

Global Journalist: Foreign journalist killed by U.S. troops and the Israel-Palestine conflict

Abstract: In this Aug. 21, 2003 episode, Stuart Loory gets his guests' perspectives on the recent killing of a Palestinian journalist by an American soldier, in Iraq. They also comment on journalists' safety covering wars, and Hamas' decision to dismiss the Roadmap agreement.

Bios

[Stuart Loory](#) was a long-time reporter and editor for the Chicago Sun-Times and CNN. He was the inaugural Lee Hills Chair in Free Press Studies at the Missouri School of Journalism. He [died in 2015](#).

[Jane Arraf](#) is a Palestinian-Canadian award-winning journalist who worked as [CNN](#)'s Baghdad Bureau Chief. She was also the Baghdad Bureau Chief for [The New York Times](#). She has spent most of her career covering wars in the Middle East, but also in Europe.

[Glenys Sugarman](#) worked as the South African Broadcasting Corporation Jerusalem correspondent until the early 2000s. She then became Foreign Press Association's [executive secretary](#), until her retirement in 2019.

[John Hendren](#) is an award-winning journalist who has worked for NPR, the [Los Angeles Times](#), and other national outlets. In 2006, he was named ABC News' White House correspondent for Nightline.

[Paul Holmes](#) is a former journalist who worked as the global editor for political and general news for Reuters. Previously, he worked for Deutsche Welle. He is now a [senior communications counsel](#) and the Vice Chair of [FGS Global](#).

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Stuart Loory 00:02

Welcome to Global Journalist on KBIA. This is the program that says mid-Missourians, indeed many Americans, are interested in international news. I'm Stuart Loory of the Missouri School of Journalism. Terrorism was the big news story this week -- bigger even than the power blackout which put perhaps 50 million Americans in the dark. In Baghdad, terrorists attacked the United Nations headquarters with a huge truck bomb and killed more than 20, including the senior UN officer in Iraq. In Israel, a suicide bomber struck a blow against the roadmap peace process,

attacking a bus in Jerusalem, killing more than 20, including young children. Israel responded today, killing three leaders of Hamas, the Palestinian organization that organizes the bombing of civilians. Hamas declared it was no longer interested in the roadmap. Covering the story in Iraq, a prize-winning Reuters journalist, Mazen Dana, was shot and killed by an Israeli by, I'm sorry, by an American soldier, who said he thought Dana's camera was a grenade launcher. Dana was a Palestinian journalist sent to Baghdad for safety's sake -- he had been wounded by Israeli gunfire several times, covering the current Intifada. To discuss what can be made of all this tragedy, we have today, Jane Arraf, Baghdad bureau chief of CNN, in Baghdad, Glenys Sugarman, South African Broadcasting Corporation correspondent in Jerusalem, John Hendren, Pentagon correspondent of the Los Angeles Times in Washington, and Paul Holmes, worldwide editor of political and general news for Reuters. Let's start with Mazen Dana, if there is anybody who ties these two stories together, it is he, a Palestinian who was assigned to Baghdad and killed by an American soldier who thought he might have been a terrorist. Paul Holmes start: What do you think happened here? And what do you think the result might be for journalists and for journalism's response to the United States?

Paul Holmes 02:24

Well, Mazen and his soundman, another Palestinian called Nael Shyioukhi, had gone to the Abu Ghraib Prison on the outskirts of Baghdad to film, on the day after a mortar attack on that U.S. run facility where six detainees were killed in the attack. As we understand it from Mazen's soundman, they had made their presence known to an American soldier on the gate, and and they had sought permission to film. They then withdrew somewhat from the prison to a vantage point on on on a piece of high ground atop a bridge and filmed from that position for a few minutes, and then moved down when they saw two American tanks approaching. Mazen got out of the car, lifted his camera onto his shoulder and started filming the approaching tanks, and shots rang out from from one of the tanks and hit him in the chest. The American military has said that a soldier mistook the camera that Mazen was carrying for a grenade launcher. We've asked for an investigation into this incident, an investigation as full as comprehensive as possible. Firstly, because this is the second Reuters journalist who's been killed by American forces...

Stuart Loory 03:42

And I think the fifth journalist in all who has been killed by American forces.

Paul Holmes 03:47

Yeah, I mean, the total number is 17, in total, in the course of the conflict since since the start of hostilities, but but not all of those, as you say, by American soldiers. I mean, we feel strongly

that the journalists in a conflict like Iraq have a unique place as independent witnesses to what's going on. And obviously, we're seeking an investigation because we want to ensure as far as possible that this sort of thing doesn't happen again.

