

# Ampatuan Massacre

## FIVE YEARS ON



INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY  
MISSION, NOVEMBER 2014,  
PHILIPPINES

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BISTÅNDSNÄMND



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IFJ

**Ampatuan Massacre Five Years On: International Solidarity Mission, November 2014, Philippines**

**Report of the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) Mission to the Philippines, November 19-24, 2014, to investigate progress on justice for the victims of the November 23, 2009 Ampatuan Massacre with visits to General Santos City and Maguindanao, Mindanao; and Manila, Luzon; Philippines.**

**Editors:** Jane Worthington and Mike Dobbie with Rowena Paraan. The editors thank the mission delegates, the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines (NUJP) and all other contributors for their assistance in providing content and images for this report.

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At some meetings the mission was accompanied by Rowena 'Weng' Paraan, chairperson of the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines (Philippines); Alwyn Alburo vice chairperson of the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines (Philippines) and Dabet C. Panelo, the media safety office program coordinator of the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines (Philippines).

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**On the cover:**

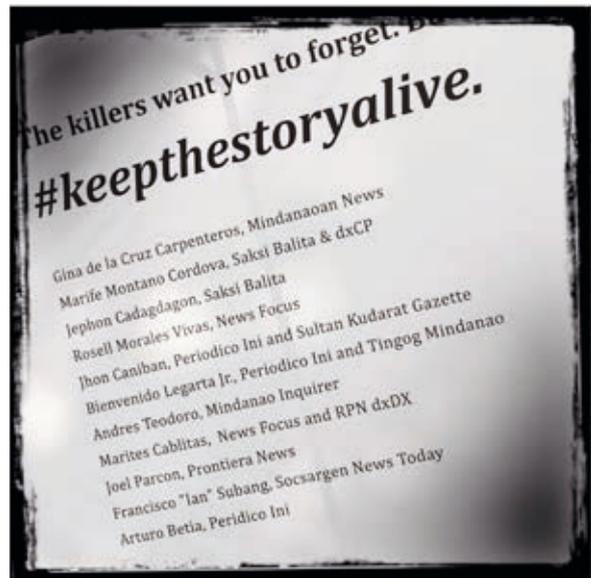
The National Union of Journalists of the Philippines created an art installation at the Bantayog ng Bayani in Quezon City to commemorate the fifth anniversary of the Ampatuan Massacre – the largest mass murder of journalists in history.

The “Monument to the Heroes” is a landscaped memorial centre honouring individuals who lived and died in defiance of the repressive regime that ruled over the Philippines from 1972 to 1986.

The installation re-created the massacre of November 23, 2009, in Maguindanao in Southern Philippines, which saw 58 people killed, including 32 journalists. The body figures were crafted from newspapers and re-create the image that ran on the front page of a newspaper the day after the massacre.

Leeroy New, an artist, helped visualise the crime scene. He said: “Our use of newspapers to re-enact the crime scene is in fact a direct reference to how the issue is slowly disappearing. And how the material – the newspaper as a material – is a very transient material. And it’s also a direct reference to the victims – the journalists who were killed.”

The agency behind the idea was BBDO Guerrero which provides the NUJP with pro bono support for its ongoing campaigns against journalist killings and impunity.





Source: NUJP



Source: Nonoy Espina

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# Preface

On November 23, 2009, the Philippines showed to the world in the most horrific way what impunity looks like.

The slaughter of 58 people – including 32 journalists – in an “unprecedented act of political violence” in Southern Mindanao was, and is, the single biggest killing of media workers in history. The scene described by journalist Nonoy Espina was that of a “cake of death”; bodies and vehicles piled and squashed into crude mass graves.

The horrifying massacre in Maguindanao shocked and sickened the world. How could this supposedly strong Asian democracy with such a vibrant and robust press play host to an audacious and brutal bloodbath of this scale? How could the killers think that no-one would notice; that life could continue on, business as usual?

The fact is they did. And they did because that was the way it had come to be in the Philippines.

Ironically, the killing of media workers had been growing into a pattern since the country’s tumultuous passage to democracy in 1986, but had been routinely disregarded by successive governments. Festering slowly, by 2009 the rot of impunity for crimes against journalists had well and truly set in.

The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) and the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines (NUJP) can say with certainty that this mass slaughter was a direct result of a history of leadership, governance and a state system that placed a low priority on the vital role the media play in being the watchdogs of democracy. It was an environment that allowed crimes against journalists to slip through unchecked; where killers were rarely prosecuted; where murder was the easiest way to silence inconvenient truths in a corrupt and lawless environment.

The slaughter that took place on that grassy hillside in Maguindanao province at the behest of the powerful Ampatuan clan should have been where the impunity story ended in the Philippines. Action should have been swift and devastating.

As of now, 34 more journalists have died in the Philippines in the five years since the massacre – more than the massacre itself. In the Asia-Pacific region, the IFJ ranks the country as the second most deadly for journalists, after Pakistan. The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) ranks it third in the world on its global impunity index.

As for the 193 accused in the massacre, not a single conviction has been secured. At least four key witnesses have been killed. Eighty-four of the accused remain at large. Ampatuan kingpins and their defence continue to roll out delaying tactics in the complex trial set to last at least a decade, likely more. Meanwhile justice remains denied for the families of the 58 slaughtered. And journalists continue to die.

Visiting the country on the fifth anniversary of the massacre, the IFJ-NUJP International Solidarity Mission declared the country an “epicentre of impunity”.

While President Benigno Aquino III came to power on the promise of justice for victims of Ampatuan, the leader has failed to deliver any meaningful outcome and has gone on to use international forums to take pot shots at the journalists who have been murdered since, suggesting they were somehow to blame for their own murders. As if murder is an acceptable outcome.

It is exactly this kind of weak leadership and a lack of understanding on the state’s fundamental human rights obligations that helps perpetuate the violence in the Philippines.

But there are important points to be made here in this bleak picture. It is the commitment, dedication and determination of the NUJP and media workers across the Philippines, who have vowed to “never forget”,

which has kept the Ampatuan Massacre story alive. Not only that, but their continued campaigning has put impunity on the global agenda, punctuated with the first ever UN- declared International Day to End Impunity for Crimes Against Journalists on November 2, 2014.

The NUJP has waged a strong battle against a corrupt system in which it operates, often at great personal risk to its leaders. With the financial support of the international community and organisations like the IFJ and its funders, it has developed one of the finest journalist safety training programs in the region and rolled it out nationally to keep journalists safe in their jobs on a day to day basis.

Journalists continue to pressure government on the justice process every day. Importantly though, the media alone cannot solve this problem.

If the system around it is foul, the solution lies not in waiting for the slow wheels of a strained justice system, but in a multilateral approach that brings justice, law enforcement and civil society together to take on a variety of approaches.

Representatives of the Aquino administration declared to the mission in meetings that Aquino cares about all humans, not just journalists. But how are ordinary citizens to feel safe if journalists keeping the powerful in check are being forced from their jobs out of fear, intimidation or threat?

The NUJP organised meetings and transport for the mission, gathered relatives of the victims and assembled local media to meet mission delegates. It also ensured the mission was able to meet government and judicial officials. This report, put together with the support and professional inputs of the NUJP and its members, outlines the key findings and recommendations for action.

What is clear is that journalists must be identified as an “at risk” group. Attacks against journalists must be condemned from the highest level. The fourth estate needs to be recognised and professionally supported as the foundation of a healthy and functioning democracy in the Philippines.

If journalists are to work in cohort with law enforcement agencies to bring killers and the corrupt to justice, they must be given access to information. The Aquino administration would do well to come through on its election promises for Freedom of Information legislation, among others.

The Philippines is not the only country with a problem of dead and dying journalists. But countries such as Colombia and Mexico have taken meaningful steps to solving this complex but important issue. It is achievable.

President Aquino’s office declared that the Ampatuan trial would deliver justice before the end of his term in 2016. But the NUJP is emphatic that political expediency must not thwart the proper legal process from being full observed. President Aquino’s actions can demonstrate a commitment to justice by observing the recommendations put forward by the mission. These include giving much needed support to victims’ families.

Finally, the IFJ expresses its gratitude and solidarity with our Filipino friends who have demonstrated the critical role the media can play in holding the powerful to account. Justice must prevail. They have a lot to feel proud of. And while the battle may be exhausting, they have many friends and supporters around the world who are behind them. They are the greatest credit to the profession of journalism.

---

*Jane Worthington*  
 Acting Director, Asia-Pacific  
 International Federation of Journalists



The slaughter of 58 people - including 32 journalists - in an “unprecedented act of political violence” in Southern Mindanao was, and is, the single biggest slaughter of media workers in history

## CHAPTER 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

# The mission

The mission to mark the fifth anniversary of the Ampatuan Massacre began in General Santos City, Mindanao, on November 18 and culminated in Manila on November 24, 2014.

International delegation:

- Mike Dobbie, who led the 2009 IFJ rapid assessment mission and has subsequently visited the Philippines multiple times to monitor progress with the trial
- Philippa McDonald, the federal vice-president of the MEAA Media section of the Australian journalists' union – the Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance – and a trustee of Oceania's Media Safety and Solidarity Fund (MSSF), which provides money to the Journalists' Orphans Fund (JOF) to educate the children of slain Filipino journalists
- Schave De Rozario, general secretary of the National Union of Journalists of the Malaysia Peninsula (NUJM), representing the Southeast Asian Journalist Unions (SEAJU)
- Jane Worthington, mission leader and acting director of the International Federation of Journalists Asia-Pacific (IFJ)

National representatives:

- Alwyn Alburo, vice chairperson of the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines (NUJP) who works with GMA 7
- Nonoy Espina, director of the NUJP and a journalist with InterAksyon
- Sonny Fernandez, director of the NUJP and a journalist with ABS CBN Global
- Dabet C. Panelo, the media safety office program coordinator of the NUJP
- Rowena 'Weng' Paraan, chairperson of the NUJP

Upon arrival in General Santos City the mission received a briefing from the NUJP. It later met with the family of journalist Alberto

Martinez, a journalist who had been shot and partially paralysed in 2005. (He died on January 18, 2015.) The MSSF is supporting the education of his children. The trial of the alleged perpetrators in the Martinez shooting began in 2007 and is still ongoing.

The mission then met with the families of Ampatuan victims Rosell Morales and Francisco "Ian" Subang Jr. Mary Grace Morales and her children, and Luisa Subang and her daughter Kristia Lou informed the mission of their life since the massacre, financial struggles and battle for justice. The Morales children's education is being funded through the MSSF-supported JOF, while Kristia Subang who has also received support, told of her recent graduation from college with an accountancy diploma.

During the General Santos visit, the mission met with representatives of media organisations based in General Santos City and discussed the threats and intimidation they face in their work, the lack of any security support to keep them safe as they go about their duties, the pressures faced by the local media after so many of their colleagues were killed in the massacre, and the changed attitude of people in power towards the media since the massacre.

On Friday, November 21, the mission joined a large convoy driving to the massacre site in Maguindanao. The convoy of 17 vehicles, including the families of the victims as well as local media news crews, stopped at Tacurong City for a break where participants were made aware of a suspicious man in a leather jacket riding a motorcycle. He had been tailing the convoy. NUJP members later learned the man was working for the provincial governor, Esmel Mangudadatu, whose wife and sisters were among those murdered in the massacre.

The convoy proceeded up the highway and at the infamous checkpoint where the 2009 convoy was halted by armed men, the 2014 convoy turned off to the same side road. Three members of

the Philippine National Police (PNP) then joined the mission and were interviewed about the local situation. The 2.5km journey up the track to the massacre site was secured by members of the Philippines armed forces.

At the site a religious commemorative service took place and candles and flowers were laid at the name markers in the location of one of the pits dug to bury the victims in 2009.

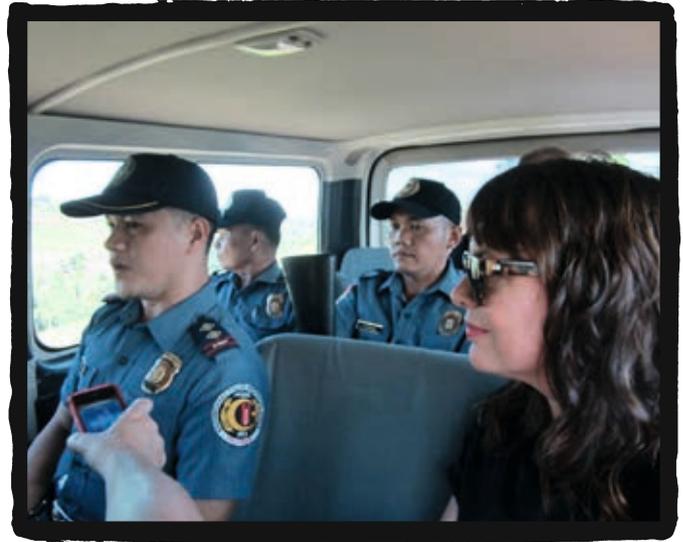
The mission returned to General Santos City, visiting the cemetery where 13 of the local journalists killed in the massacre are buried. The mission lit candles and laid single flowers and wreaths at each and every gravestone.

Early the following morning the mission returned to Manila to meet with presidential spokesperson Undersecretary for Legislative, Policy and Legal Affairs, Jess Anthony Q. Yu. He read a statement on the progress with the trial. The mission asked him specifically about funding and resourcing for the trial and investigation, and inquired why so many of the suspects were still at large after five years. The mission also raised several issues regarding impunity.

Specifically, the mission also asked why President



Credit: Nonoy Espina



Benigno “Ninoy” Aquino III had not responded to any of the three letters it had written to him in recent years, noting that this was extraordinary for a head of state to ignore an organisation that represented more than 600,000 journalists in 134 countries globally. The mission also asked that the findings of an investigation by the Inspector General of the Armed Forces into the role of Major General Alfredo Cayton and Colonel Medardo Geslani in the massacre be released.

During a two-hour meeting with the Department of Justice’s Secretary Leila de Lima, the mission raised several issues regarding the ongoing trial. De Lima made the following important statement to the mission on impunity in the Philippines: “I am not going to deny there is no longer a culture of impunity in our country. There is still a culture of impunity and that is something that we’re trying to address and eradicate.”

