of a journalist is to reproduce the instructions of the information ministry. The weather forecast is the only thing in the news that can be trusted? We are lucky that the temperature in Riyadh is 50 degrees all year round. Foreign correspondents are regularly accompanied by ministry officials? This is for their own safety.*

*Internet filtering has been stepped up since January 2011? Access to hundreds of thousands of pages has been blocked?*

*This is to preserve social order, and also the welfare of Saudi citizens. My subjects are encouraged to report any disparaging information that might pollute "my" Internet. There is so much of it out there.*

*I made a point of expressing support publicly for my friend, Egyptian leader Hosni Mubarak, before his sudden removal from power. Tunisia's Zine El Abidine Ben Ali is living happily in my kingdom. I feel sorry for dictators. I am able to avert revolution by buying social peace. I have promised Saudis that I will grant benefits for the unemployed and students, bonuses for civil servants and housing assistance. I have also given women the right to vote and to be elected in local elections. Recently I even asked 30 women to join the consultative Shura Council. I have selected several prisoners to be pardoned. But I can only be lenient up to a point.*

*Critical voices? Silenced. Three journalists from an online television station were arrested in late 2011 for daring to mention poverty in "my" capital. Similarly, I blocked the Radio Nederland website after it published an article on the ill-treatment of immigrants in my kingdom. The journalist Hamza Kashgari is still in prison for expressing his personal opinion on line. He could face a death sentence for tweets regarded as blasphemous.*

## PROPAGANDA



### BAHREÏN - KING HAMAD BEN AISSA AL KHALIFA

#### Official version

Statement by King Hamad on World Press Freedom Day, 3 May 2012:

“We are fully and constantly supportive of the rights of journalists, writers and media personnel and organizations as they carry out their noble mission without any threat or molestation. We do not and will not tolerate throughout our reign any insulting, arresting or jailing of a journalist as a result of exercising her/his legal and constitutional right of free expression.”

#### The reality

The renowned photographer Ahmed Humeidan has been in prison since 29 December 2012 for taking photos of an attack on a police station. Journalists and photographers are constantly harassed during demonstrations. On 2 March, the photographer Mazen Mahdi and his colleagues from the Associated Press and Agence France-Presse agencies were prevented from freely covering a march demanding that the return of the body of a demonstrator who had been killed. This was done by carrying out checks on their identity cards and press cards.

#### Official version

Speaking before the Formula One Grand Prix on 21 April, information minister Samira Rajab said: “The reports of some media outlets that the increase of violence is connected with the approaching race date is an exaggerated claim.” She added that

the event would have a positive impact on the economy and expressed the hope that the race would not be associated with the political affairs in the country.

#### The reality

During the grand prix, the authorities took a range of measures to restrict journalists’ access to the kingdom and preventing those who might be tempted from broadcasting any information about human rights in the country, thereby “harming” the welfare of Bahrain. A crew from the television station ITV News was forced to leave Bahrain on 19 April, two days before the grand prix.

#### Official version

In a statement on the inauguration of the Bahrain Press Club on 3 May 2012, the Information Affairs Authority said: “The establishment of the club highlights the kingdom’s full commitment to transparency and the protection of the freedom of expression and the promoting of a free and independent media.”

#### The reality

Just before the Grand Prix, the government endorsed an amendment to the penal code increasing the penalty for offending King Hamad or the country’s flag and other national symbols to a maximum of five years’ imprisonment. Its imprecise language gives judges a wide margin for interpretation. If parliament approves the reform as it stands, it would be a serious threat to freedom of information and expression.

## INDICTMENT



### IRAN - AYATOLLAH ALI KHAMENEI, SUPREME LEADER OF THE ISLAMIC REVOLUTION

*Aged 74, resident in Tehran. Profession: Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution.*

*You are one of the Iranian regime's founders and, as such, one of the architects of the system of repression and censorship that has been in place in Iran since 1979.*

*As Ayatollah Khomeini's successor, you stepped up persecution of journalists and demonized the foreign media and new media.*

In view of your responsibilities ever since the Islamists seized power in Iran, Reporters Without Borders accuses you of the following crimes:

- As head of the Revolutionary Guards (1978-1980), president (1981-1989) and finally Supreme Leader since June 1989, you are guilty of arbitrary arrests, illegal imprisonment and torture. You are responsible for the disappearance of at least 100 intellectuals, journalists and netizens from 1979 until now.
- You participated in the executions of the journalists Ali Asgar Amirani, Simon Farzami, Nasrollah Arman, Said Soltanpour and Rahman Hatefi-Monfared.
- You instigated the murders of many other dissident journalists such as Ebrahim Zalzadeh, Majid Charif, Mohamad Mokhtari, Mohamad Jafar Pouyandeh and Pirouz Davani.
- You covered up the atrocities that intelligence ministry officials committed in November and December 1998. The deaths in detention of Zahra Kazemi (2003), Ayfer Serce (2006), young

blogger Omidreza Mirsayafi (2009) and Sattar Beheshti (2012) are all directly attributable to you.

- You have fostered arbitrary rule and impunity. None of the perpetrators of the preceding abuses – including key judicial system ministers and officials close to you (Mohamad Raishahri, Mostafa Pourmohamadi, Golamhossien Mohsseni Ejehi, Ghorbanali Dorri-Najafabadi and Said Mortazavi) – have ever been brought to justice. Worse still, they have been appointed or promoted to senior posts with your approval.
  - Again, it was you who, on 20 April 2000, gave the order for a crackdown on the reformist press that had emerged in the wake of Mohammad Khatami's election as president in 1997. Since then, more than 300 news media have been designated as "foreign enemies inside the country" and closed, thousands of pages have been censored and more than 500 journalists and netizens have been arbitrarily arrested, tortured and given very harsh sentences, while many others have had to flee the country. The crackdown is now targeting new media and satellite TV stations that broadcast to Iran from abroad. Your country is currently one of the world's biggest prisons for news providers.
  - You are also the inventor of a "Halal" (national) Internet and promoter of a "digital apartheid," which your regulatory bodies are imposing on the Iranian people.
- You should be called to account for these gross violations of freedom of information, which contravene article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

## INDICTMENT



### IRAN - MAHMOUD AHMADINEJAD, PRESIDENT

*Age: 56*

*Domicile: Tehran*

*Position: President of the Islamic Republic of Iran*

*Assumed office: 3 August 2005*

Dear Mr. President

As someone close to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, you are responsible for the growing crackdown on journalists and netizens since you were sworn in on 3 August 2005. In light of this, Reporters Without Borders makes the following allegations:

- you ordered the systematic repression of dissident voices with the consent of the Supreme Leader after your disputed re-election as president on 13 June 2009.

- during both of your terms, you ensured the closure of more than 200 newspapers with the backing of the Press Supervisory Board of the Ministry of Islamic Culture and Guidance.

- you are an accessory to crimes against the Iranian people's right to be informed, a strategy orchestrated by the Supreme Leader.

- you are directly responsible for the arbitrary arrests of more than 300 journalists and netizens, who are regularly tortured by your intelligence service.

- you recruited to your government former members of the intelligence services and the armed forces, in particular the interior, intelligence and culture ministries, all of which have been implicated in crimes against journalists and netizens, including murder.

- Previously, after your predecessor Mohammad Khatami took office in 1997, you launched a wide-ranging censorship operation against reformist newspapers, again with the consent of the Supreme Leader.

You should be called to account for these gross violations of freedom of information, which contravene article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

## PROPAGANDA



## ISRAËL - ISRAEL DEFENCE FORCES

On its website (<http://www.idf.il/1497-en/Dover.aspx>), the Israeli army says it is committed to certain values. However, these fine principles are contradicted by the facts.

### **The official line**

**Purity of Arms** - The IDF servicemen and women will use their weapons and force only for the purpose of their mission, only to the necessary extent and will maintain their humanity even during combat. IDF soldiers will not use their weapons and force to harm human beings who are not combatants or prisoners of war, and will do all in their power to avoid causing harm to their lives, bodies, dignity and property.

### **The facts**

On 8 April this year, Mohamed Al-Azza, a photographer for the Palestinian News Network, was taking pictures of Israeli soldiers from the offices of the Lajee Center, a centre for social and cultural activities for children in Aida Refugee Camp, 2 km from Bethlehem in the south of the West Bank. Ignoring the rules that apply to non-combatants, one of the soldiers opened fire in his direction, hitting him on the cheek with a rubber-coated steel bullet. That evening, Al-Azza underwent surgery in hospital in Beit Jala to remove the bullet.