Stuart Loory 04:16

Jane Arraf, if I can bring you into this. How do journalists operate in Baghdad these days, after the killing of Mazen? I mentioned, they are much more careful about certain things, are they?

Jane Arraf 04:29

You know, I think on a corporate level, certainly the news organizations are much more careful. And they're all looking at what they can do, how they can avoid this sort of thing. On a personal level, for journalists here on the ground, you really can't very, very much what you do. Either you're here and you take that risk and you go out and you try to protect yourself the best you can, or you decide you're not going to be in Baghdad. And and sadly, it's as simple and stark a choice as that in many cases. Now one of the things that journalists are doing, when they can, is to wear bulletproof vests. That has its own inherent problems and nobody likes wearing them, they're bulky, they're hot. And on top of that, there are a lot of places you know what to go with a bulletproof vest, it just sends the wrong message. So it's all system of calculated risks. Journalists, perhaps are being a little bit more careful, but there's not much more you can really do. And one of the main problems is these soldiers are very, very nervous. These are really young guys, they see everyone as a threat. And I don't know what the rest of you think, but I have to believe that they saw Mazen perhaps as more of a threat because he was not a white guy with a camera. They are very antsy, and going out in the streets they're particularly antsy when confronted with people who they automatically assume might be threatening, well. Yeah, from everything that I've read Mazen was not easily identifiable as a Palestinian. He could easily have been taken for a, an American or Western European, is that right?

Paul Holmes 06:00

Well, I I knew Mazen personally, I work very closely with Mazen and for three years. He could easily be mistaken for an Irishman, in fact. He's over six feet tall, he's he's built like a wardrobe, and he has a very ruddy complexion. I think one of the issues I mean, Jane is absolutely right, that the journalists in war zones take calculated risks. All our journalists and journalists from any major news organization are given training by specialists -- former commandos -- in how to operate, how to minimize those risks in combat zones. And I have to say in the case of Mazen, that that he worked, for most of his career, in his hometown of Hebron, prob, probably one of the most consistently violent places in the West Bank. And he and his soundman were very skilled, very schooled in how to minimize the risks of injury and worse.

Stuart Loory 06:53

John Hendren, how seriously is the Pentagon taking this incident and what's being done in Washington about it?

John Hendren 07:00

There's definitely a lot of concern in the Pentagon, they realize that a lot of the goodwill they built up through this embedment program has been eroded through incidents like this. ITN, the British broadcast organization is still trying to find out information about missing staffers., they have confirmed, I think that at least one of three missing staffers was killed by U.S. forces. There's not a whole lot that that the Pentagon can do. I mean, these are acts taken by individual soldiers and every soldier has an under most rules of engagement -- the right to defend themselves by firing on anybody they perceive as a threat. And so that kind of independence of action on the part of the soldiers does not rule out the possibility that these things are going to happen. If anything, makes it nearly inevitable.

Stuart Loory 07:55

Glenys Sugarman, this is also a problem on the West Bank, in Gaza, with Israeli forces, shooting journalists.

Glenys Sugarman 08:06

This is... Yeah.

Stuart Loory 08:09

What what is being done by the Israelis to try to minimize this?

Glenys Sugarman 08:16

Well, the Foreign Press Association has asked the Israeli army on on countless occasions, to take note of of foreign journalists and and locals who work for foreign agencies. What the FPA does is, of course, encourage the journalists to wear protective gear that is very clearly marked.

But I agree with the people that have just been talking out of Baghdad, what happens in very often and what happened here a few months ago, was the Italian photographer in the streets of Ramallah. The soldiers understand that either they shoot, or they're shot at. And that is what happened. The Italian was filming in one of the streets of Ramallah, a tank came around the corner, and within seconds, he was shot dead for exactly the same reason as Mazen Dana was shot dead. And this is the risk of covering warfare. There's no question about it. There's very little one can do except plead with the authorities to explain with the soldiers on the ground, that they should take care. But in the heat of battle, I don't think that holds much water.

Stuart Loory 09:34

Yeah, we used to be able to say that the journalists were spectators who sat in the grandstand and who watched what was going on on the playing field, but obviously, this is no longer the case. Journalists are now players themselves and as a result of grave risks. I hate to leave this subject but, I would like to move on to the bombing of the UN headquarters in Baghdad and, Jane Arraf, if I may ask you, what impact is this going to have on the United States' ability to stabilize things in ba... in Iraq?