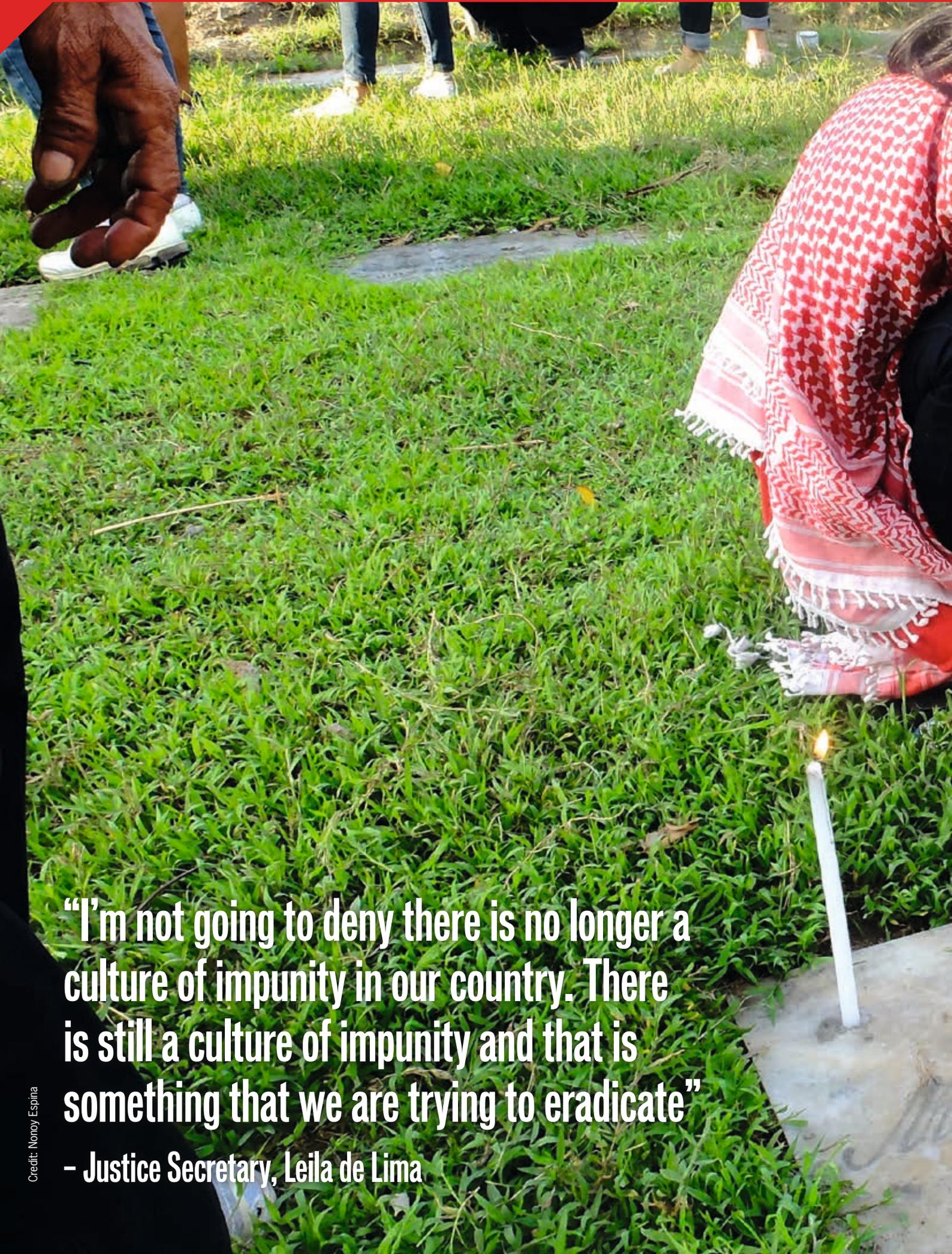
The mission once again raised the Inspector General’s investigation of Cayton and Geslani and the failure to observe United Nations Security Council resolution 1738. It urged de Lima to ensure the investigation’s findings were released and to ensure that the Philippines government agencies such as the police and military are aware of their obligations towards the safety of journalists.

On November 23, the fifth anniversary of the Ampatuan Massacre, a press conference was held at Bantayog ng mga Bayani

– a monument for the martyrs and victims of the struggle against dictatorship in the Philippines – and the mission’s interim statement on its initial findings was released. The press conference in Quezon City was also marked with the opening of an art installation commemorating the victims of the massacre. The installation comprised of victims’ bodies made of newspaper laying on an open grass space along with the names of the 32 victims on a banner.

On the evening of November 23, the mission joined other international journalists and non-government organisations in a candle-lighting vigil at the EDSA Shrine in downtown Manila, built in 1989 to commemorate the peaceful overthrow of the Marcos regime.

The following day, on November 24, the mission met with Task Force Usig at police headquarters in Camp Crame. The task force is charged with investigating any work-related murders of journalists. Police Chief Superintendent Libay and others in the Usig leadership group used a series of detailed presentations to explain its work, but the mission found its statistics were at odds with both Justice Secretary de Lima’s and the NUIP’s own close monitoring of journalist killings. The mission was cautiously optimistic however that both Secretary de Lima and the task force were demonstrating that for the first time in several missions to the Philippines since 2009, the government was at least trying to take action.



**“I’m not going to deny there is no longer a culture of impunity in our country. There is still a culture of impunity and that is something that we are trying to eradicate”**

**– Justice Secretary, Leila de Lima**



## CHAPTER 2: INTRODUCTION

# The darkest of days

IT WAS THE SINGLE MOST DEADLY DAY FOR JOURNALISTS AND MEDIA WORKERS ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD.  
 BY MIKE DOBBIE

### The massacre

The Ampatuan Massacre took place in the province of Maguindanao, on the southern Philippines island of Mindanao, on Monday, November 23, 2009. Fifty-eight people were murdered, including 32 journalists and media workers. It was the single deadliest day for journalists in history.

The victims had been in a convoy heading to the provincial capital of Shariff Aguak to file candidacy papers for Esmael “Toto” Mangudadatu for the upcoming May 10, 2010 national elections. Mangudadatu was nominating for the position of provincial governor against Andal Ampatuan Jr, a son of the incumbent, and it was big news.

The Ampatuan clan, loyal to then Philippines President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, were immensely powerful. A long-running insurgency on the island of Mindanao had seen the Philippines Government increasingly rely on local war lords and their militias to secure provincial towns and villages against the unrest. It handed clans such as the Ampatuans extraordinary powers and weapons in exchange for their loyalty. The Ampatuans had used their dominance to intimidate local police, judges and provincial administrators.

But Mangudadatu was now challenging the Ampatuans’ heir apparent, and many journalists gathered at the Mangudadatu compound in the town of Buluan to report on the event.

Already fearing the Ampatuan clan would interfere, Toto Mangudadatu arranged for his wife, sisters and two female lawyers to travel in a convoy to file his candidacy papers. It was believed that in accordance with Muslim tradition, no harm would come to the women.

Prior to departure, the family had also sought a military escort for the convoy from the commander of the 6th Infantry Division,

Major General Alfredo Cayton. Instead, he assured them that the road was clear and safe, and that the Philippine National Police (PNP) was deployed along it.

The convoy of six vehicles headed off from the Mangudadatu compound at 9am. One hour later at 10am, as it was approaching Ampatuan Town, the group was stopped at a checkpoint roadblock at Sitio Malating, Barangay Salman, by members of the PNP and about 100 armed men allegedly led by Andal Ampatuan Jr. Mixed in with the original convoy were now two other vehicles with six people, unwittingly caught up in the cavalcade in the process of overtaking the slower vehicles.

The convoy and more than 20 vehicles belonging to the gunmen were diverted west, on to a rough side road and along a ridgeline for about 2.5km to Sitio Masalay, a knoll with a steep drop-off. They arrived at about 10.30am. At that site, a back-hoe belonging to the provincial government, its engine casing stamped with the words: “Property of the province of Maguindanao – Gov. Datu Andal Ampatuan Sr.,” had already dug three pits between 1.5 metres [5 feet] and 3.5 metres [12 feet] deep.

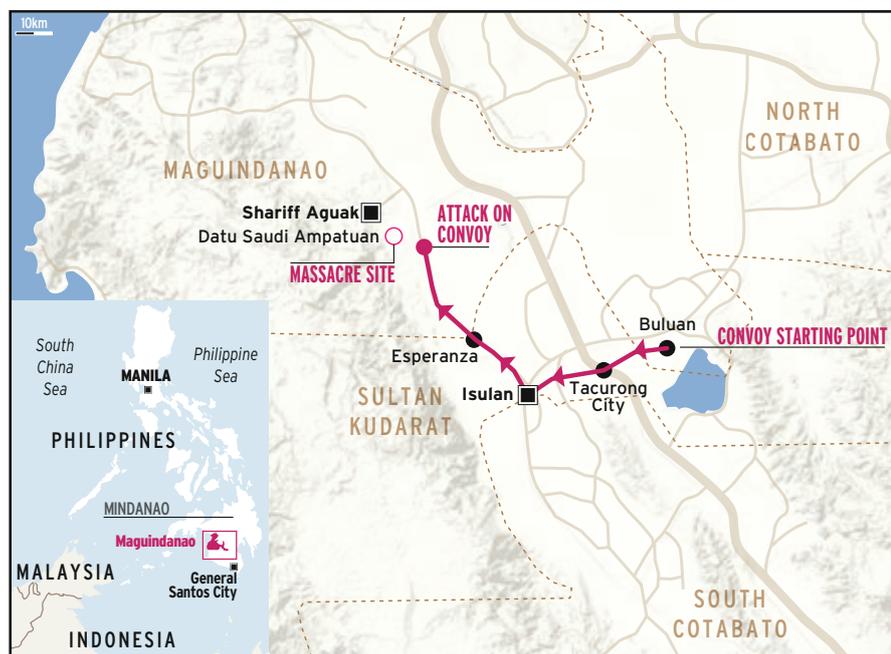
Over the next hour the armed men massacred 58 people, including 15 women. They were shot in batches of about 10 with some still in their vehicles. The back-hoe had earlier been carried on a transporter to the checkpoint, and then driven up the side road to the site to dig the holes. It was also used to begin burying the bodies and vehicles before its engine burnt out.

Journalists who had earlier turned back before the roadblock became concerned when they were unable to raise the people in the convoy. They alerted Major General Cayton, telling him they believed the group

had been kidnapped. A search was ordered and at about 1.30pm, troops of the 64th Infantry Brigade arrived at the checkpoint. They began moving on foot along the side road, and two-thirds of the way along they encountered two armed men and heard the roar of the back-hoe’s engine. They arrived at the massacre site at about 3pm.

The soldiers initially found 22 bodies and five vehicles at the scene. Subsequent police operations revealed three vehicles and six bodies buried in one pit and covered with soil in alternating layers, with the back-hoe crushing the vehicles. The investigators counted six layers in the large pit. Five victims were exhumed from another pit and 24 victims from the third. A 58th victim’s body has never been found. Some of the group had been shot in the genital area. Others were mutilated. Many were shot in the face, making them unrecognisable.

*Mike Dobbie is communications manager in the Media section of Australia’s Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance, and a consultant with the International Federation of Journalists*





Credit: Nonoy Espina

**The soldiers initially found 22 bodies and five vehicles at the scene. Subsequent police operations revealed three vehicles and six bodies buried in one pit and covered with soil in alternating layers, with the back-hoe crushing the vehicles. Five victims were exhumed from another pit and 24 victims from the third. A 58th victim's body has never been found.**





# The reality five years on

NOT ONE PERSON HAS BEEN CONVICTED FOR THEIR PART IN THE AMPATUAN MASSACRE, WHILE THE FALLOUT FOR THE MEDIA AND THE MURDERS CONTINUE. BY ROWENA 'WENG' PARAAN

## The trial

In total, 193 people have been accused of a role in the massacre (revised down from 197). Eighteen of the accused carry the Ampatuan surname, including clan patriarch Andal Ampatuan Sr, Zaldy Ampatuan (the former governor of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao) and former Datu Unsay town mayor Andal Ampatuan Jr.

At the time of the fifth anniversary of the massacre, at least 118 people have been arrested and arraigned, but according to Justice Secretary Leila de Lima, 84 of the suspects have still not been captured.

The trial, which began in January 2010, has been characterised by lengthy legal argument from prosecutors, delaying tactics by defence lawyers, bribery accusations and a sorry lack of updates for the families of the massacre victims.

The ongoing court case simultaneously hears both the petition for bail for 42 of the accused and the trial proper for the entire 108 arraigned.

While the prosecution has so far presented 147 witnesses, at least four potential state witnesses have been killed since the trial's start. The most recent murder was in the week preceding the fifth anniversary. There was another attack on a witness in January 2015. It's anticipated the defence will eventually present more than 300 witnesses.

However witnesses, and some policemen, continue to fear for their safety as their status in the Witness Protection Program remains unclear.

The Justice Department has repeatedly assured the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines (NUJP) that sufficient money has been released by the Office of the President for this trial, however there have been instances of scheduled witnesses failing to appear, reportedly due to lack of funds.

Early in 2014, the panel of public prosecutors assigned to the case, then under the supervision of Justice Undersecretary Francisco Baraan III, had sought to rest the case for 28 of the accused, both with regards to the bail petition and evidence-in-chief. A private counsel, Harry Roque, agreed with this decision. But two other private prosecutors, Nena Santos and Prima Quinsayas, believed such action was premature and that there were more witnesses who could be called to testify. They also complained that they were no longer being consulted by the public prosecutors.

Both sides have sought to discredit each other's positions through statements and press conferences. The already heated situation became even more complex when stories surfaced alleging bribes had been offered to prosecutors, including Baraan, to compromise the trial in favour of the accused.

Baraan was also accused of secretly meeting with lead defence counsel Sigfrid Fortun in early 2013. Baraan admitted to the meeting, but said it was not related to the trial. The prosecution panel has also been accused of misusing funds allotted for the massacre trial.

Such allegations highlight how attempts to pay off witnesses, victims' families and lawyers over the past five years could be influencing both the course of the trial and public sentiment.

Secretary de Lima has now stepped in and declared the prosecution panel is under her direct supervision. She has also promised an investigation of the bribery allegations.

In the almost five years of the case, several people have received threats and/or faced legal actions over their work in the massacre case, among them private prosecutor Prima Quinsayas, massacre victim Napoleon Salaysay's widow Monette, journalist Ces Drilon and NUJP chair Rowena Paraan.

Since the defence began presenting evidence in the trial, it has become

very difficult for journalists to get inside Quezon City regional trial court branch inside the Quezon City Jail Annex in Camp Bagong Diwa, where the hearings are being held. On September 17, reporters from ABS-CBN, *Philippine Star* and *Malaya* were denied entry but it was unclear whether the order came from the police, jail management, or the court. Reporter Ces Drilon who has covered the trial from the start, was again refused entry the next hearing day. September 17 was the day when the defence counsel of former governor Zaldy Ampatuan presented their first witness for his bail petition.

Meanwhile, the court has granted the bail petitions of 41 police officers accused of being complicit in the massacre. They were members of the 1508th Police PMG (Provincial Mobile Group) which flagged down the convoy, an act pivotal to the commission of the crime according to the prosecution. The court however believed the evidence of guilt was not strong and set bail at PhP200,000 (approx. US\$4,500) for every count of murder or a total of PhP11.6 million (approx. US\$791,600). (Under Philippine Rules on Criminal Procedure, any person accused of committing a crime punishable by *reclusion perpetua*, such as murder, may be granted bail if the prosecution fails to show strong evidence of guilt.)

Two top-ranking military officials who refused to provide security to the ill-fated convoy have both enjoyed promotions. Colonel Medardo Geslani, who headed the Army's 601st Brigade at the time of the massacre, was promoted to Brigadier General only recently. Army Major General Alfredo Cayton, then commander of the Army's 6th Infantry Division, became vice commander of the Philippine Army. NUJP and the victims' families opposed both promotions, but the military board sided with the two officers' claims that the request for an escort was turned down because of a limited number of available foot soldiers.

## Other killings

It must be stressed that the killing of journalists in the Philippines did not stop with the Ampatuan Massacre. At least 34 journalists have been killed since then. Since 1986 when the People Power uprising against the Marcos dictatorship brought democratic institutions back to the Philippines, 172 media workers have been killed. And as the NUJP continues to point out, it is only the gunmen who are ever pursued. Not one of the people who actually engage the assassins has ever been convicted.

President Aquino has been unsupportive. On several occasions, he has said the reasons journalists are killed in the Philippines are not always due to their media work.

