

## 2009 Laureates

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### Journalist of the year

A journalist who has demonstrated a commitment to press freedom in work, action or publicly-expressed views.

***Amira Hass***  
(Israel)



### Media

A news media that embodies the struggle for the right to inform and be informed.

***Dosh***  
(Russia - Chechnya)

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## Amira Hass

2009 journalist of the year

Pays : Israël

Nombre de journalistes emprisonnés : 2

Position dans le classement de la liberté de la presse : 93 sur 175



### Amira Hass

Amira Hass is the first and only Israeli journalist living in the Palestinian Territories. She based herself in Gaza after the Oslo Accords were signed in December 1993, and then moved to the West Bank city of Ramallah in 1997. Despite restrictions imposed by both the Israeli military and the Palestinian authorities, Hass has kept writing about the daily life and difficulties of the Palestinians, drawing attention to the policy of curbs and Palestinian land division pursued by Israel's decision-makers. She has been the target of harassment from both sides for offering an independent and critical view of Israeli and Palestinian policy.

She was awarded the Reporters Without Borders - Fnac Prize in the "Journalist" category for the quality of her reporting for the Israeli daily *Ha'aretz* during Israel's Operation Cast Lead offensive against the Gaza Strip from 27 December 2008 to 18 January 2009.

Her articles tried to sensitize Israeli public opinion to what the Gaza Strip's inhabitants were going through, tirelessly exposing the atrocities committed by the Israel Defence Forces.

The daughter of Holocaust survivors, Hass was born in Jerusalem in 1956 and studied history in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. After a spell as a teacher, she joined the staff of *Ha'aretz* as a reporter in 1989.

### **Israel, two-speed press freedom**

Israel's media are outspoken and investigate sensitive subjects thoroughly, which is unique in the region. But military censorship is still in force and the Palestinian and international media operating in the Occupied Territories are often the targets of abuses by the Israel Defence Forces. These flagrant press freedom violations are rarely investigated by the military high command. Israeli journalists have been banned from entering the Occupied Territories for the past two years.

Citing "security reasons," the Israeli authorities prevented all news media, both Israeli and international, from entering the Gaza Strip during the Operation Cast Lead offensive from 27 December 2008 to 18 January 2009. This blockade was a serious violation of media freedom. During this war, six journalists were killed (two of them in the course of their work) and 15 others were injured. And at least three buildings housing Palestinian media were hit by Israeli fire.

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**2009 nominees for journalist category are :**

### **Eynulla Fatullayev, Azerbaijan**

The founder and editor of the respected daily Gundelik Azerbaijan and the Russian-language weekly Realny Azerbaijan, Eynulla Fatullayev has paid dearly for criticising President Ilham Aliyev and his allies. As early as 2001, he had to leave the country for six months after being threatened with arrest on a defamation charge, and his articles exposing electoral fraud and ministerial corruption soon led to physical attacks and prosecutions.

Matters came to a head in 2007. First, his father was kidnapped, forcing him to suspend publication until his father's release. Then, in April of that year, he was sentenced to two years in prison on a charge of "insulting the Azerbaijani people." Finally, in October, he was given another eight and a half years in prison on charges of terrorism and inciting racial and religious hatred.

Fatullayev's prison conditions are particularly bad and his requests for a pardon have been systematically ignored. The authorities seem determined to psychologically destroy this journalist who had the nerve to resist them, and whenever he tries to write from his cell, he or his relatives are harassed.

Azerbaijan currently has a total of five journalists and cyber-dissidents behind bars.

### **Dhondup Wangchen, China/Tibet**

A self-taught documentary filmmaker, Dhondup Wangchen was a Tibetan refugee in northern India, where he lived with his family. But he chose to go back to Tibet to make a documentary consisting of interviews with Tibetans talking about the situation under Chinese rule, with the aim of showing it before the Beijing Olympic Games. The film, called "Leaving fear behind," was screened clandestinely in Beijing during the games, but by then Dhondup had already been arrested in Tibet. Held incommunicado for many months, he has been mistreated and has not been allowed to see a lawyer to discuss how to defend himself against charges of inciting separatism, which carry a possible life sentence.

Born in 1974 in eastern Tibet, Dhondup did not receive any higher education but he began taking an interest in Tibetan culture at an early age. "The point of our film was not to become famous or to make something entertaining," Dhondup said before his arrest. "At a time of crisis and a feeling of abandonment, we wanted to show a film that gives answers with meaning." A total of 11 other Tibetan journalists and bloggers have been arrested since the March 2008 protests.