Jane Arraf 10:19

I think it's going to have a huge impact. This was, they keep saying it was a soft target, but is very visible target, obviously. And the message that it sends is that nothing here is safe. And that really has an impact not just on the local population, but certainly on a whole facet of things. Practically speaking, from the UN point of view, how it keeps its operations going here, from a wider point of view, whether businesses are going to come to invest on large scale, it's probably not possible after something like this, in the foreseeable future. It's, it has had it is having and it will have a huge impact on stability. And just as importantly, that sense of stability, that sense of security, which is almost entirely missing right now.

John Hendren 11:01

(Unintelligible) and Jane, this is John Hendren. I was at a base in Balad, north of Baghdad, where they had just had a government contractors set up a food service for the soldier there, and after mortar attacks, hit that base, the food service company just said, "I'm sorry, we can't do this. It's not secure enough" and bailed out. I think that sort of thing is already happening all over the country, and that it's only going to get worse as a result of it.

Stuart Loory 11:29

Colin Powell is at the United Nations today trying to convince the UN to send in more forces from perhaps India, Pakistan and Turkey. Will they go? Who can deal with that, Jane?

Jane Arraf 11:46

They probably won't go in this current climate. We've already seen that Japan, for instance, is rethinking whether it can send troops in in the wake of the UN bombing, other countries saying that they need a UN mandated presence. Now one of the interesting things that we're following is whether the Turkish troops are going to come. And this is a fascinating thing, because the U.S. has asked Turkey to come to the three most volatile places that it has troops in places like Ramadi, places like Fallujah, where they have almost constant attacks against U.S. forces. It's unclear whether the Turks will agree to this, they are considering it, the government would like them to do it. But it would be a force coming in. And it would be fascinating to see whether they do any better. They are Muslim, but still, they were an occupier at one point, and that's one of the interesting potential foreign forces that are going to be here.

Stuart Loory 12:37

Yeah. What is known about who is organizing this guerrilla warfare. Is Saddam Hussein himself involved in this in any way?

Jane Arraf 12:49

If I could just touch on that, I, no, There's a perception that he is, has his hand on everything. But the feeling on the ground when you talk to military officials, coalition officials, counterterrorism experts that Saddam basically has his hands full, trying to keep out of sight and trying to hide. They've seen no link from here to, from the attacks to him. What they're targeting really are those mid-level people, they tell us: the mid-level Ba'ath party people, the people who are funding these attacks, and it doesn't, the organization doesn't seem to go much higher than that. They are saying that Saddam ideologically is having an impact on these people with the continuing messages he's sending, but on the organizational level, it appears not.

Stuart Loory 13:35

John...

John Hendren 13:36

I'd add into that, that the the circumstances under which that Saddam's sons Uday and Qusay were caught, after spending 30 days in a residential house in Mosul, kind of suggests that they're not running anything. I mean, it was really, the two sons, a bodyguard and the son of Qusay there. It's not as if there was some larger organization, and indeed, there was no one there to protect them, when when the time came.

Stuart Loory 14:02

Well, this would appear to mean then that even if Saddam Hussein is caught, that this guerrilla warfare is going to go on, is that right Jane?

Jane Arraf 14:11

It quite likely will to some extent. Because the thing is, it's not just Saddam, it's not just the Ba'ath Party, it's not Ba'ath Party loyalists. There are a lot of reasons why people are attacking U.S. forces. And while the U.S. believes it's making progress here in the organization, and every time it launches these raids, it's collecting explosives, intelligence, it's arresting people, as long as it's a wide variety of factors with the only common link being they want the U.S. forces out, that makes it so much harder to combat.

Paul Holmes 14:40

I think there's a further factor here as well, and that is that in in a situation like the one that exists in Iraq today, it's so hard to get a handle on intelligence. You know, there are, you know, there are tens of thousands of American troops there but there is really no organized major Iraqi security force that can have its ears to the ground and know who's doing what in specific areas. And that makes it very difficult over the short and medium term, I think, to actually do prove it take preventive measures against this sort of things.

Stuart Loory 15:16

Paul Holmes, what you just said, reminds me of Vietnam. One of the big problems in the Vietnam War was that American forces in Vietnam, so misunderstood Vietnamese culture and society, that they had trouble gathering intelligence. And as a result of that, it was a relatively low level as far as technology is concerned insurgency that finally did the United States in. Could that happen again, in Iraq?

Paul Holmes 15:51

Well, I mean, I wouldn't want to draw parallels too closely with Vietnam. But I think certainly, you know, we see in this case, sort of some of the classic symptoms of an occupation, a misunderstanding between the occupiers and the occupied over motives, a lack of intelligence. I mean, you know, the Americans themselves acknowledge that they have a crying lack of linguists looking go in there and actually speak Arabic and know what's going on. And a lack of, you know, a lack of local security forces widespread that that can help crack down on this.