Having the nation's highest ranking official say such a thing serves to create an environment where there is no importance or urgency in solving media killings and other human rights violations. Instead, it gives the impression that the government couldn't care less if journalists are being killed or that basic freedoms such as freedom of expression and press freedom are being trampled and the rule of law undermined.

The main challenge for the NUJP and the media community is to put justice for the victims of the Ampatuan Massacre issue at the top of the national government's agenda. The murderers must be held to account. But just as importantly, we need to restore public interest on the issue and strengthen the people's resolve in demanding justice and asserting the democratic rights to free expression and a free press.

---

*Rowena 'Weng' Paraan is chairperson of the National Union of Journalists in the Philippines*

**THE LIVES LOST**

# The journalists killed in the Ampatuan Massacre

Bengie Adolfo  
 Henry Araneta  
 Mc Delbert "Mac-mac" Arriola  
 Rubello Bataluna  
 Arturo Betia  
 Romeo Jimmy "Pal-ak" Cabillo  
 Marites Cablitas  
 Hannibal Cachuela  
 Jephon Cadagdagon  
 John Caniban  
 Eleanor "Leah" Dalmacio  
 Noel Decena  
 Gina Dela Cruz  
 Jose "Jhoy" Duhay  
 Jolito Evardo  
 Santos Gatchalian, Jr.

Bienvenido Legarta, Jr.  
 Lindo Lupogan  
 Ernesto "Bombo Bart" Maravilla  
 Rey Merisco  
 Reynaldo "Bebot" Momay  
 Marife "Neneng" Montaña  
 Rosell Morales  
 Victor Nuñez  
 Joel Parcon  
 Ronnie Perante  
 Fernando "Ranny" Razon  
 Alejandro "Bong" Reblando  
 Napoleon "Nap" Salaysay  
 Francisco "Ian" Subang, Jr.  
 Andres "Andy" Teodoro  
 Daniel Tiamzon



## CHAPTER 3

# Living with the fear

AMPATUAN WAS THE MOST EXTREME EXAMPLE OF THE REALITY FOR JOURNALISTS IN MANY REGIONS OF THE PHILIPPINES, WHERE YOU CROSS THE CURRENT TIN-POT DESPOT AT YOUR OWN PERIL. BY NONOY ESPINA

*How can your soul rest,  
 How can you be set free?  
 How do we all rest,  
 How can we call ourselves free?*  
 – **Athle Wijangco Estacio**

Five years on, it still haunts me – the banality of the evil that happened on November 23, 2009. It was cruel, yes, but it was also so... matter of course.

By all indications, those who ordered the bloodbath had no reason to be angry with the victims, except perhaps the kin and supporters of the man who dared challenge the Ampatuan clan. In fact, six of the dead weren't even supposed to be there. They were hapless souls who just wandered into the wrong place at the wrong time.

And many of the 32 media workers who died were well known, and a few even considered "friends", to the Ampatuan family.

There could have been more journalists killed had it not been for what now feels like a random roll of the dice.

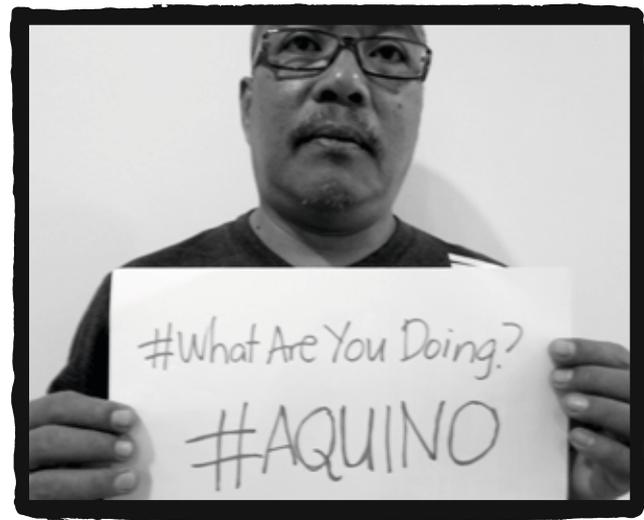
Myself and a photojournalist friend, for example, were not with the ill-fated convoy on November 23, 2009. Just as we heard word that the Ampatuans would make mincemeat of this brash Mangudadatu who wanted to wrest away their hold on Maguindanao province, we were both coming down with the flu. We decided to rest up for a while and come back to cover what we thought would be another shooting war between two politicians' private armies. (The Ampatuans' private militia was larger and better armed than the regular army.)

This thought would badger me for months after the carnage, a perverted survivor's guilt, popping in at the most unexpected times – "I SHOULD (not could) have been there..."

The bloodbath that shocked the world was just another day in a war lord's undoubtedly busy schedule. So was the initial reaction of the Arroyo Government, which had allowed the war lord's clan to amass so much wealth and power in exchange for their loyalty and the votes they could deliver (a 7-0 administration sweep in the senatorial elections of 2007).

Even as the world howled in outrage over the carnage in Ampatuan Town, the administration of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo negotiated, nay, PLEADED with clan leaders – who undoubtedly had ordered and planned it all – to please surrender the scion who led the slaughter. Only when it became impossible to brazen out the pressure did the government finally declare martial law and haul in most of the principal players and their minions, though almost a hundred of them remain scot-free five years on.

Yet, so has been the reaction of the succeeding government, whose president ran on the pledge to grant justice to the victims of the Ampatuan Massacre. The families of the victims believed Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino III's promise and openly campaigned for him. After all, hadn't



Credit: IFJ

he lost his father, too, to the minions of a dictator whose depravities the Ampatuans could never dream of matching? And didn't their kin die in the run-up to the elections that Aquino handily won on the strength of those very promises of justice, good governance and human rights?

But five years on, what have the victims' relatives got?

- Aquino has refused to dismantle the private armies, which invariably are given the patina of officialdom as "government militias", claiming they are essential to defending the State.
- He and his mouthpieces have heaped insult on injury by not even pretending to care enough to remember exactly how many people died on that day of infamy.
- Since he became president, another 34 journalists have been murdered, deaths he attempts to explain by saying, without presenting any proof, that many of the victims were killed not for their media work but for other reasons.

During a recent dialogue with colleagues from the region around General Santos City, which lost half its media population to the massacre, they confirmed they are still gripped with fear.

"The mindset of people changed with the massacre," said one journalist. "People say, 'Why would you keep working, you will be killed'. You are not supposed to be afraid to deliver facts and you should not be covering up stories that might affect lives."

Another said: "I'm worried about what will happen to the next generation. I hope our cause will not be stopped by the killing of media. We have that obligation; we have the responsibility to tell the truth. We have to do that."

It is a fear that continues to cloak much of the truth, not only from the people of the region but of the country as well. This fear limits what stories the storytellers are willing to tell and how they tell them. That they continue to strive to tell their stories as fully as they can, despite the perils they face, is a testament to their bravery.

But it would be a mistake to write off Ampatuan as an aberration. It was extreme in its magnitude and savagery, of course, but it was simply the worst example of the reality in so many regions of the Philippines. In these areas you cross the current tin-pot despot at your own peril because political expediency dictates the central government will turn a blind eye, lest it fall out of grace with its allies.

And so it went, and so it goes...

What is clearly needed is an end to this curse, to this system of governance that breeds so much corruption and so much death.

Five years after the massacre, the really scary thing is that another Ampatuan is almost a certainty. It is only a matter of who and when.

*Nonoy Espina is the director of the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines*



**Five years after the massacre, the really scary thing is that another Ampatuan is almost a certainty. It is only a matter of who and when.**

## CHAPTER 4

# Does Aquino really care about murdered journalists?

THE SILENCE OF THE GRAVEYARD CONFRONTS PHILIPPINE JOURNALISTS AND OTHER WATCHDOGS OF DEMOCRACY. THERE'S LITTLE INDICATION PRESIDENT AQUINO, LIKE OTHER LEADERS BEFORE HIM, WANTS TO CHANGE THE SITUATION. BY INDAY ESPINA-VARONA

*"Tuwid na daan"* (the straight path) was President Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino III's pledge on assuming power in the Philippines in 2010.

After nine years of rocky relations with the preceding administration of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, Philippine journalists looked forward to the swift passage of a Freedom of Information (FOI) law and more focus on bringing to justice the killers of 172 journalists murdered since 1986.

Four years into Aquino's presidency, however, the son of democratic icons Benigno and Corazon Aquino has hewed closer to the hostility displayed by his now jailed predecessor.

As I write, I'm looking at reports, articles, talks and papers from 2004. Few things have changed. Indeed, every incident of violence perpetrated against journalists and almost every official statement by the incumbent president on the issue hurl those working for press freedom into a never-ending throwback loop.

Aquino has tried to downplay the 34 murders of journalists under his watch, insulting the victims while he's at it.

"When we say 'media killing' usually [we refer to] agents of the state suppressing the search for the truth... but many of them, we can say, were not in pursuit of the profession," the current Philippines president has stated, citing love triangles and extortion as possible alternative motives for the murders.

His comment came amid preparations to commemorate the fifth anniversary of the Ampatuan Massacre in Maguindanao – the deadliest day for journalists ever, anywhere in the world.

The National Union of Journalists of the Philippines (NUJP) notes that of the 34 murders of journalists committed under Aquino's term, there have been arrests in only six of these cases. Yet here is the land's highest elected official, who presents his administration as being righteous and anti-corruption, providing an old, discredited spin to a long-festering problem. In his predecessor Arroyo's nine-year presidency, 104 journalists were killed, including those who perished in Ampatuan Town.

That impunity remains a critical problem for the Philippines is brutally clear. The Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility (CMFR) points out that only 14 media murder cases since 1986 have resulted in the conviction of suspected gunmen. But none of the people who paid these gunmen has ever been brought to justice.

In 2004, only war-torn Iraq had more murders of journalists than the Philippines; the year before, the Philippines was in a tie with Colombia, then besieged by drug cartels, as the world's most dangerous country for journalists. In 2014, the Philippines ranks

third in the Committee to Protect Journalists' (CPJ) Impunity Index, just behind Iraq and Somalia.

Arroyo and leaders of the Philippine National Police (PNP) then also repeatedly blamed media victims for the killings, hinting at "shady backgrounds", corruption and messy personal lives.

Then and now: Top government officials refusing to acknowledge that murder has become a routine response by powerful individuals and groups who come under a harsh media spotlight.

Then and now: Top government officials ignoring the roots of the problem, instead hinting that murders could decrease if journalists eased up on their duties as watchdogs of society.

For more than a decade now, the Philippines has had three presidents with a penchant for blaming the media every time scandals hit their administrations, or any inconvenient truth tares the rosy image they seek to project.

Aquino, Arroyo and the ousted former president Joseph Estrada have done their best to clamp down on freedom of expression and freedom of the press.

The latter pressured owners of one national daily into selling it to his political allies. Estrada also prodded business cronies to boycott a hard-hitting newspaper.

Arroyo took on emergency powers, padlocking a newspaper and arresting outspoken critics. The armed forces and the police went around the country, providing schools and communities with a list of "enemies of the state" – which included media organisations such as the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines.

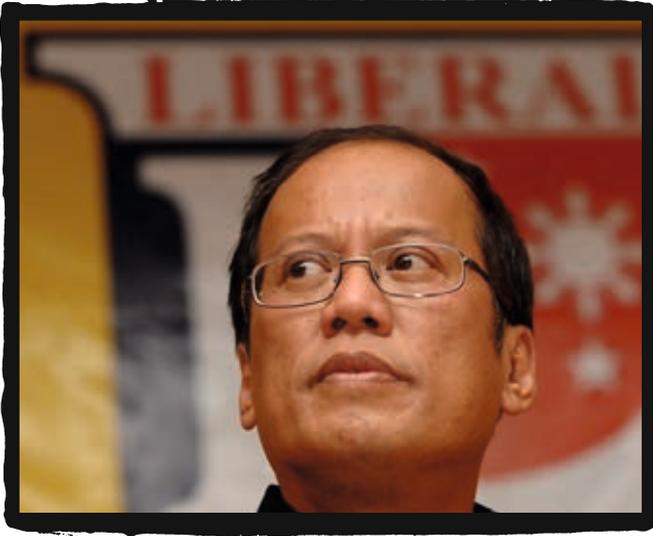
Aquino strongly backed the Anti-Cybercrime Law, which includes online libel – a chilling development in one of the world's most vibrant social media milieu. The same law would have given the Justice Department unilateral powers to take down websites and increased its digital surveillance powers, but fortunately these provisions were struck down by the Supreme Court.

Arroyo's political allies routinely killed off Freedom of Information (FOI) initiatives. As an opposition senator, Aquino voted for the Freedom of Information bill and made a campaign promise to make it a legislative priority.

On assuming power, however, he reneged on his pledge, and publicly expressed second thoughts about FOI, citing dangers to governance and possible political destabilisation as a result of the free flow of information.

While the coalition of media and other non-government groups pushing the bill have consented to presidential demands for exceptions, others have warned that these vague exemptions

Credit: AFP/Noel Celis



Credit: AFP/Tang Chhin Sothy



**All three administrations have been accused of siphoning off state funds, including those already contained in national budget legislation, and diverting these to political allies and favoured local government units.**

would keep critical information away from the public and hamper efforts to pre-empt acts of corruption.

All three administrations – Aquino, Arroyo and Estrada – have been criticised for ignoring the murders of activists, lawyers, environmentalists and judges, the people who along with the media act as watchdogs against corruption in society. And all three administrations have been accused of siphoning off state funds, including those already contained in national budget legislation, and diverting these to political allies and favoured local government units.

Opaque systems, the selective imposition of justice, not to mention a weak justice framework that makes sitting ducks of whistleblowers and witnesses, continue to fuel conditions that constrict press freedom – and all other freedoms – in the Philippines.

Most murders of journalists occur far from the national capital. In close to half of the killings, current and retired members of the security forces or henchmen of government officials have been identified as culprits. In regions where journalists are gunned

down, weapons have also been trained on human rights workers and other activists.

In these same areas, the struggles on the ground are about rampaging crime and the exploitation of natural wealth – land, minerals, forests – and the links of all of these to government authorities. The Ampatuans were pets of Arroyo. President Aquino's political party has also embraced many of the clan's members.

Media is a reflection of the society it serves. Impunity rides high when society confers too much power on select individuals and groups and imposes too little accountability on them. The murders of journalists in the Philippines will go on so long as governments continue to confound calls for transparency, so long as the corrupt and abusive wield the silence of the graveyard in response to expressions of the people's democratic aspirations.

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## How the Philippines Government breaches UN resolutions

UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 1738 REQUIRES MEMBER STATES TO ENSURE JOURNALISTS, MEDIA PROFESSIONALS AND ASSOCIATED PERSONNEL MUST BE “RESPECTED AND PROTECTED” IN “AREAS OF ARMED CONFLICT”. THE AMPATUAN MASSACRE DESERVES CLOSER SCRUTINY.

Even before the Ampatuan Massacre occurred, the Philippines Government was in breach of its international legal obligations. Indeed, so many of those charged in the massacre trial are on the government payroll – police, members of the armed forces, paramilitary members – the role of the government in this atrocity cannot be overlooked.

