

AFL-CIO Executive Council
Statement
March 2007
Las Vegas, NV

2006 GEORGE MEANY-LANE KIRKLAND HUMAN RIGHTS AWARD:
INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF JOURNALISTS (IFJ)

In recognition of its members' unfailing courage and selflessness in the pursuit of truth, we are proud to present the 2006 George Meany-Lane Kirkland Human Rights Award to the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) on behalf of media workers around the world. From working members of the press who risk their lives and often die to tell the story come the world's photos, film, videos and news every minute of each day so we might know what's really going on.

We ask IFJ General Secretary Aidan White to accept this human rights award on behalf of such journalists as Daniel Pearl of *The Wall Street Journal*, a member of The Newspaper Guild-CWA who was brutally executed on videotape; Russian investigative reporter Anna Politkovskaya, who was gunned down in her apartment building; murdered Mexican journalist Roberto Marcos Garcia; Colombian journalist Santiago Rodríguez Villalba, who was killed by extreme right-wing paramilitaries; and murdered Iraqi journalist and Associated Press cameraman Aswan Ahmed Lutfallah.

From the world-renowned to the lesser known, media men and women have been imprisoned, tortured and assassinated only because they tried to tell a story. During 2006, the IFJ recorded at least 155 murders, assassinations and unexplained deaths of journalists and media workers, making it the worst year on record. Members of the media were prime targets of terrorist attacks in Iraq, with 69 media staff killed last year. Second only to Iraq was the Philippines, where 13 journalists died in 2006. In Latin America, where at least 37 deaths are recorded, Mexico moved ahead of Colombia as the deadliest country for journalists with 10 deaths, many of them of investigative reporters. Victims such as Politkovskaya in Russia were targeted for assassination with political motives. Others died at the hands of gangsters. In Africa, journalists were killed with impunity in Somalia, Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The International Federation of Journalists is an independent worldwide organization of trade unions and associations of journalists. It began in Paris in 1926 and is the world's oldest group representing media workers, with 161 member unions and more than 500,000 members in 117 countries. The IFJ promotes global action to defend press freedom and social justice through strong, free and independent trade unions of journalists. It supports journalists and their unions whenever and wherever they are fighting for their industrial and professional rights. Its International Safety Fund, established to provide humanitarian aid for journalists in need, received the 2006 Freedom Award from The Newspaper Guild-CWA.

As the year of tragedy ended, one positive sign emerged when the United Nations issued an historic statement condemning the targeting of journalists and calling for the prosecution of killers of media staff.

For its members' commitment to telling the story at the risk of their lives, the AFL-CIO is pleased to award the 2006 George Meany-Lane Kirkland Human Rights Award to the IFJ.