Emadoldin Baghi, Iran

A human rights activist and founder of several pro-reform newspapers such as Jomhouriat, Emadoldin Baghi is a symbol of courage in Iran. He has maintained an unwavering determination despite being repeatedly arrested and convicted – in 2000, 2003, 2004, 2007 and 2008. His writing has never ceased to criticise the government, advocate a democratic form of Islam and defend ethnic and religious minorities.

As a result, he receives dozens of summonses from the courts and the intelligence services every year and is currently facing several prosecutions. As the head of the Association for the Defence of Prisoners of Conscience, he provided vital legal and financial help to detained journalists. In a clear sign that this NGO was effective, the authorities closed it down in June.

### **Francisco Castellanos, Mexico**

A journalist for the past 38 years, Francisco Castellanos Javier is based in Michoacán, one of the most dangerous Mexican states for the press, with three journalists killed and two missing since 2006. After working for regional print media, he helped to set up the Canal 7 TV station in Uruapan. Widely respected by his Michoacán colleagues, he is nowadays the correspondent of the national weekly Proceso and one of the few reporters still daring to cover crime and drug-trafficking in a particularly dangerous state. Michoacán is the bastion of "The Family," one of Mexico's most feared drug cartels. At the same time it is the epicentre of the major anti-drug offensive launched by President Felipe Calderón in 2006.

Castellanos has been often been threatened in connection with his reporting and has been kidnapped twice, in September 2007 and December 2008. In October 2008, gunmen attacked his home and kidnapped his son-in-law, whose release he had to negotiate. In an indication, perhaps, of the collusion between the authorities and the cartels, the state governor commented to Castellanos after this incident: "I thought it was something much more serious."

## **Francisco Castellanos, Mexique**

Francisco Castellanos Javier, journaliste depuis trente-huit ans, travaille dans le Michoacán, l'un des Etats les plus dangereux pour la presse avec trois journalistes tués et deux disparus depuis 2006. Passé par la presse régionale, il a participé à la fondation de la chaîne Canal 7 à Uruapán. Figure respectée de la profession dans le Michoacán, Francisco Castellanos est aujourd'hui correspondant de l'hebdomadaire national Proceso. Il est l'un des très rares journalistes à couvrir encore les faits-divers et les affaires de narcotrafic sur un territoire particulièrement exposé. Le Michoacán est en effet le bastion de "La Famille", l'un des plus redoutables cartels du pays et l'épicentre de la vaste offensive anti-drogue lancée en 2006 par le gouvernement de Felipe Calderón.

Régulièrement menacé de représailles, Francisco Castellanos a subi deux enlèvements, en septembre 2007 et décembre 2008. En octobre 2008, des individus armés ont attaqué son domicile et kidnappé son gendre, dont il a dû négocier la libération. Témoin des collusions entre les autorités et les cartels, le journaliste s'est entendu répondre, après cet incident, par le gouverneur de l'État : "Je croyais qu'il s'agissait de quelque chose de plus grave."

## *Dosh*

### Winner in the media category

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Country: **Russia - Chechnya**

Number of journalists killed in 2009: 3

Press freedom index ranking: 153 / 175



#### **Dosh (Russia - Chechnya)**

An independent magazine operating in a region where outspoken media have never been welcome *Dosh* (which means “The Word”) has been covering politics and current affairs in Chechnya and other parts of the Russian Caucasus since 2003. Forced to move its headquarters from Grozny to Moscow because of threats and reprisals, it has managed to overcome this handicap with the help of a sizeable network correspondents in the region.

Paying particular attention to human rights, *Dosh* has established itself as an authoritative news source in a still chaotic region with few good news media. Its reporters are committed to covering all the major stories in the Caucasus despite the many obstacles. In 2004 and 2008, for example, *Dosh* was banned in Ingushetia because of its interviews with former Ingush President Ruslan Aushev.

By publishing an annual English-language issue called *Digest*, the magazine has managed to reach a much wider range of readers. *Dosh* can also be read online at [www.doshdu.ru](http://www.doshdu.ru)

#### **Russian news blackout**

A series of murders of journalists, human rights activists and civil society representatives turned 2009 into a particularly grim year for the North Caucasus. The victims included Grozny-based human rights activist Natalia Estemirova in July and Maksharip Aushev, an outspoken member of the Ingush

opposition, in October. These clearly targeted killings have heightened concern about the region's future.

The press freedom situation in Russia is bad, despite the hopes raised by Dmitri Medvedev's election in April 2008. Most of the population gets its news from television, where there is complete lack of diversity. Opposition figures and leading government critics are all blacklisted by the major national TV stations.