Stuart Loory 16:30

Okay, we have to take a break now, this is Global Journalist on KBIA. I'm Stuart Loory, we'll be right back. Welcome back to Global Journalist. You may listen to this program, again, ask questions or make comments by going to www.globaljournalist.org or, here in mid-Missouri, by calling us at 573-882-9641. Let's switch the discussion now to Israel and the Israeli occupied territories. Glenys Sugarman, as we know there was a retaliation today by the Israeli defense forces against Hamas leadership and a Hamas leader was killed. Hamas says the ceasefire is over as if it hadn't been over a couple of days ago. What is the outlook for the roadmap now?

Glenys Sugarman 17:30

Well, the Israeli security forces have been saying for some time, that yeah, things that the this treaty between the Palestinian organizations that would not come into an end, and in fact refused to give permission to release more Palestinian political prisoners, because they said they would simply be releasing them back into the hands of the organizations that are waiting for them. The Roadmap looks extremely rocky at the moment. Observers are saying that the so this Hamas goal was actually to create a kind of state of what they called mutually assured deterrence with Israel and what they mean wanted to do, what they ended up doing was to send in operatives, to attack Israelis, in response for every wanted militants killed by the Israeli Defense Forces. And now we've seen what that has done over the last week or two, especially on Tuesday night. The Israelis don't understand this. Because on the one hand, they say, well, the militants that are killed by Israel, are people who have to do directly with approving the military operations, and they're directly involved in these military operations against Israel. Whereas, you can't exactly quote, a whole load of very orthodox people who were coming back from press, combatants, these are even people who live in such an orthodox area of Jerusalem that they -- a lot of them don't even recognize the State of Israel -- they really had nothing to do with this entire dispute. So that is very difficult to take for the ordinary Israeli. On the government side, there seems to be a large amount of one could almost call it confusion. On the one hand, Ariel Sharon seems to want to appease the right-wing is extreme right-wing is in the

government. On the other hand, he doesn't want to disappoint President Bush. Abu Mazen, I think is in a far tighter position at the moment because he's pretty anxious of the possibility of a civil war.

Stuart Loory 19:52

Yeah, when you say, Glenys, if I can just put in for a second when you say Abu Mazen, you mean Mahmoud Abbas...

Glenys Sugarman 20:01

Mahmoud Abbas, the pri, the Palestinian Prime Minister.

Stuart Loory 20:01

...prime Prime Minister, right.

Glenys Sugarman 20:04

...(Unintelligible) Abu Mazen in here.

Stuart Loory 20:04

Right.

Glenys Sugarman 20:04

He he has tremendous problems, because disarming organizations as strong as the Islamic Jihad and the Hamas, or even attempting to, can actually lead him straight into civil warfare. And that is the the Palestinian Authority have been trying to avoid at all costs. But if I can say something interesting that the foreign press had to deal with today in this area, was was a very curious phenomenon: that the Palestinian Authority early this morning, warned all of the foreign journalists' representatives in Gaza, not to make contact at all, with the Islamic leaders. And the agencies were wondering what the motivation was over here, was this to protect them? Or was this to really take steps or show the outside world that steps are finally being taken against these organizations? Perhaps both? It's very difficult to know, it's a very complex situation.

Stuart Loory 21:13

So, in other words...

Glenys Sugarman 21:14

(Unintelligible)

Stuart Loory 21:16

...Yeah, the the Palestinian leadership, this is Mahmoud Abbas' government is saying to foreign journalists, "Stay away from people practicing terrorism" is that the idea?

Glenys Sugarman 21:30

No. They said stay away from the Islamic leaders. They didn't say they were people that were practicing terrorism.

Stuart Loory 21:37

Well, okay, right.

Glenys Sugarman 21:40

And then a couple of hours later, we saw the the the helicopter attack on on Abu Shanab. So, this is, this caused some questions to be asked. What actually made the situation worse for some of the agencies in Gaza, was that they were very clearly told that if their agencies from, either from Israel or abroad would try and contact the the the leaders of the Islamic parties, there would be repercussions in Gaza, on the agency's ability to work. So, this is a kind of a ban on the work of journalists, that is not really acceptable.

Stuart Loory 22:24

Does it does it sound though, as if the Palestinian Authority is saying to journalists "Don't give too much publicity to Hamas or Islamic Jihad"?