Prior to the convoy setting out from Buluan on the morning of November 23, 2009, it contacted then Major General Alfredo Cayton, commander of the 6th Infantry Division of the Philippines Army based in Maguindanao, seeking a military escort to the capital Shariff Aguak. Several of the people in the convoy had deep concerns about security, and knew the Ampatuan clan had worked closely with the Division. The 601st Infantry Brigade was operating in Maguindanao under the command of Colonel Merdado Geslani.

As outlined in detail in the 2009 mission report, Cayton told a journalist that everything was clear, there was nothing to worry about and that there were Philippine National Police (PNP) deployed along the highway. Asked again by the journalist if the convoy would be safe, Cayton responded: “There is nothing to worry about.”

Had Cayton said anything other than this, the convoy would never have set out and the massacre would not have occurred. It has to be remembered that the convoy was stopped at a PNP checkpoint under the command of Chief Inspector Sukarno Adil Dikay. Dikay and 61 other members of the PNP have been charged for their role in the massacre.

As one of the journalists who turned back before the checkpoint said of Cayton: “They in the military knew better than us; he should have informed his field commanders and field units that journalists would be covering the convoy of Mangudadatu. If he had done that, I think the... massacre could have been prevented.”

Cayton was informed by a journalist at 10.40am, about 40 minutes after the convoy was halted at the checkpoint, that “more than 30 journalists in the convoy were already kidnapped by unidentified armed men”. Cayton responds at 11am: “I will try to check that info with the PNP” and he subsequently orders Geslani’s unit to commence a search and rescue operation.

Under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1738, passed in 2006, member states are required to ensure that journalists, media professionals and associated personnel must be “respected and protected” in “areas of armed conflict”.

Neither in its initial rapid assessment mission in 2009 nor during

its 2014 meetings with a presidential spokesperson, the Justice Secretary, and the leadership group of the PNP’s Task Force Usig, has the IFJ come across anyone in authority in the Philippines with knowledge of this international legal obligation. It has to be noted that since the massacre, members of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), supplemented by the PNP, usually do offer some protection for visitors to the massacre site.

So how did the Philippines handle the failure of Cayton to protect journalists in an armed conflict zone, as required by UNSC resolution 1738? Four days after the massacre Cayton and Geslani were relieved of their commands and sent to Manila to appear before an investigation following complaints that they failed to provide security. Twelve days later the Inspector General of the AFP found the pair were not remiss for failing to provide security to the victims of the massacre. Less than a month later, Cayton was promoted to the position of Vice-Commander of the Army. He retired the following month on February 14, 2010. In October 2014 Geslani was promoted to Brigadier-General.

The National Union of Journalists of the Philippines (NUJP) has said: “It is a fact that an Army intelligence unit witnessed the convoy being stopped and then taken to the killing grounds in Sitio Masalay. The unit had been reporting back to Geslani’s headquarters as events developed. It is clear... that there is no way he can claim ignorance and that the only conclusion that can be drawn is that he, too, had a degree of involvement in the Ampatuan Massacre.

“We would also like to point out that only around two months before the massacre, a convoy of 50 journalists covering the mass evacuations caused by the fighting in Maguindanao at the time were summarily detained at a military outpost in the province. When the journalists asked why they were being prevented from travelling freely and performing their duties, the



Major General Alfredo Cayton



Colonel Merdado Geslani



soldiers told them they [had been] ordered by their commander, who happened to be Geslani, to specifically stop the media. Officers such as Geslani are not only a disgrace to the service and their uniform but are clearly a threat to our freedoms.”

Cayton and Geslani ignored their obligations to provide protection for the journalists in the convoy. The request for assistance from a journalist due to participate in the convoy was flippantly brushed aside. The massacre is proof of Cayton’s negligence.

Over the last five years the IFJ has repeatedly asked that the investigation conducted by the Inspector General of the Armed Forces into Cayton and Geslani be made public so the Filipino people can learn more about the conduct of the most senior military officer during this slaughter of journalists.

The IFJ has also repeatedly sought assurances that PNP and AFP officers are trained in their legal obligations under the Geneva Convention and UNSC resolution 1738. But even now, it is clear that there is an ignorance of these international agreements at the highest level of the government, the police and the military.

The IFJ repeats these requests now.

As impunity continues to flourish in the Philippines, the United Nations has stepped up its activities aiming to ensure the safety of journalists. On December 18, 2013 the United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution 68/163 which calls on states to promote

a safe working environment for journalists, including awareness-raising measures for law enforcement officers and military personnel. The resolution requires states to monitor and report attacks against journalists, publicly condemn attacks and dedicate resources to investigate and prosecute attacks.

The resolution also requires that member states do their utmost to prevent violence against journalists and media workers, ensure accountability through the conduct of impartial, speedy and effective investigations into violence against journalists and media workers, and bring the perpetrators of these crimes to justice; and ensure that victims have access to appropriate remedies.

The Philippines failed its obligations on November 23, 2009. Five years later, the existence of Task Force Usig suggests it has slowly begun to take action as required under UNGA 68/163. But the specific role of Cayton and Geslani before, during and after the massacre still needs to be understood if genuine justice is to be served and the obligation for accountability met.

Journalists are still being killed at a staggering rate. Witnesses in the massacre trial are being silenced. Impunity continues. It is time for the Philippines Government to take its international legal obligations seriously.

*Mike Dobbie*





## CHAPTER 5

# When justice fails

THE AMPATUAN MASSACRE TRIAL HAS BARELY CLEARED THE STARTING GATE AFTER MORE THAN FIVE LONG YEARS, AND THIS DELAY HAS ALLOWED THE CONTINUED INTIMIDATION, ASSAULT AND EVEN MURDER OF WITNESSES. THE NUMBERS TELL A STARK STORY. BY RUPERT DI MANGILIT

Impunity – no other word so perfectly encapsulates everything that the numbers behind the Ampatuan Massacre tell us.

The most recent of these figures, and probably the most telling, is 19 – the total number of accused whose petitions for provisional freedom were granted despite them being accessories to the biggest attack against press freedom and free elections in recent history.

Eighteen of them are police officers who were earlier allowed to post bail amounting to PhP11.6 million each (about US\$250,000). The 19th and the latest, whose bail petition was approved on January 9, is Sajid Islam Ampatuan. He was granted temporary freedom despite serving as the officer-in-charge [acting] governor of Maguindanao at the time of the massacre of 58 people, and despite him allowing the killers access to government-owned resources to commit their crime, including the back-hoe that crumpled the vehicles and some of the bodies.

Just as disturbing are more recent events, such as the cold-blooded murder of Dennis Sakal, the fourth potential prosecution witness to be killed, on November 18, 2014.

Employed as a driver for Andal Ampatuan Jr, the former Datu Unsay town mayor and alleged mastermind of the massacre, Sakal might have spilled more graphic and disturbing details as to what transpired on and before the November 23, 2009 killings. Unfortunately, he was permanently silenced before he could even formally file an affidavit about the crime.

Sakal and another crucial witness, Butch Saudagal (an alleged former bagman for the Ampatuans), were headed to the Cotabato City Regional trial court to submit their affidavits, when a group of armed men waylaid the tricycle they rode and riddled it with bullets. Saudagal was badly wounded, while Sakal died on the spot.

Sakal's killing both angered and alarmed those closely monitoring the case. The timing, in particular, was baffling: Sakal was murdered on November 18, a mere five days before the nation commemorated the fifth anniversary of the Ampatuan Massacre. Its implications on how justice will be dispensed (or aborted) in the next few years of this trial, is likewise discomfiting.

When the case started in January 2010, all of the eight Ampatuan family members accused of the horrid murder were already in jail. But the family's influence appeared unscathed. Even after the massacre, the other clan members – many of them spouses, children and



Credit: Dondi Tawato – Dateline Philippines

**It's more than likely that the Ampatuans are still able to wield power from inside prison, including possibly ordering the ambush of Sakal and Saudagal, and the murder of other potential witnesses.**

grandchildren of the imprisoned Ampatuans – managed to secure plum seats in the 2010 and 2013 elections.

Meanwhile, unconfirmed reports say that the Ampatuan patriarch, Andal Ampatuan Sr, and his sons have been receiving special treatment, staying in cells with portable air-conditioners and enjoying other privileges such as using mobile phones and the internet inside the jail facility. If such rumours are true, it's more than likely that the Ampatuans are still able to wield power from inside prison, including possibly ordering the ambush of Sakal and Saudagal, and the murder of other potential witnesses such as Suwaib "Jesse" Upham [killed in 2010], Alijol Ampatuan [killed in 2012] and Esmail Amil Enog, whose dismembered body was found in a sack in 2012.

Equally frustrating is the slew of delays that have marred the trial. At one point, the Quezon City Regional Trial Court Branch 221, which is hearing the massacre case, had to resolve more than 300 motions filed by the defence panel, including bail petitions and motions to bar crucial prosecution witnesses such as former militiaman Kenny Dalandag and back-hoe operator Bong Andal. It took nearly four years before all 110 individuals accused of the crime were arraigned.

It also did not help that the public prosecution panel was reshuffled at least four times, due to professional differences. Worse still, in the middle of their seemingly premature move to rest the prosecution case in April 2014, some of the prosecution panel were named in allegations of pay-offs of up to PhP20 million (almost US\$450,000).

Just before the massacre's fifth anniversary, Justice Secretary Leila de Lima expressed her confidence in the current prosecution team, saying she needed concrete evidence to justify such claims. At the same time, she announced she would be taking charge of supervising the case.

But where has the case gone from there? Not many people would be able to know, as in September 2014 journalists were barred from proceedings.

The massacre trial is being run from the Quezon City Jail Annex inside the Camp Bagong Diwa police enclosure, rather than a

public courthouse. This decision was made to avoid the risk and expense involved in transporting so many prisoners to court. But on September 17, 2014, for reasons that are still unclear, journalists were barred entry to the Jail Annex by the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology.

The attitude of government agencies, and the executive, in resolving this now five-year case shows in a glaring way how impunity works in the Philippines. President Aquino appears to have little interest in dispensing justice for either the victims of the Ampatuan Massacre or the 30 plus media workers murdered under his watch. Nor is there much action on the alarming increase in threats and harassment against journalists covering the massacre

President Aquino's statements regularly reveal his lack of knowledge on the current state of press freedom in the Philippines. He drew the ire of journalists and press freedom groups for muddling the figures of journalists killed in the Ampatuan Massacre [he said 52, while there were 32 journalists among the 58 victims].

Worse, his statements in a forum in Brussels, Belgium displayed his lack of empathy and his anaemic political will in securing convictions against those who murder journalists. He was quoted as saying: "Did [the journalists] die because they were investigative journalists? Were they exercising their profession in a responsible manner, living up to journalistic ethics? Or did they perish because of other reasons?"

It's tantamount to a shameless denial of justice.

Aquino's flippant attitude towards journalist killings has made the perpetrators even bolder in what they do to avoid conviction. Worse, it has encouraged other people to silence journalists by killing them. According to Human Rights Watch, the mounting death toll among both journalists and the witnesses to these murders indicts the Philippines government as much as the killers.

*Rupert di Mangilit is the secretary general of the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines*

What the numbers tell



## CHAPTER 6

# What happens when killers get away with it

A CULTURE OF IMPUNITY HAS FLOURISHED IN THE PHILIPPINES FOR DECADES. EXTINGUISHING IT WILL TAKE MASSIVELY MORE RESOURCES THAN THE GOVERNMENT IS CURRENTLY PREPARED TO GIVE.

### The epicentre of impunity

BY MIKE DOBBIE

A massacre of the scale and audacity as occurred on November 23, 2009 seems so ghastly that it is, at first, unthinkable, irrational and then inexplicable. And yet the horror of the Ampatuan Massacre did indeed take place for a perfectly rational and explicable reason: the killers thought they could get away with it.

The culture of impunity that flourished in the Philippines after its return to democracy in 1986 was the perfect hothouse for this act of extreme brutality. It's likely the massacre's perpetrators reasoned that if so many people had already been killed, resulting in little or no police investigation let alone prosecution, why not simply scale up the killings from a single figure to dozens?

And if the perpetrators are political allies of the government then there is even less chance of official retribution; particularly if the evidence is buried by back-hoe in 3.5-metre-deep pits at the end of a rough track on the top of a knoll overlooking a serene and beautiful valley.

And that is the problem with impunity; it spreads. The Ampatuan Massacre was not the first instance of killers getting away with their crimes but it became the epicentre of what is a growing regional and global crisis. Its tremors have rippled outwards, with an increasing number of journalists being targeted around the world. Journalists, through the inaction of governments to properly investigate, prosecute and punish their killers, are now facing increased levels of threats, intimidation, harassment, assault and murder.

Five years on, the failure to fully prosecute a case against those responsible shows that impunity continues to reign in the Philippines. It should have been unthinkable that after the horror of the massacre, one more journalist would ever be murdered in that country. Yet, at the time of writing 34 more journalists have been murdered during the current Aquino administration – two more than were slaughtered in the massacre.

The mission said many times during the meetings, discussions and interviews that the justice system was broken in the Philippines. The Justice Secretary Leila de Lima took exception to this and objected to international media groups making such remarks. However the evidence of a judicial process that fails to deliver justice is apparent in the trial process.

There are 193 suspects in the massacre who have been formally charged in the case, revised down from an initial 197. And yet, after five years, up to 84 are still at large according to the Justice Department. Inexplicably, the Philippine National Police's Task Force Usig, created to investigate work-related media killings since 2001, believes only 77 individuals are still to be captured. The failure of the police and Justice Department to even agree on the number of suspects still at large points once again to failures within the judicial system – in this case, to even get right their facts around the Ampatuan case.

According to Task Force Usig's lower figure of 77 suspects still at large after five years, five are members of the Philippine National Police (PNP), four are members of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), and 53 are members of the government-subsidised paramilitary Civilian Volunteer Organizations (CVOs). Six of 11 ➤





**Journalists, through the inaction of governments to investigate, prosecute and punish their killers, are now facing increased levels of threats, intimidation, harassment, assault and murder.**



► people designated as “allies” are also yet to be captured. Worse still, nine of the 84 that have yet to be arrested have the surname Ampatuan. And the mission was told some of those nine have run for political office in Maguindanao over the preceding five years, while still eluding capture by the police.

De Lima commented: “I am as disappointed as anyone that not one has been arrested despite reports that the Ampatuan accused at large are sometimes seen there.” Asked why there was such a delay in rounding up suspects, the Justice Secretary said: “I don’t think it’s resources. I wouldn’t say there is absolute vigour. Part of the problem, I think, is because there are still vestiges of the power and the clout of the Ampatuan clan. There are also vestiges of fear. There is still fear in the area. It may not be as palpable as it was in 2009. Some of the witnesses we are trying to locate are still hesitant.”

**The axiom of “justice delayed is justice denied” is surely at work in the Philippines.**

But if having so many suspects still on the run five years after the massacre demonstrates a failure of policing, there is also the manifest failure to protect witnesses. Days before the mission visited the massacre site came news that a witness, an employee of the Ampatuan family likely to appear in the trial for the defence, had been murdered. Ironically, the killing was not far from the checkpoint on the highway where the convoy was stopped on November 23, 2009. Four witnesses have now been killed before being able to give evidence.

The Justice Secretary points out that her department cannot be responsible for failing to protect these witnesses as they were not in the department’s witness protection program. While this is true, the reason the witnesses were not in the official protection program is because few people have faith in it. As the 2009 mission said at the time: “...journalists had no faith in government-sponsored witness protection programs because several protected witnesses had been gunned down, on occasion by members of the police who were meant to be protecting them or by former members of the PNP.” The witness protection program has a designated total budget of 180 million pesos (approx. US\$4 million).