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**2009 nominees for media category are :**

**Gambia Press Union, Gambia**

The press works with its hands tied in Gambia. President Yahya Jammeh constantly attacks the media and his country's defamation laws are the most draconian in West Africa. Despite the many threats, the Gambia Press Union defends media freedom with courage. Six of Gambia's most high-profile journalists, all GPU leaders or members, were arrested in the summer of 2009. Sentenced to two years in prison and heavy fines on charges of defamation and "seditious publication," they were finally pardoned by President Jammeh after serving one month of their sentence. Their crime was to have dared to suggest to the president that his government was responsible for the 2004 murder of Deyda Hydara, the editor of the independent daily *The Point* and Gambia correspondent of Agence France-Presse and Reporters Without Borders. In practice, the president pardoned innocent people.

**Radio Progreso, Honduras**

Based in rural northeastern Honduras, Radio Progreso was founded by Jesuits 60 years ago. Run by Father Ismaël Moreno, it employs 10 young reporters and gets its listeners to help make its news, education and musical programmes. It is one of the few radio stations with no political or commercial ties to acquire a national following.

Radio Progreso was one of the first victims of the coup against President Manuel Zelaya on 28 June 2009. Just a few hours after Zelaya was expelled from Honduras, 25 soldiers arrived at the station and tried to prevent it broadcasting any reports about the coup. The intervention of a large number of local residents protected Radio Progreso and its staff. But the de facto government continues to keep the station in its sights. Its reporters are often attacked, it has been suspended on more than one occasion and it has been threatened with closure, but it has always managed to keep going as a web radio. The Honduran media have for the most part been polarised by the coup and Radio Progreso is one of the few to resist making propaganda for one side or the other.

**Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists, Pakistan**

In the front line of the resistance against the draconian media laws adopted by former President Pervez Musharraf, the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ) and its members now have to face violence from the Taliban and the security forces, which regularly attack the press. Pakistan's leading journalists' organisation, the PFUJ moves into action and begins investigating whenever journalists are killed, arrested or kidnapped in connection with their work. The PFUJ, some of whose leaders have received death threats, also campaigns for better pay and work conditions for Pakistani journalists.

With five journalists killed so far in 2009, Pakistan currently shares a ranking with Somalia as the world's most dangerous country for the press. In an attempt to slow growth in the death toll, the PFUJ is organising safety training for its members.

**Radio Shabelle, Somalia**

Somalia's best-known radio station, Radio Shabelle is also the most exposed to violence. Its manager, Mukhtar Mohamed Hirabe, was shot four times in the head in the centre of Mogadishu as he was on his way to work on 7 June 2009. He was the third member of the station's staff to be killed this year. His predecessor as manager, Bashir Nur Gedi, was gunned down in 2007. Around 20 journalists employed by the Shabelle Media Network fled the country to escape this wave of violence. The Islamist militia Al Shabaab accuses Radio Shabelle of serving the interests of the "crusaders" because it covers Somali news in an independent manner and refuses to be anyone's mouthpiece. As a result, it is a leading target for these African Taliban, who are ready to stop at nothing in order to silence journalists.

**Al Ayyam, Yemen**

An employee killed, three others wounded, a correspondent sentenced to 14 months in prison, its headquarters fired on by the army and ransacked, an editor harassed and charged with murder, its journalists regularly threatened, tens of thousands of copies confiscated, delivery trucks intercepted, delivery drivers kidnapped – this is the price that one of Yemen's most respected independent newspapers has had to pay this year alone. Al Ayyam has been covering sensitive stories since 1958 and, despite



being the target of a guerrilla-style war by the government, is nowadays the mouthpiece of unrest in the most deprived parts of southern Yemen.

The government tries to maintain a complete news blackout on the situation in the south, which has seen clashes between Shiite rebels and government forces since 2004 with a toll of thousands dead or displaced. The rebels criticise the pro-American position of the government in Saana, while Saana accused the rebels of wanting to reestablish an Islamic regime. Al Ayyam pays a high price for being outspoken in one of the world's most closed countries.

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## **Fnac's commitment to free expression**

Fnac is proud to be broadening the partnership it began with Reporters Without Borders 15 years ago and to be participating in the Reporters Without Borders-Fnac prize, which is awarded to a journalist and news media that embody the struggle for free expression and the right to inform and be informed.

Fnac believes that the role of cultural intermediary that it plays between the public and those who create has two elements that are essential in a vibrant democracy – free expression and the citizen's freedom to pass judgment. Ever since its creation, Fnac has defended these principles in France and in all the countries where it has established operations.

By actively supporting the work of Reporters Without Borders, Fnac is demonstrating not only solidarity but also fidelity to its own principles.