Glenys Sugarman 22:38

Well, at this at this point, it's very difficult to know. Because we haven't got any real statements from the Palestinian Authority on this, we just have the reports from the people on the ground, who called back to the offices and said, you know, no way we can't make contact today. Some of the some of the bigger organizations did go out and eventually make contact, especially after the the attack. And it seems as if that regulation by the PA is not going to work very well. But we still objected to the fact that it was made.

Stuart Loory 23:16

Paul Holmes, if I can bring you into this?

Paul Holmes 23:18

Sure.

Stuart Loory 23:19

How would an organization like Reuters, a worldwide news gather, react to a request like, this not to get in touch with certain people?

Paul Holmes 23:29

Well, I mean, we in principle, we will, we will be against any attempt to censor -- by whatever means -- the work that we do, whether it's in Gaza, the West Bank, Israel or anywhere else. That there have been occasions in the past with the Palestinian Authority, when they have attempted to limit contact with leaders of Islamic parties. I'm thinking particularly of the spiritual leader of Hamas, Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, on several occasions in the past, they have prevented journalists physically from approaching his house. There have been occasions in the past when when the Palestinian Authority has confiscated the film that cameramen and photographers take, whether it's demonstrations by Hamas, or Islamic Jihad, or clashes between supporters of Hamas and Palestinian security forces. And on each occasion, we've registered our protest --

and tried within the limits of the possible and and with a view to the safety of our staff -- to continue reporting as we should report,

Stuart Loory 24:34

Jane Arraf, this is happen in Iraq?

Jane Arraf 24:39

It doesn't happen on that blatant scale. But certainly it happens in other ways, the the desire to control the media to send the right message. Just on the street level, we have more and more instances where the American military for instance, has been trying to confiscate our tapes for no real reason, there's no real security threat. And they probably stems from a lack of understanding, but the perception on the ground that they're under threat from everybody -- that it goes all the way up to, just the difficulty of getting information, which you have to wonder is that completely, that may be somewhat deliberate. As well as, particularly when you're embedded I was into Crete the military base into Crete, along with the crew for the past week or so, where they are becoming much more restrictive in their rules of people covering the military and covering that military base. And certainly there are a number of measures they've taken, the trend seems to be that they are cracking down on journalists trying to direct the coverage, trying to get more "good news" stories, but it is really very hard to find good news and Baghdad these days.

Stuart Loory 25:43

John Hendren, of course, in Washington, you don't have this kind of thing. But you do have a lot of restrictions on news gathering, don't you? Just because people won't talk to you all the time.

John Hendren 25:54

Yeah, that's the biggest restriction, is people telling you that that for security reasons, they won't give you that information. It's often questionable whether it is really for security reasons that these things are going on, and that's a frustration I know on the ground in Baghdad as well, where you've got lower ranking people who are waiting for higher up people to approve them, speaking about a number of things. It's a it's a frustration, but one we deal with in wartime and other times as well.

Stuart Loory 26:24

Okay, we have about a minute and a half left. And I would like to ask Jane Arraf first, and then Glenys Sugarman, to give, each of you, your best guess on the outcome in the countries that you're covering. Jane?

Jane Arraf 26:41

I would say it's going to sadly go on the way it's going on for some time to come, possibly a year or so, with continued attacks on these targets that will be impossible to secure with the current level of U.S. troops, it's going to take a long time to get Iraqi forces up and running. There will be some slight improvements, we're seeing them in the electricity sector. But the key is to stability is certainly security and that doesn't look like it's going to improve anytime soon.

Stuart Loory 27:08

Okay, and Glenys Sugarman?

Glenys Sugarman 27:11

Well, I can only quote the spokesman for the Palestinian Minister for Security Affairs, and he said this afternoon, that the PA will have to reassess the decisions taken yesterday, to take action against militant organizations in the wake of this afternoon's targeted killing. The tragedy is that people on the ground both in the Palestinian areas and in Israel have had six weeks of respite, have a little more freedom and a feeling of calm and it's very, I would I would not take the risk of prophesying what has what's going to happen now.

Stuart Loory 27:52

Glenys, I'm sorry to say, we are out of time. Our guest today have been Jane Arraf, of CNN in Baghdad, Glenys Sugarman of South African Broadcasting, in Jerusalem, John Hendren Pentagon correspondent for The Los Angeles Times in Washington, and Paul Holmes, worldwide editor of political and general news for Reuters. Our director is Pat Akers, our producers Yussuf Caliango (pg) and Sarah Catan (ph). For all, I'm Stuart Loory. Global Journalist, we'll be back next week.