Impunity has also flourished because of the agonisingly slow judicial trial process. Government sources who met with the mission said that the massacre trial would always proceed slowly

## There is no difference between the Arroyo and Aquino administrations in terms of combating the murder of journalists.

because of the number of defendants and the massive number of witnesses to be heard, and due to the way the trial had been configured from the outset. As well, the defence is using every stalling tactic possible to slow down the entire trial, including trying to have the judge recused.

However, the mission was also told of other cases of journalist killings and attempted murders where legal proceedings were still in progress a decade later. The mission heard of one case still underway nine years after the journalist had been attacked and seven years after the accused had been charged. The journalist in that case died on January 15, 2015, leaving behind his wife and two children who are currently in the witness protection program and who have lost their home which has fallen into ruins since they were forced into hiding. They are still awaiting justice from the system.

The Ampatuan trial began on September 15, 2010. In the more than 1500 days since then it has sat for only 206 days, as at November 23, 2014. Currently, it only sits on Wednesdays and Thursdays. The defence has yet to present its case. There is confusion over whether the prosecution has formally rested its case or whether it may call additional witnesses. Between the prosecution witnesses [155] and the defence witnesses [believed to be at least 300], more than 450 people may be called. It took 560 days before the assets of the Ampatuans were frozen.

Five years is a long time for any victim of crime to wait for an outcome. For the families of the massacre victims, it is hard to hold on to any hope for justice – and eventual redress and compensation – without succumbing to the many bribes being offered if they drop their civil actions which are part of the case (remembering that, in most cases, it is the families' major bread winner who was murdered). The axiom of "justice delayed is justice denied" is surely at work in the Philippines.

Both the PNP and the Justice Secretary were at pains to highlight to the mission the work of police Task Force Usig. It was created to investigate only work-related killings of journalists that have occurred since 2001. The mission met with Usig's senior leadership who came armed with copious amounts of statistics and charts to demonstrate the scale of their work.

Much of Usig's effort seems to be in determining that a journalist killing has been for work-related reasons. Murders of journalists for other reasons, we were assured, were still being investigated by the PNP with the same vigour and determination as for any other murder. Either way, it is hard to go past the NUJP's own statistic that of the 171 journalists killed since 1986, only about 10 convictions have been achieved – and these are only the gunmen and their accomplices who took part in the act of murder, not the "masterminds" behind the murders. Of those who ordered the killings and who paid for them to be carried out, there has not been a single arrest let alone prosecution.

Usig is not the first task force to look into the targeted killing of journalists. In 2004 the then president Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo announced Task Force Newsmen. A bounty was to be paid to anyone providing evidence leading to the conviction of a killer of a journalist. The killings continued. In December 2007,

Task Force 211 was created to investigate political violence. The killings continued: seven journalists were killed in 2008. In 2009, prior to the Ampatuan Massacre, six journalists were killed – four of them in targeted attacks.

In fact, during President Arroyo's eight years in office, 103 journalists were killed – one every 33 days – including those murdered in the Ampatuan Massacre.

But if you leave out the statistical extreme of the massacre and focus on the 71 non-massacre deaths of journalists during her term, Arroyo's record is one journalist killed every 48 days.

Coincidentally, President Aquino's average for his term of office beginning in mid-2010 and up to the massacre anniversary in 2014 is also one journalist killed every 48 days. This suggests that there is no difference between the Arroyo and Aquino administrations in terms of combating the murder of journalists.

The ingrained culture of impunity that is crippling the Philippines undermines society and kneecaps democracy. It has flourished under a broken judicial system that fails to dedicate sufficient resources to investigate murders and takes far too long to produce justice if a case ever makes it to trial. It repeatedly denies justice to the victims of crime and encourages wrongdoers to commit ever-escalating acts of violence. It prevents legitimate scrutiny of the powerful and encourages corruption. It muzzles the media and prevents them from carrying out their duties. It promotes self-censorship amid a climate of fear and intimidation.

Police Chief Superintendent Henry Libay of Task Force Usig told the mission: "Are we proud of it? We don't want to be treated as the third most dangerous country for journalists. We have a lot of different ethnic groups, we have a problem with poverty and unemployment... We keep on learning from our own mistakes. We have instigated certain developments. Due process is very long and there is a lack of lawyers. You are writing a lot of reports against us, but how can you help us?"

The mission acknowledges that the Aquino Government has taken some steps, belatedly, to dedicate resources to address the problems with impunity. The mission welcomed Justice Secretary de Lima's statement: "I am not going to deny there is no longer a culture of impunity in our country. There is still a culture of impunity and that is something that we're trying to address and eradicate." The mission acknowledges that Task Force Usig is taking steps to investigate and bring to trial cases of work-related journalists killings.

But sadly, impunity has gripped the Philippines over the years and this has been exacerbated by ongoing government inaction, despite several changes of government and election promises that have not been fulfilled. There is much to be done. It will require enormous resources to be expended to conclude justice for the crimes of the past and create a future free of wilful murder carried out with impunity.

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*Mike Dobbie is communications manager in the Media section of Australia's Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance, and a consultant with the International Federation of Journalists.*

# Who will catch the killers?

TASK FORCE USIG WAS SET UP IN 2006 TO CATCH THOSE WHO KILL JOURNALISTS, BUT MOST OF THESE MURDERS ARE STILL UNSOLVED. THE QUESTION IS WHY? BY SONNY FERNANDEZ

Five years after the Ampatuan Massacre, Task Force Usig – the unit of the Philippine National Police that specifically deals with journalist killings – has admitted that 77 of the 195 suspects still remain at large. (The Justice Department, however, says there are 84 who are not yet arrested.)

Task Force Usig, created on May 19, 2006 to investigate, prosecute and monitor killings of journalists and activists, maintains a sufficient budget to fulfil its mission. But so far its successes have been few.

Eighteen of the policemen accused in the Ampatuan Massacre were granted bail in October 2014 because, according to the court, the evidence against them is weak. (Another policeman who also sought bail allegedly committed suicide while in prison.) The policemen had all belonged to the 1508th Provincial Mobile Group which had blocked the Mangudadatu convoy on its way to Shariff Aguak town.

This bail decision seems to validate fears that many of the accused will be released as a result of weak evidence. While first responders to the massacre site contaminated the scene, the situation also points to the incompetency and inefficiency of police in gathering evidence to build a tight case.

The head of Task Force Usig, Police Chief Superintendent Henry Libay, assured members of the IFJ mission on November 24, 2014 that police are on the lookout for the suspects 24-7.

“It’s not that easy conducting a manhunt operation in the Philippines,” he said. “We have 7100 islands, we have one of the longest coastlines. There is a lot of places for you to go.”

When asked by mission members, Libay confirmed that a tracker team is dedicated to finding the remaining suspects, but he refused to name its members to protect their personal safety. The tracker team has yet to report on the suspects still at large.

Libay also confirmed police are still offering rewards for information on the whereabouts of suspects. But details of this reward scheme have been barely publicised; the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines (NUJP) only learned about it at this November meeting.

## A culture of failure

Journalist killings did not stop after the Ampatuan Massacre. The NUJP has documented 34 more journalists killed under the administration of President Benigno Aquino III, bringing to 172 the number of journalists killed since 1986, when democracy was supposed to have been restored in the Philippines.

Those murdered include radio broadcaster Gerardo Ortega, “Doc Gerry”, who revealed widespread corruption in the Palawan provincial government and was spearheading an anti-mining movement when he was assassinated in January 2011. The shooter was quickly apprehended, then another man also turned himself in to the police and his confession implicated one former and one serving provincial governor in the murder. But prosecutors initially dismissed criminal charges against the governors, citing insufficient evidence.

From 2001 to November 2014, of the 117 cases listed, Task Force Usig recorded 51 as work-related media killings – all in regional areas. But there have been only six convictions for any of these crimes, all of them involving triggermen and lookouts. None of the people who ordered the murders has been brought to justice. Perhaps there is no better evidence for a culture of impunity.

Speaking to the IFJ mission, Libay defended at length Task Force Usig’s method, where they must first classify journalist killings as work-related before they investigate, as that was part of the unit’s original mandate.

But the mission insisted that the decision on whether a journalist

killing is work-related or not should be one made by a court, based on evidence that confirms the motive of the case.

Media and extra-judicial killings happen because the structures that tolerate, if not institutionalise, this evil remain, while mechanisms to dismantle them have failed miserably.

After the Ampatuan Massacre, the then President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo created a task force to dismantle private armies but nothing was heard of it when Benigno Aquino III became president in 2010. Aquino also promised to revoke Executive Order 546, initiated by Arroyo in 2006, which allows local officials to arm members of Civilian Volunteer Organizations. He appears to have backtracked on this as well.

By and large, the national government’s aversion to protecting the right to free expression tacitly condones the killing of journalists. Too often, members of the government downplay the dangers that journalists face, suggesting that often they are killed for reasons other than their work.

In an interview aired by Bombo Radyo in August 2014, Aquino said: “Actually, killings don’t really have to happen. But I can say that many [media killings] were not in the pursuit of the profession.”

He suggested that authorities had not revealed the reason behind some killings to spare the feelings of family members.

“There are families who lost their members. Will we announce why they lost this family member? And sometimes there are mixed reasons. There are love triangle, extortion and many others. Do we want to reveal that they had personal quarrels that ended up [in a murder]?”

His press secretary Sonny Coloma also made the startling claim in 2013, in the *Philippines Star* newspaper, that the Philippines were not that dangerous a place for journalists: “*Kung ihihinalay naman ‘yung Maguindanao figures, hindi naman talaga tayo ‘yung lalabas na* [most dangerous place for journalists]. *Hindi naman ganu’n kaseryoso o kalala ‘yung problemang ‘yun* (If we separate the Maguindanao figures, we would not really be the [most dangerous place for journalists]. The problem is not really that serious).”

Despite this, Task Force Usig continues its investigation into the Ampatuan Massacre case, and extends its assistance to distress calls or any form of help within its limited mandate.

A welcome development was the creation in November 2012 of the Inter-Agency Committee on Extra Legal Killings, Enforced Disappearances, Torture and Other Grave Violations of the Right to Life, Liberty and Security of Persons. The committee is now headed by the Justice Secretary, with members drawn from the Philippine National Police, the military, the Interior Department, the National Bureau of Investigation, and even the Commission on Human Rights.

The Inter-Agency Committee coordinates all government efforts to address media and extra-judicial killings and related cases. More importantly, it involves prosecutors in investigating cases, which was not allowed before.

According to Justice Secretary Leila de Lima, the Inter-Agency has looked at 100 priority cases – 54 of which were determined as media-related killings. Two years after it was put up though, the Inter-Agency Committee has to deliver results. At the meeting with the IFJ, de Lima said the Inter-Agency had 30 days to collate evidence and submit a plan.

No word has been received by the NUJP or IFJ. Action and outcomes are needed soon, otherwise it will be yet another in a long line of failures.

*Sonny Fernandez is a director of the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines*



Credit: NUJP

**None of the people who ordered the murders has been brought to justice. Perhaps there is no better evidence for a culture of impunity.**

## CHAPTER 7

# Those left behind

SEVENTEEN OF THE JOURNALISTS AND MEDIA WORKERS KILLED IN THE AMPATUAN MASSACRE HAD CHILDREN. LIFE IS HARD FOR THESE FAMILIES, BUT A FUND SUPPORTED BY OVERSEAS JOURNALISTS IS AT LEAST GIVING THE YOUNGSTERS AN EDUCATION. MORE IS NEEDED FROM THE GOVERNMENT OF THE PHILIPPINES IF JUSTICE IS TO BE SECURED. BY PHILIPPA MCDONALD

The Ampatuan Massacre continues to have the most profound impact on the families of its victims. The mission met privately with families and accompanied several to the massacre site, cemetery and fifth anniversary commemorations.

Maura Montano, age 74, is raising her 11-year-old granddaughter Rhully Mae Shulla. Her daughter, 44-year-old Marife “Neneng” Montano, was a correspondent with GMA’s news program and a reporter with dxCP radio station.

Montano told the mission: “I was very proud of my daughter, but now there’s only sadness. We were very happy. My daughter was the one that supported us.”

Montano broke down as she spoke to the IFJ delegation: “I am the only one left to raise my granddaughter and it depends if there’s money if she can study. I get 100 pesos from my sister a day. I want the president to give justice to us. I think the president is not doing enough. I hope he will do something about the case.”

Grace Morales lost both her sister, Marites Cablites, and her husband, Rosell, in the Ampatuan Massacre. She is struggling to raise her three daughters, Mary Alexandra Nichole (15), Ruschiel Faye Marie (12) and Xhandi Glaze (10), and keep up with the tiring battles of the case and the emotional impact it has had on them all.

“It was very hard. The oldest one was hiding in the corner crying and I’m glad that after a series of psycho-social activities, she’s been able to come out and talk with the others. It’s a really great thing,” she told the delegation.

The much-needed psycho-social support for her children, however, did not come from the Philippines government and instead was reliant on the benevolent support of the national and international media in the wake of the massacre. But after five years, the fear is that global attention may wane and, with the trial predicted to drag out for as long as 20 years, that no fund is capable of supporting the families for such an extended period.

Mary Alexandra Nichole was nine years old when her father was gunned down in the Maguindanao hills controlled by the Ampatuan clan. She and her two sisters have been receiving a scholarship from the

National Union of Journalists of the Philippines (NUJP) and the Media, Safety and Solidarity Fund (MSSF) to help with their education. When she grows up, the 15-year-old said she wants “to run a business and have a career in the arts.”

Twelve-year-old Ruschiel Faye Marie wants to be a doctor “to help my family”. The youngest of the three, Xhandi Glaze, would like to be a teacher.

Their mother is grateful for the help to send her daughters to school. To make ends meet she sews at home and has been working at a chicken farm. “I need to work hard to find the money for them, for us to survive,” Morales said.

On each anniversary of the massacre, Morales visits the site where both her sister, a publisher and news anchor, and husband, who was a circulation manager for *News Focus*, were gunned down with 56 others. Thirty-two journalists were among those killed that day.

“It’s difficult when I go up there. I light a candle there and offer a short prayer,” Morales said.

While it is a deeply personal pilgrimage, this year she was again hoping for the Philippines government to take notice.

“It’s a call for government, that here we are again, in this place again, where our loved ones died and calling for your help to help solve this case.”

But her confidence that justice will be done has been severely shaken by the trial’s constant delays and allegations of bribery.

“I can’t say if I have 100 per cent trust that the case will be resolved knowing that the prosecution has big problems now, the private and the public prosecutors,” Morales said.

Families have also told the IFJ they are deeply concerned that four witnesses in the case have been killed. She says as the witnesses “have been killed one by one, they should be inside witness protection.”

She told the mission she has heard that some families have been offered sums of money from those accused of the killings and she would not blame them if they took the money. But up until now she doesn’t know of anyone who has accepted an offer to “settle”.

“They are in a very hard situation with no food, no money to pay bills and there are people offering a huge amount,” she said.

**“The oldest one was hiding in the corner crying and I’m glad that after a series of psycho-social activities, she’s been able to come out and talk with the others.”**



Credit: NUJP

Kristia Subang has recently completed a national certificate in bookkeeping and is going on to study accountancy. Her life changed when her 59-year-old father, Francisco “Ian” Subang Jr was shot dead. The veteran journalist was the publisher of *Socsargen News Today*.

