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 - ▣ Sports
 - ▣ Op Ed
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 - ▣ Profile
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Inter-American Press Lobbies For Press Freedom

**Journalists
are being
assassinated.**

**And the
killers are
getting away
with murder.**

Hardbeatnews, NEW YORK, N.Y., Fri. Feb. 11, 2005: In the past three weeks, less than a dozen regional journalists claim to have faced some form of intimidation in the line of duty. Guyler Delva, secretary-general of the Haitian Journalists' Association and a Reuters correspondent, Four other Haitian journalists complained of intimidation while three photo journalists - two in the Dominican Republic and one in Trinidad, were arrested by police. Haitian radio reporter Abdias Jean was allegedly killed by police in the Village de Dieu sector of the capital Port-au-Prince on January 14. Police are reported to have beaten and shot him after he identified himself as a journalist while covering a police raid on the shantytown and their killing of several people there. In

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Guyana, independent television owner, C.N. Sharma, had his license yanked by police and other government authorities, who confiscated the TV station's transmitting equipment and closed its studios. And in St. Kitts, journalist Clive Bacchus is still awaiting the renewal of his work permit, which ran out on January 31, and forced him to quit his job as station manager at WIN FM. While the National newspaper editor in St. Maarten, Leonard Gildarie was arrested and repatriated to Guyana because he lacked work and residence permits. The recent incidents have left organizations like the Inter-American Press Association, the International Press Institute, Reporters Without Borders, the Association of Caribbean Media Worker and other local groups of journalists, outraged. This week, the Inter-American Press Association convened an Emergency Forum on Press Freedom in Haiti to focus on press freedom, particularly during the transition of democracy there. "Without freedom of the press there can be no democracy, and without democracy there can be no freedom of the press," stated IAPA second vice president, Rafael Molina, who opened the proceedings. The forum ended with legislators from the Dominican Republic announced they will amend a law placing restrictions on news media and individual journalists beginning February 27. Meanwhile the ACM and Guyana Press Association will convene a discussion on the current challenges to the free press in the region in Guyana on Friday, February 18. Now it's left to be seen whether the promises made this week by legislators will become reality. - Hardbeatnews.com

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