The Palestinian photojournalist Mohamed Othman was shot and seriously wounded by an Israeli soldier in May 2011 near the Beit Hanoun (Erez) checkpoint in the Gaza Strip where he was covering clashes between Palestinian youths and Israeli troops

during Nakba Day, marking the establishment of the state of Israel. Othman was partially paralysed and handicapped for life.

### **The official line**

**Responsibility** - The IDF serviceman or woman will see themselves as active participants in the defense of the state, its citizens and residents. They will carry out their duties at all times with initiative, involvement and diligence with common sense and within the framework of their authority, while prepared to bear responsibility for their conduct.

### **The facts**

Although the army does carry out some investigations, troops are seldom prosecuted for the abuses they commit. Such was the case with the Israeli photographer Mati Milstein, who filed complaints against the Alexandroni Brigade after he was attacked by troops on the outskirts of the West Bank village of Nabi Saleh in July 2011.

The only response he received from the Israeli armed forces, in December that year, was a rejection of his complaint. They claimed that they had responded appropriately to what they said was "a violent and illegal demonstration".

The military has not announced an investigation of any kind into the circumstances in which Othman and Al-Azza were wounded.

## INDICTMENT



### **SYRIA - BACHAR EL-ASSAD, PRESIDENT**

*When you took over as president on 10 July 2000, after 30 years of a ruthless dictatorship led by your father, Hafez Al-Assad, both the Syrian people and the international community thought you would be a reformer, that you would bring democracy to your country. Thirteen years later, you are seen in a very different light. Ever since the Syrian uprising began in the spring of 2011, you have obstinately rejected any possibility of reform and have not hesitated to use imprisonment, torture and summary execution to silence opposition voices. In your determination to hold on to power, you have been responsible for an unprecedented blood-bath.*

Bashar Al-Assad, Reporters Without Borders accuses you of the following crimes since you became president:

- Controlling the news put out by the government and pro-government media.
- Routinely denying entry to most of the foreign journalists who want to visit Syria.
- Trying to deter journalists from entering without a permit by using your information minister to threaten them with arrest on a charge of cooperating with Al-Qaida.

- Ordering the cyber-police to track down everyone whose on-line activities pose a threat to the regime's interests.

- Arbitrarily detaining many Syrian and foreign news providers since the start of the uprising in March 2011.

- Ordering and organizing the systematic use of torture on detained news providers.

- Deliberately attacking Syrian and foreign news providers who cover the government's brutal crackdown.

**You should be called to account for these gross violations of freedom of information, which contravene article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.**

At least 23 journalists and 59 citizen-journalists were killed between 15 March 2011 and 3 May 2013.

Seven other journalists are currently missing.

## **INDICTMENT**



### **SYRIA - JABHAT AL-NOSRA AND ITS LEADER ABU MOHAMED AL-JOLANI**

*Abu Mohamed Al-Jolani, you are the leader of Jabhat Al-Nosra, a Jihadi armed rebel group that was formed in Syria in April 2011 to combat and overthrow the Assad regime. You recently proclaimed allegiance to Al-Qaida. You advocate a society based on the Sharia, regard democracy as the religion of the ungodly, and want a caliphate after Bashar Al-Assad's fall.*

According to Thomas Pierret, a specialist in contemporary Islam at the University of Edinburgh, your group gained strength in the summer and autumn of 2012 through a combination of factors

– the creation of liberated areas in the east and north of Syria, the brutalization of the conflict as a result of air strikes, and the feeling that the opposition was marking time. The United States designated Jabhat Al-Nosra as a terrorist organization at the end of 2011.

Abu Mohamed Al-Jolani, Reporters Without Borders accuses

you of committing the following crimes against news providers since the start of the militarization of the Syrian conflict:

- Intimidating news providers while they are gathering information.
- Threatening to kill Syrian and foreign journalists who are critical of Jabhat Al-Nosra.
- Deliberately attacking journalists who work for Syrian media that support the government.
- Kidnapping foreign journalists.

You should be called to account for these gross violations of freedom of information, which contravene article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.



# **REPORTERS WITHOUT BORDERS**

**FOR PRESS FREEDOM**

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