She sees education as critical to her future security. “My father always told me study first. Education helps everyone, it’s the only thing that can’t be taken, so in the future we won’t be unemployed and suffer,” Subang said.

At anniversary commemorations in Manila, 14-year-old Hermina Tiamzon said: “I am sad, but I have to accept it.” She lives in fear she said, explaining that “there may be Ampatuan sympathisers where I live.”

Hermina Tiamzon is in her second year of high school. “I’d like to thank the NUJP and everyone else who’s helped me through my schooling and to move on. I want to be a flight attendant and travel.”

The scholarship program, called the Journalists’ Orphans Fund (JOF), began in 2005 with 34 children of 15 journalists murdered since 1986 as beneficiaries. By the end of the 2013-2014 school year, the program had supported 113 scholars, including 32 children of 17 of the journalists murdered at the Ampatuan Massacre. As of April 2014, 32 children have graduated from college with the help of the scholarship program.

The scholarship program was conceived following the murders in 2005 of Mindanao journalists Marlene Garcia-Esperat, an investigative journalist gunned down as she sat at dinner with her children in her home, and broadcaster Edgar Amoro of Pagadian City, who was a key witness in the 2002 murder of his colleague and friend Edgar Damalerio. There had been 13 other media practitioners killed the previous year.

The JOF has sent three of Esperat’s children to college, while her youngest is in his second year of a hotel and restaurant management course in a state university in Mindanao. Meanwhile, four of Amoro’s children have also graduated from college with help from the scholarship

program. The youngest of the Amoro siblings is due to graduate this school year while the eldest once worked on the full-time staff of NUJP.

The beneficiaries of the JOF are also provided psycho-social help through the Sarangola Summer Camp, an annual summer camp organised to help children of slain journalists cope with the loss of their parents, and to get support from one another. Through social media, Sarangola Camp participants have been able to build a strong support network among themselves.

While the Ampatuan Massacre was the largest mass killing of journalists in the world, the Philippines has been a dangerous place for media workers for decades.

Alberto Martinez was shot in the back on April 10, 2005 after he was ambushed by two men on motorcycles after his radio show.

While two men, including a soldier, have been charged in relation to the alleged attempted murder, they are on bail and Martinez is living under witness protection and away from his family. His family spends much of their time travelling backwards and forwards from his ‘safe’ house.

His wife, 41-year-old Geraldine Martinez, has been left to bring up her son and daughter on her own. “My husband right now is half paralysed. He survived a gunshot blast and he’s in and out of hospital,” she said.

Her son Mark and daughter Saskia are studying in college with the assistance of the MSSF and the NUJP.

Aged 18, Saskia Martinez is hoping for change. “The killing of journalists and attempts on their lives must stop because it’s hard to grow up without your family being complete. It’s hard for us,” she said.

(Editor’s note: Sadly, Alberto Martinez died on January 18, 2015.)

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*Philippa McDonald is the federal vice-president of the Media section of the Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance, and a trustee of the Media Safety and Solidarity Fund (Australia)*



## Adequate support for victims' families

A FIRST STEP TO DEMONSTRATING A COMMITMENT TO ENDING IMPUNITY IS SUPPORT FOR VICTIMS' FAMILIES.

The Ampatuan Massacre was an act of political violence allegedly perpetrated by one clan, representing the provincial governor, against a political rival.

The Ampatuan family benefited immensely through its connections to President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's administration in Manila – both in terms of arms and wealth. In return it provided the central government with muscle to combat the insurgency in the southern island of Mindanao, and allegedly was involved in widespread electoral fraud to ensure an Arroyo victory. The ties that bound the governor and the Philippines central government were extremely strong.

Today, there are 18 Ampatuans accused of involvement in the massacre. Most of the other alleged perpetrators of the crime are also on the government payroll. They are 100 members of the paramilitary equipped with weapons supplied by the Department of Defence, 62 members of the Philippine National Police (PNP) led by a chief inspector, four members of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and 11 others who are designated as “allies” by the PNP.

In short, through its agencies the Philippines Government is deeply involved in the atrocity of November 23, 2009. This is crystal clear.

While the Philippines government continues to baulk at any suggestion or mention of the word “compensation”, it is only right that it take this on as a matter of absolute priority – and begin assisting families of the massacre victims.

Families should not have to wait 20 years for a snail's pace trial as

complex as this to complete. Already they are the victims of a heinous crime. The financial pain only continues to exacerbate that suffering and jeopardise justice being delivered.

Damages should not only recognise the involvement of government employees in the crime, but also compensate the victims' families for the significant delays, stress and loss of income inflicted on them during the lengthy trial.

It is clear that without support, many families remain open to the absolute reality that bribes are on offer to walk away. This is exactly what the perpetrators of the massacre are hoping.

It is time that the Philippines Government acknowledges that the families have been subjected to harassment, intimidation, threats and offers of bribes to halt their civil action. It must provide compensation to ensure that the families will be free of any form of pressure being applied to them throughout the remainder of the trial.

Importantly, the government should provide aid and assistance so that the families can begin to get on with their lives in some way. This may be in the form of assistance to help them with finding gainful employment, training and education, and small loans to allow them to set up businesses.

The intention to combat Philippines woeful record on impunity can be addressed in multiple ways beyond the judicial process. It can begin by showing a commitment and a national emotional resolve to help those suffering most.

## A prayer for justice

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH HAS CALLED FOR AN END TO THE EXPLOITATION OF THE VICTIMS OF THE AMPATUAN MASSACRE FOR POLITICAL MEANS.

At the fifth anniversary memorial service on November 21, 2014 at the Ampatuan Massacre site in Maguindanao, where 58 people were slaughtered, Catholic priest Father Rey Ondap prayed for the lives lost on the very ground where he stood. He also didn't pull any punches when it came to levelling criticism of politicians' handling of the case.

"Hopefully, (the massacre) will not end up as political propaganda for the next elections," Fr Rey Ondap said gravely, outlining how President Aquino had cleverly used the massacre in his political advertising to swing public sentiment.

When Aquino ran for the presidency in 2010, his political ads also featured some relatives of the massacre victims as he vowed to give them justice if elected.

For those gathered, the hollow promise echoed over the verdant hills that five years earlier were a bloody killing field.

In his homily, Fr Ondap slammed President Aquino's tactics and said he hoped this would not happen again in the elections to choose the president's successor in 2016.

Families of the victims followed, reading out a letter sent to Pope Francis, calling for his support and prayer for a just outcome and an end to their suffering.

## A letter to Pope Francis

*We are the spouses, children, parents and siblings of those who were killed in the town of Ampatuan, Maguindanao on 23 November 2009.*

*Our loved ones were among the victims of the massacre that claimed the lives of 58 persons, 32 of them journalists.*

*Every year, we return to the place where their blood spilled when they were gunned down on the orders of the Ampatuan clan. But they were not only shot. More than half of them, and their vehicles, were buried in pits dug by a back-hoe that was also used to crush the vehicles so they would fit with the bodies in the mass graves.*

*Five years have passed since this happened.*

*Five years since our children lost fathers or mothers to guide them as they grow.*

*Five years since the widowed among us lost our partners in building our homes.*

*Five years since we lost siblings who we played with as we grew up, but who we can now only visit in the graves where they lay.*

*Our relatives were not perfect. They, too, sinned when they were alive and would forget the Lord's sacred commandments from time to time. But for them to be killed and buried like animals is unacceptable.*

*Here, where echoed the shots from the guns of those who snatched their lives...*

*Here where they begged not to be killed...*

*Here where 58 families lost their hopes...*

*We beg you, beloved Holy Father, to help us find justice.*

*We know that nothing can bring back our loved ones. But we believe that our God is a God who loves those like us who are weak and cannot defend themselves.*

*Give us the determination to continue our search for justice.*

*Give us the strength to meet the daily needs of our families.*

*Give us the wisdom to make the right decisions.*

*We are simple people, with no power and no wealth.*

*But with your help, your prayers and blessings, we hope to receive the strength to fight for justice.*

*We look at your visit as a symbol of God's love for those like us who seek justice.*

*Which is why in this place, five years after the massacre, we ask that you pray for us and, in whatever way, as the leader of the Catholic Church, walk with us in our journey toward justice.*

**Respectfully,**

**The spouses, children, siblings and parents of the journalists killed in Sitio Masalay, Barangay Salman, Ampatuan, Maguindanao**



## CHAPTER 8

# Impunity's global blight

IF KILLING JOURNALISTS IS SHOOTING THE MESSENGER, WHAT MESSAGE ARE GOVERNMENTS SENDING WHEN THEY LET THE KILLERS GET AWAY WITH IT?

### Ampatuan Massacre, an emblematic case

BY SCHAVE DE ROZARIO

It is crucial that the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines and the International Federation of Journalists collectively continue to push for justice for victims of the Ampatuan Massacre and their families. But it is clear that five years of creaking judicial procedure is wearing down any expectation of a just outcome anytime soon.

In its visit to General Santos City, the mission met with three families whose breadwinners had been killed for their journalistic work. The families were full of praise for the monetary aid given to them during the last five years and the continuing support from journalists around the world. However, the funds they receive are not coming from the Philippines government and they are still grossly insufficient as they await a justice that will be a long time coming.

As a representative of the Southeast Asia Journalist Unions (SEAJU), seeing the challenges faced by such families reinforced the need for a strong united response from SEAJU's member countries. The impunity prevalent in the Philippines is not unique to that country – it can be found in the whole South-East Asia region. What is concerning is the impact; that the Philippines culture of impunity may also serve to send a message to others that killing journalists can escape punishment. This rot spreads.

The growing impunity that festers within our countries is encouraged by the lack of justice for victims of the Ampatuan Massacre. Journalists doing their jobs in countries such as Myanmar, Vietnam and Cambodia face an increasing danger of bloodshed, but sadly stories of these assaults go largely untold in the wider world.

Journalists in Indonesia, Thailand and Malaysia are being pressured to abandon writing the truth and to play according to the tune of ruling government parties. Journalists are often targeted because they seek to promote the rights and voice of the ordinary people.

It is clear there is a strong need for SEAJU unions to come together and to strengthen their cooperation on issues facing the profession. A united call for journalism rights and better conditions can help inspire journalists to continue in their work and be the voice for the voiceless.

Meanwhile, and in spite of this, the crisis of impunity continues to spread across the region.

Cambodian newspaper journalist Suon Chan was attacked by a group of fisherman in January 2014 for his reporting on illegal fishing, and later died from his injuries. Although his six killers were charged, convicted and sentenced to 13 years' jail on November 12, only one is currently in custody. The others are at large. SEAJU continues to pressure the Cambodian government to bring all six of his convicted killers to justice. SEAJU is also calling for justice for Cambodian journalist Traing Try and Canadian film-maker David Walker, who were also killed in separate incidents in Cambodia in 2014.

In Myanmar, IFJ and SEAJU have called for an investigation into the brutal murder of freelance journalist Aung Kyaw Naing who was shot and haphazardly buried by the Burmese military on October 4 after covering the clashes between the army and a rebel group. He was the first journalist killed in the country since 2007.

News of the murder was not released for three weeks and his body later exhumed on the orders of President Thein Sein, after significant international pressure. SEAJU said the attempt to cover up his murder echoed similar methods brought into play throughout the region, where critical media are often depicted as obstacles to progress or even "enemies of the state".

It is clear blatant threats against journalists continue in the region. While it is obvious that many South-East Asian nations are absolutely focused on development and advancement, the most important factor in building any country is its people. Journalists, in their work, bridge the gap between the governing body and the masses. But if journalists are not respected in their attempts to write the truth ethically, it allows dictatorships to grow. This is plainly seen in the history of many South-East Asian nations.

Justice for the victims of the Ampatuan Massacre would serve as a beacon that impunity for the murderers of journalists is at an end. The Philippines would instead be seen as a democracy where justice reigns.

It is imperative that South-East Asian governments and media representatives condemn impunity and encourage press freedom by creating an Asian-based body that aims to eradicate this violence perpetrated against journalists.

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*Schave De Rozario participated in the 2014 mission as the representative of the Southeast Asia Journalist Unions (SEAJU)*

**If journalists are not respected in their attempts to write the truth ethically, it allows dictatorships to grow.**



## Getting governments on board

BY ANNIE GAME

On November 13, 2013, David Rohde published an article called “An epidemic of journalist kidnapping”. Under a photograph of James Foley, who had then been missing for a year, the article highlighted the situation in Syria where 30 journalists had been kidnapped or had disappeared – half of them Syrian, half of them foreign reporters.

Rohde was well positioned to write on this subject. A Pulitzer Prize-winning investigative journalist and author, he was kidnapped by the Taliban in Afghanistan in 2008 and spent more than seven months in captivity.

Now, more than a year after Rohde’s article went to press, Foley’s name has been added to the list of more than 700 journalists since 1992 who have been killed for doing their jobs. In Foley’s case as well as others, the horror has been compounded by their killers’ subsequent use of the murders as a peculiarly gruesome public relations tool on social media.

Always risky, the situation for reporters covering conflict has worsened in recent years. Where formerly the word “Press” was worn as a protective measure, now it’s seen as a bullseye, with militant groups assessing journalists’ value as pawns in their power struggles.

Not all journalist kidnappings or murders make international headlines, nor do the majority of deaths take place in war zones. Most of those attacked are local journalists, reporting in their own countries. Those who would bring us the truth, covering crime, conflict or corruption, are increasingly targeted and silenced. But whether it is an ultra violent jihadist group like ISIS, a crime syndicate, or shadowy figures doing the dirty work for corporations or governments, the motives behind attempts to silence the media are clear, and it’s equally clear why we cannot allow that to happen.

This is where impunity comes into the equation. The killers are getting away with it.

The reality of systemic impunity for crimes committed against journalists is not in question. According to the latest figures from UNESCO, 593 journalists have been killed since 2006, and only 39 cases resolved. That’s less than 7 per cent.

The problem of impunity in cases of violence against the media has received global attention recently. The inaugural UN International Day to End Impunity for Crimes Against Journalists was on November 2, 2014. US President Barack Obama spoke on the importance of journalist protection, describing a free press as essential to a healthy democracy and calling for “accountability for those who have committed crimes against journalists”.

When those responsible are not brought to justice, the impact is profound. The resulting climate of impunity encourages the likelihood of similar crimes, and contributes to a dangerous environment that stifles the free flow of information and the ideas on which any healthy democracy relies. It chills free expression and constricts access to information.

The International Freedom of Expression Exchange (IFEX)



**GET GOVERNMENTS ON BOARD TO**  
**END IMPUNITY**

**THE PROBLEM**

What does it cost a **JOURNALIST** to report the truth?  
Potentially, **EVERYTHING.**

**MURDER**

**ARBITRARY DETENTION**

**THREATS**

**KIDNAPPING**

**IMPRISONMENT**

What does it cost the **PERPETRATORS** of these crimes?  
In a culture of impunity, **NOTHING.**

Credit: IFEX

network, which includes the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) and a number of its affiliates as members, has been part of annual campaigns to end impunity since 2011. It is sending a very clear message: Reducing impunity is an achievable goal.

IFEX’s actions have turned the heat up on governments. Some are already on board and indeed have been champions of this work. Others need more encouragement. Globally, media advocacy groups and the IFJ are maintaining that pressure.

In the weeks leading up to November 2, IFEX and IFJ affiliates sent letters to all UN missions, calling on governments to do their part – to use already available mechanisms to address the problem of impunity for crimes against journalists in their own countries.

The focus has been on two mechanisms in particular: the UN *Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity*, a multi-stakeholder strategy

launched in 2012, and the biennial UNESCO director general’s *Report on the Safety of Journalists and the Danger of Impunity*, which tracks and reports on progress in unsolved cases of crimes against journalists. Together they represent a chance to make tangible, lasting progress – to establish safer conditions for journalists and end the climate of impunity for crimes against them.

Everyone needs to understand the problem of impunity, how these UN mechanisms work and how they can get involved. IFEX produced resources including two fact sheets, an infographic and a map of impunity hot spots around the world.

On November 23, the IFEX network and many others around the globe marked the fifth anniversary of the Ampatuan Massacre – a brutal event that has now become an emblematic case of impunity globally.

# Those who would bring us the truth, covering crime, conflict or corruption, are increasingly targeted and silenced.

The Philippines' Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility (CMFR) held a "Million Candles Campaign", including a vigil in the capital Manila on the evening of November 23. In the week before the vigil, in collaboration with members in the region, IFEX sent out a global call to participate in a "Tweet for Justice" in this case. Individuals sent messages of solidarity with the families of the massacre victims, which appeared on an interactive digital wall projected at candlelight vigils held in the Philippines and around the world.

In 2014, there was increased attention on journalist safety and the problem of impunity. But will progress in this case follow?

At a public gathering at the Ampatuan Massacre site on November 23, 2014, Philippines Justice Secretary Leila de Lima noted that the sheer size of the trial – with 193 accused, and 300 individuals set to testify – has slowed proceedings.

Chief Justice Maria Lourdes Sereno of the Philippines Supreme Court has announced the development of new guidelines to advance legal processes, and in a speech called *The Culture of Impunity and the Counter-Culture of Hope* at the Journalism Asia Forum (JAF) stated: "Like you, impunity is an issue that burdens me – it weighs heavily on me officially, as Chief Justice, and for a very long time has been a source of heartache for me personally."

She added that, "No-one is immune from accountability simply because he is powerful or because he is rich or both."

The JAF forum, held in November on the anniversary of the massacre, was convened by two IFEX members: the Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility (CMFR) and the Bangkok-based Southeast Asian Press Alliance (SEAPA).

The Presidential Office of the Philippines has also commented on the lack of progress in the trial, and set as a goal the conviction of at least one suspect by the end of President Benigno Aquino's term in 2016.

IFEX has called on the government of the Philippines to redouble its efforts to end impunity in the case of the Ampatuan Massacre, to ensure the safety of all involved in the case, including witnesses and prosecutors, and end arbitrary delays and postponements. The government must create a safer environment for journalists, and ensure that justice prevails when prevention fails. This will send a clear message to any who would commit such acts that they will not get away with it.

And while we call on governments to act, we will never forget that a strong and empowered civil society, a credible and transparent legal system, courageous lawyers, the passionate and unrelenting actions of individuals monitoring violations, spreading awareness, promoting the safety of journalists and demanding justice – these will always be at the forefront of the struggle to end impunity.

Cutting off impunity at its roots must be strategic.

Annie Game is the executive director of the International Freedom of Expression Exchange (IFEX)

**4th ANNIVERSARY**  
THE MAGUINDANAO, AMPATUAN MASSACRE  
23 of November, 2009

**MURDERED: 58** INCLUDING 32 JOURNALISTS and MEDIA WORKERS

**THE TRIAL**  
HEARINGS STARTED 3 JANUARY, 2010  
197 SUSPECTS FORMALLY CHARGED IN COURT, INCLUDING 8 PEOPLE FROM THE AMPATUAN FAMILY  
105 SUSPECTS ARRESTED  
0 SUSPECTS CONVICTED TO DATE

**"IT IS THE SINGLE BLOODIEST INCIDENT**  
in the history of PHILIPPINE MEDIA."  
— CMFR

**For the WITNESSES WHO ARE STILL ALIVE, DRASTICALLY.**  
--- their lives have changed ---

**THEIR MOBILITY IS VERY LIMITED.**  
--- They have to take extra precautions about ---  
**WHERE THEY GO WHO THEY DEAL WITH and WHAT THEY DO**  
--- PERLA JESPERA SORIANO ---  
--- Regular journalists are mostly killing victims in the massacre ---

**70** MEMBERS OF POLICE, MILITIA AND SECURITY FORCES ARE AMONG THE SUSPECTS

**THREE 3 RELATIVES OF OTHER WITNESSES HAVE BEEN KILLED** IN CONNECTION WITH THE TRIAL

PRIVATE PROSECUTORS WORK IN A CLIMATE OF FEAR AND FACE TWENTY REGULARLY

THE CASE OF THE 50TH VICTIM OF THE MASSACRE, PHOTOJOURNALIST REYNALDO MOMAY, WAS ONLY FILED IN JANUARY 2012.  
**78** SUSPECTS PLEADED NOT GUILTY FOR HIS MURDER ON 29 MAY 2012.

**TAKE ACTION**  
TWEET AT THE FILIPINO PRESIDENT:  
PRESIDENT (PINOY) AQUINO  
STOP IMPUNITY AND INVESTIGATE THE KILLINGS  
#AMPATUANMASSACRE  
#ENDIMPUNITYINPH

Attempts to silence witnesses by groups identified with the accused and the legal manipulation of court rules and regulations are resulting in substantial excessive delays to the trial and over the main obstacles for justice.  
— CMFR

Source: Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility, Center for Global Journalism, IFEX  
**ifex**

Credit: IFEX

## Mission Recommendations: 2014 International Solidarity Mission - Ampatuan Massacre Five Years On

### A history of non-response on the Ampatuan Massacre

Regularly since the 2009 massacre, the IFJ and its affiliate the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines (NUJP) have issued recommendations and written letters to President Aquino urging action on the killing of journalists. Over the course of five years, no reply has been received from the Aquino administration.

#### To President Aquino and the Philippines Government:

- President Aquino and his administration to publicly condemn all acts of violence against media workers. Such action would demonstrate the Philippines' commitment to press freedom and its international human rights obligations to protect media workers.
- Promote the passage of the Freedom of Information (FOI) bill, promised by President Aquino during his election campaign. This would address the issue of impunity by providing greater media access to official documents.
- Recognise November 23 as a national day of media freedom in remembrance of the journalist lives lost the Philippines and help promote the role of the media as a vital arm of democracy.
- Mark November 2, the UN-declared International Day to End Impunity for Crimes Against Journalists, in accordance with the UN decree.
- Establish and implement programs outlined under the UN Action Plan on Security of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity and report on the progress and the steps taken by the state to address impunity as requested by UNESCO's director general. This information to be released to the international community each year on November 2.
- Commit to provide ongoing financial support to the families of the victims of the Ampatuan massacre; compensate them for the significant impacts of the lengthy trial and for the actions of agents of the state in the massacre, ensure the families are free from any external pressure or bribes.
- Revoke Executive Order 546 which allows local officials to arm members of Civilian Volunteer Organizations (CVOs).
- Provide sufficient resources and political support to ensure that authorities conduct exhaustive and timely investigations and trials relating to crimes against journalists.

#### Justice and Human Rights:

- Conduct an independent review of the Inter-Agency Committee on Extra Legal Killings, Enforced Disappearances, Torture and Other Grave Violations of the Right to Life, Liberty and Security of Persons which has been charged with coordinating all government efforts to address media and extra-judicial killings and related cases since 2012. Specifically, refine its coordination work and draw specific roles for each agency and ensure that all journalists and media groups are consulted through regular, detailed updates.
- Investigate thoroughly, prosecute and report on the 54 "priority" unsolved cases of media killings outlined by Justice Secretary, Leila De Lima, as head of the Inter-Agency Committee and publicly disclose the progress on these cases before November 2, 2015.
- Reopen other remaining unsolved cases of slain journalists dating back to 1986 and regularly report with detailed information to the media and public on the status and progress of all cases of killed journalists.
- Ensure a mechanism for the immediate transfer of venue for cases in regional areas critical areas where suspects may influence proceedings, including inclusion by the Supreme Court in the regular court rules upon the determination of the prosecution service or other relevant agency.
- Adopt journalist protection initiatives and legislative reforms implemented in countries such as Mexico, Colombia and Honduras,

including recognition of media workers as an "at risk" group and prevention strategies that include much-needed regional and federal structures for protecting human rights.

- Implement the recommendation of the Alston report (2007) for the Ombudsman's office to formally acknowledge its independent constitutional role in responding to extrajudicial killings plausibly linked to public officials.
- The Department of Justice to consider legislation that would sanction or penalize corrupt prosecutors.

#### Law Enforcement:

- Conduct an independent review of the state witness protection program to determine the efficacy and financial investment to ensure witnesses are guaranteed the expected level of protection.
- Enact a statutory framework for the nation's law enforcement officials to make agencies more accountable through tailored mechanisms of internal review and Parliamentary oversight to report on attacks on journalists within a designated timeframe.
- Investigate all reports of threat, attempted murder, intimidation, assault and attempted bribery of witnesses and victims' families as well as a systematic prosecution of the suspects in individual lawsuits.
- Ensure Task Force Usig sets targets for the arrest and prosecution of the remaining 84 suspects at large in Ampatuan massacre and for the arrest of masterminds in the Esperat and Ortega killings and to report by May 2, 2015, UN World Press Freedom Day.
- Ensure the Task Force's investigations extend to the criminal masterminds behind journalist killings in addition to the immediate killers.
- Reform laws to give national authorities broader jurisdiction to investigate and prosecute crimes where provincial authorities have failed, including the possibility of allowing prosecutors to lead or participate in these investigations.
- Ensure the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology installs CCTV near prison cells of Ampatuans and other suspects.
- Grant unfettered access to the Ampatuan court inside the Quezon City Regional Trial Court Branch 221 for the media and the families of the victims.
- Train military and police in their responsibilities for the safety and security of citizens, including media personnel. Ensure they are aware of their obligations under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1738; encourage cooperation between media and the state's agencies in the future investigation of journalist attacks.

#### Media:

- Media companies to commit to invest and contribute a percentage of their operational budget to safety training and professional development, particularly in the area of journalist ethics and to purchase safety equipment and insurance cover for journalists working in conflict zones.
- Establish a secure threat monitoring media network in conjunction with the Inter-Agency Committee and Task Force Usig.
- Investigate and report on issues of anti-press violence, including individual attacks, threats, and harassment, regardless of the victim's media affiliation.

#### The UN and International Support Agencies:

- International NGOs and UN agencies to provide ongoing and meaningful support to media workers in southern Mindanao for safety and professional development, to counter the climate of fear that has led to self-censorship and ongoing safety risks.
- Support the NUJP and other journalism organisations to continue the provision of safety and commit to ethical journalism training programs across the country to strengthen the capacity of the media as the fourth pillar of democracy.

## APPENDIX: LIST OF JOURNALISTS KILLED SINCE 1986

Case no.	Name	Affiliation/s	Medium	Date of Incident	Year
1	<b>Pete F. Mabazza</b>	Manila Bulletin	Print	April 24	1986
2	<b>Wilfredo "Willy" Vicoy</b>	Reuters	Wires	April 24	1986
3	<b>Florante "Boy" de Castro</b>	DXCP/General Santos City	Radio		1986
4	<b>Dionisio Perpetuo Joaquin</b>	Olongapo News	Print	April 12	1987
5	<b>Narciso Balani</b>	DXRA / Davao City	Radio	Aug 27	1987
6	<b>Rogie Zagado</b>	DXRA / Davao City	Radio	Aug 27	1987
7	<b>Leo Palo</b>	DXRA / Davao City	Radio	Aug 27	1987
8	<b>Martin Castor</b>	Pilipino Ngayon / Manila	Print	Aug 28	1987
9	<b>Ramon Noblejas</b>	DYVL/Tacloban City	Radio	Aug 28	1987
10	<b>Noel Miranda</b>	Mindanao Scanner/ Tagum City, Davao del Norte	Print	Mar 29	1988
11	<b>Ruben R. Manrique</b>	Luzon Tribune/Bataan	Print	Aug 12	1988
12	<b>Josef Aldeguer Nava</b>	Visayan Life Today/Iloilo	Print	Oct 30	1988
13	<b>Severino Arcones</b>	DYFM-Radyo Bombo/ Iloilo	Radio	Oct 17	1989
14	<b>Eddie Telan</b>	Newscaster/Manila	Radio	Dec 1	1989
15	<b>Reynaldo Catindig Sr.</b>	Northern Sierra Madre Express/Isabela	Print	May 15	1990
16	<b>Jean Ladringan</b>	Southern Star/General Santos City	Print	July 08	1990
17	<b>Nesino Paulin Toling</b>	Panguil Bay Monitor/ Ozamiz	Print	April 14	1991
18	<b>Danilo Vergara</b>	Philippine Post	Print	July 01	1992
19	<b>Ladjid "Jade" Ladja</b>	Prensa Zamboanga	Print	July 3	1992
20	<b>Rev. Greg Hapalla</b>	DXAS/Zamboanga	Radio	Sep 21	1992
21	<b>Gloria Martin</b>	DXXX/ Isabela Basilan	Radio	Dec 30	1992
22	<b>Romeo Andrada Legaspi</b>	Voice of Zambales	Print	Jan 11	1993
23	<b>Rosauro Lao</b>	Cotabato News	Print	Nov 22	1993
24	<b>Ding Sade</b>	Cotabato News	Print	Nov 22	1993
25	<b>Ferdinand Reyes</b>	Press Freedom/Dipolog City	Print	Feb 12	1996
26	<b>Alberto Berbon</b>	DZMM / Manila	Radio	Dec 15	1996
27	<b>Evelyn Joy Militante</b>	GMA Channel 2 / Legazpi City	TV		1997
28	<b>Daniel J. Hernandez</b>	People's Journal Tonight / Manila	Print	Jun 3	1997
29	<b>Regalado Mabazza</b>	Polaris cable network/ Cauayan, Isabela	TV	Dec 17	1997
30	<b>Odilon Mallari</b>	DXCP / General Santos City	Radio	Feb	1998
31	<b>Rey Bancairin</b>	DXLL / Zamboanga City	Radio	Mar 29	1998
32	<b>Nelson Catipay</b>	DXMY/ Cotabato	Radio	April 16	1998
33	<b>Dominador "Dom" Bentulan</b>	DXGS / General Santos City	Radio	Oct 30	1998
34	<b>Frank Palma</b>	Bombo Radyo / Bacolod	Radio	April 25	1999
35	<b>Vincent Rodriguez</b>	DZMM / Pampanga	Radio	May 23	2000
36	<b>Olimpio Jalapit</b>	DXPR / Pagadian City	Radio	Nov 17	2000
37	<b>Rolando Ureta*</b>	DYKR-Kalibo of Radio Mindanao Network	Radio/Print	Jan 3	2001
38	<b>Muhammad Yusop</b>	DXID/Pagadian City	Radio	Feb 24	2001
39	<b>Candelario Jumamil Cayona Jr.*</b>	DXLL – Radyo Ukay (UMBN)	Radio/Print	May 30	2001
40	<b>Joy Mortel</b>	Mindoro Guardian	Print	May 31	2001
41	<b>Benjaline "Beng" Hernandez</b>	CEGP / Davao	Print	April 5	2002
42	<b>Edgar Palomeras Damalerio*</b>	RPN-9 (TV); DXKP-RPN (Radio); Zamboanga Scribe, Goldstar Daily	Radio/Print/TV	May 13	2002

## APPENDIX: LIST OF JOURNALISTS KILLED SINCE 1986 (CONTINUED)

Case no.	Name	Affiliation/s	Medium	Date of Incident	Year
43	<b>Sonny Alcantara*</b>	Kokus, Celestron Cable TV / San Pablo City	Print/TV	Aug 22	2002
44	<b>John Belen Villanueva Jr.</b>	DZGB /Legazpi City	Radio	April 28	2003
45	<b>Apolinario "Polly" Pobeda*</b>	DWTI / Lucena City	Radio	May 17	2003
46	<b>Bonifacio Gregorio*</b>	Dyaryo Banat / Tarlac	Print	Jul 8	2003
47	<b>Noel Villarante*</b>	The Laguna Score/DZJV	Radio/Print	Aug 19	2003
48	<b>Rico Ramirez</b>	DXSF/Butuan City	Radio	Aug 20	2003
49	<b>Juan Porras Pala Jr.*</b>	DXGO/Davao City	Radio	Sep 6	2003
50	<b>Nelson Nadura*</b>	DYME/Masbate City	Radio	Dec 2	2003
51	<b>Rowel Endrinal*</b>	DZRC/Legazpi City, Bicol Metro News	Radio/ Print	Feb 11	2004
52	<b>Elpidio "Ely" Binoya*</b>	Radyo Natin / General Santos City	Radio	June 7	2004
53	<b>Roger Mariano*</b>	DZJC-Aksyon Radio/ Laoag	Radio	July 31	2004
54	<b>Arnel Manalo*</b>	DZRH/Bulgar/Batangas (Dyaryo Veritas, People's Courier)	Radio/Print	Aug 5	2004
55	<b>Jonathan "Jun" Abayon</b>	RGMA Superadyo/ General Santos City	Radio	Aug 8	2004
56	<b>Fernando Consignado</b>	Radio Veritas / Laguna	Radio	Aug 12	2004
57	<b>Romy Binungcal</b>	Remate, Bulgar / Bataan	Print	Sep 29	2004
58	<b>Eldy Gabinales (Eldy Sablas)</b>	DXJR-FM / Tandag, Surigao del Sur	Radio	Oct 19	2004
59	<b>Gene Boyd Lumawag*</b>	MindaNews / Jolo, Sulu	Print	Nov 12	2004
60	<b>Herson "Boy" Hinolan*</b>	Bombo Radyo / Kalibo, Aklan	Radio	Nov 13	2004
61	<b>Michael Llorin</b>	Freelance photojournalist/ Manila		Nov 13	2004
62	<b>Allan Dizon</b>	The Freeman Daily and its sister publication Banat News, a tabloid, in Cebu City	Print	Nov 27	2004
63	<b>Stephen Omaois</b>	Guru News Weekly, DZRK / Kalinga	Print/Radio	Dec 1	2004
64	<b>Edgar Amoro</b>	Freelance Broadcaster, DXKP Pagadian City	Radio	Feb 2	2005
65	<b>Arnulfo Villanueva*</b>	Asian Star Express Balita / Naic, Cavite	Print	Feb 28	2005
66	<b>Romeo Sanchez</b>	DZNL, Baguio	Radio	Mar 9	2005
67	<b>Marlene Garcia Esperat*</b>	The Midland Review/Tacurong City	Print	Mar 24	2005
68	<b>Klein Cantoneros*</b>	DXAA-FM / Dipolog City	Radio	May 4	2005
69	<b>Philip Agustin*</b>	Starline Times Recorder	Print	May 10	2005
70	<b>Rolando "Dodong" Morales*</b>	DWMD-Radio Mindanao Network, South Cotabato	Radio	July 3	2005
71	<b>Ricardo "Ding" Uy</b>	DZRS-AM Sorsogon City	Radio	Nov 18	2005
72	<b>Robert Ramos*</b>	Katapat (community paper)	Print	Nov 21	2005
73	<b>George Benaolan</b>	DYDD Bantay Radyo, Cebu City	Radio	Dec 2	2005
74	<b>Rolly Cañete*</b>	DXPR, Pagadian City, Zamboanga del Sur	Radio	Jan 20	2006
75	<b>Graciano Aquino</b>	Central Luzon Forum, Bataan	Radio	Jan 21	2006
76	<b>Orlando Mendoza</b>	Tarlac Profile / Tarlac Patrol	Print	April 2	2006
77	<b>Nicolas Cervantes</b>	Surigao Daily & Daily Tribune	Print	May 2	2006
78	<b>Albert Orsolino*</b>	Saksi Ngayon (tabloid)	Print	May 16	2006
79	<b>Fernando "Dong" Batul*</b>	DYPR (Palawan Broadcasting Corp.), Puerto Princesa City, Palawan	Radio	May 22	2006
80	<b>George Vigo</b>	Union of Catholic Asian News (UCAN), Kidapawan City	Print	June 19	2006
81	<b>Macel Alave-Vigo</b>	Church-run radio dxND	Radio	June 19	2006
82	<b>Armando Pace*</b>	RADYO UKAY DXDS Digos City, Davao del Sur	Radio	July 18	2006
83	<b>Ralph Ruñez</b>	RPN 9, NCR	TV	July 28	2006

Case no.	Name	Affiliation/s	Medium	Date of Incident	Year
84	<b>Prudencio “Dick” Melendrez</b>	Tanod (tabloid)	Print	July 31	2006
85	<b>Ponciano Grande</b>	The Recorder and Nueva Ecija Times	Radio	Dec 7	2006
86	<b>Andres “Andy” Acosta</b>	dzJC Aksyon Radyo Ilocos Norte	Radio	Dec 20	2006
87	<b>Hernani Pastolero</b>	Lightning Courier Sultan Kudarat	Radio/Print	Feb 19	2007
88	<b>Carmelo “Mark” Palacios*</b>	Radyo ng Bayan Nueva Ecija	Radio	April 18	2007
89	<b>Dodie Nuñez</b>	Katapat Cavite	Print	May 21	2007
90	<b>Vicente Sumalpong*</b>	Radyo ng Bayan Tawi-Tawi	Radio	June 25	2007
91	<b>Fernando “Batman” Lintuan</b>	DXGO Aksyon Radyo	Radio	Dec 24	2007
92	<b>Benefredo Acabal</b>	Pilipino Newsmen Tabloid	Print	April 7	2008
93	<b>Marcos Mataro</b>	UNTV host, D Ex-Man	TV	April 27	2008
94	<b>Robert Sison*</b>	Regional Bulletin/ Harana program	Print/Radio	June 30	2008
95	<b>Martin Roxas*</b>	dyVR,-RMN	Radio	Aug 7	2008
96	<b>Dennis Cuesta*</b>	DXMD-RMN	Radio	Aug 9	2008
97	<b>Arecio Padrigao, Sr.*</b>	dxRS Radyo Natin	Radio	Nov 17	2008
98	<b>Leo Mila*</b>	Radyo Natin	Radio	Dec 2	2008
99	<b>Badrodin Abas</b>	dxCM Radyo Ukay	Radio	Jan 21	2008
100	<b>Ernesto Rollin*</b>	dxSY-AM	Radio	Feb 23	2009
101	<b>Crispin Perez*</b>	dwDO	Radio	June 9	2009
102	<b>Antonio Castillo*</b>	Bigwasan	Radio	June 12	2009
103	<b>Jonathan Petalvero</b>	dxVM-FM Balita at Komentaryo	Radio	June 25	2009
104	<b>Godofredo Linao, Jr.*</b>	Radyo Natin program Kapamilya Walang Iwanan	Radio	June 27	2009
105	<b>Ismael Pasigma</b>	B96-FM station/Zamboanga del Norte	Radio	Dec 24	2009
<b>JOURNALISTS KILLED IN THE 2009 AMPATUAN MASSACRE</b>					
106	<b>Bengie Adolfo</b>	Gold Star Daily	Print	Nov 23	2009
107	<b>Henry Araneta</b>	dzRH	Radio	Nov 23	2009
108	<b>Mc Delbert “Mac-mac”</b>	UNTV	TV	Nov 23	2009
109	<b>Rubello Bataluna</b>	Gold Star Daily	Print	Nov 23	2009
110	<b>Arturo Betia</b>	Periodico Ini	Print	Nov 23	2009
111	<b>Romeo Jimmy “Pal-ak” Cabillo</b>	Midland Review	Print	Nov 23	2009
112	<b>Marites Cablitas</b>	News Focus, RPN dxDX	Print/ Radio	Nov 23	2009
113	<b>Hannibal Cachuela</b>	Manila Star & Punto News	Print/ Radio	Nov 23	2009
114	<b>Jephon Cadagdagon</b>	Saksi Balita	Print	Nov 23	2009
115	<b>John Caniban</b>	Periodico Ini & Sultan Kudarat Gazette	Print	Nov 23	2009
116	<b>Eleanor “Leah” Dalmacio</b>	Socsargen News Today	Print	Nov 23	2009
117	<b>Noel Decena</b>	Periodico Ini	Print	Nov 23	2009
118	<b>Gina dela Cruz</b>	Saksi Mindanaoan News	Print	Nov 23	2009
119	<b>Jose “Jhoy” Duhay</b>	Gold Star Daily	Print	Nov 23	2009
120	<b>Jolito Evardo</b>	UNTV	TV	Nov 23	2009
121	<b>Santos Gatchalian, Jr.</b>	Mindanao Daily Gazette	Print	Nov 23	2009
122	<b>Bienvenido Legarta, Jr.</b>	Periodico Ini & Tingog Mindanao	Print	Nov 23	2009
123	<b>Lindo Lupogan</b>	Mindanao Daily Gazette	Print	Nov 23	2009

## APPENDIX: LIST OF JOURNALISTS KILLED SINCE 1986 (CONTINUED)

Case no.	Name	Affiliation/s	Medium	Date of Incident	Year
124	<b>Ernesto “Bombo Bart” Maravilla</b>	Bombo Radyo	Radio	Nov 23	2009
125	<b>Rey Merisco</b>	Periodico Ini	Print	Nov 23	2009
126	<b>Reynaldo “Bebot” Momay</b>	Midland Review	Print	Nov 23	2009
127	<b>Marife “Neneng” Montaña</b>	Saksi Balita & dxCP	Print/ Radio	Nov 23	2009
128	<b>Rosell Morales</b>	News Focus	Print	Nov 23	2009
129	<b>Victor Nuñez</b>	UNTV	TV	Nov 23	2009
130	<b>Joel Parcon</b>	Prontiera News	Print	Nov 23	2009
131	<b>Ronnie Perante</b>	Gold Star Daily	Print	Nov 23	2009
132	<b>Fernando “Ranny “ Razon</b>	Periodico Ini	Print	Nov 23	2009
133	<b>Alejandro “Bong” Reblando</b>	Manila Bulletin & Reuters	Print	Nov 23	2009
134	<b>Napoleon “Nap” Salaysay</b>	Clear View Gazette	Print	Nov 23	2009
135	<b>Francisco “Ian” Subang, Jr.</b>	Socsargen News Today	Print	Nov 23	2009
136	<b>Andres “Andy” Teodoro</b>	Mindanao Inquirer	Print	Nov 23	2009
137	<b>Daniel Tiamzon</b>	UNTV	TV	Nov 23	2009
<b>JOURNALISTS KILLED UNDER THE ADMINISTRATION OF PRESIDENT BENIGNO AQUINO III</b>					
138	<b>Desiderio “Jessie” Camangyan*</b>	Sunrise FM	Radio	June 14	2010
139	<b>Jovelito Agustin*</b>	dzJC	Radio	June 16	2010
140	<b>Nestor Bedolido</b>	Mt. Apo Current, Kastigador	Print	June 19	2010
141	<b>Miguel “Mike” Belen*</b>	dwEB	Radio	July 31	2010
142	<b>Gerardo “Doc Gerry” Ortega*</b>	dwAR	Radio	Jan 24	2011
143	<b>Cirilo Gallardo</b>	Spirit FM	Radio	Feb 1	2011
144	<b>Maria Len Sumera*</b>	dzME	Radio	Mar 24	2011
145	<b>Romy Olea*</b>	dwEB	Radio	June 13	2011
146	<b>Niel Jimena</b>	dyRI	Radio	Aug 22	2011
147	<b>Datu Roy Bagtikan Gallego</b>	dxSF	Radio	Oct 24	2011
148	<b>Alfredo “Dodong” Velarde, Jr.</b>	Brigada News	Print	Nov 11	2011
149	<b>Antonio Silagon</b>	tabloid Bohol Balita Daily News	Print	Dec 15	2011
150	<b>Nestor Libaton</b>	dxHM-FM, Mati	Radio	May 8	2012
151	<b>Rommel “Jojo” Palma</b>	Bombo Radyo Koronadal	Radio	April 30	2012
152	<b>Aldion Layao</b>	GMA Super Radyo Davao	Radio	April 8	2012
153	<b>Nixon Cua</b>	Pilipino Star Ngayon	Print	July 22	2012
154	<b>Julius Cauzo*</b>	dwJJ	Radio	Nov 8	2012
155	<b>Christopher Guarin*</b>	Tatak News	Print	Jan 5	2013
156	<b>Dr. Edgardo Adajar*</b>	101.7FM Radyo Natin	Radio	Jan 4	2013
157	<b>Mario Vendiola</b>	101.7 FM Radyo Natin, Kabasalan, Zamboanga Sibugay	Radio	April 22	2013
158-159	<b>Richard Kho, Bonifacio Loreto</b>	Aksyon Ngayon	Print	July 31	2013
160	<b>Mario Sy*</b>	Freelancer	Print, Online (freelance)	Aug 1	2013
161	<b>Fernando “Nanding” Solijon*</b>	dxLS Love Radio	Radio	Sep 2	2013
162	<b>Vergel Bico</b>	Kalahi	Print	Sep 4	2013
163	<b>Jessie Tabano</b>	Radyo Calungsod	Radio	Sep 15	2013
164	<b>Joas Dignos*</b>	dxGT Radyo Abante	Radio	Nov 29	2013

Case no.	Name	Affiliation/s	Medium	Date of Incident	Year
165	<b>Michael Milo</b>	Prime FM, Tandag City	Radio	Dec 9	2013
166	<b>Jhonavin Villalba</b>	dyOK Aksyon Radyo Iloilo	Radio	Dec 10	2013
167	<b>Rogelio "Tata" Butalid*</b>	Radyo Natin Tagum	Radio	Dec 11	2013
168	<b>Rubylita Garcia*</b>	Remate	Print	April 6	2014
169	<b>Richard Najid*</b>	DxGD AM	Radio	May 4	2014
170	<b>Samuel Oliverio*</b>	Radyo Ukay/ Supreme Radio	Radio	May 23	2014
171	<b>Nilo Baculo</b>	DWIM	Radio	June 9	2014
172	<b>Nerlita Ledesma</b>	Bataan tabloid	Print	Jan 8	2015

Source: NUJP

\*Cases given priority by the Inter-Agency Committee on Extra Legal Killings, Enforced Disappearances, Torture and Other Grave Violations of the Right to Life, Liberty and Security of Persons, as advised to the international mission in November 2014.

The Inter-Agency also includes the name of Jhonson Pascual killed on October 8, 2011.



Source: NUJP

