

## Iraqi reporter shot dead

May 04, 2008

MOSUL, Iraq—Gunmen shot dead an Iraqi reporter on Sunday after pulling her out of a car in northern Mosul, a notoriously violent city where journalists are often targeted and live in fear of their life.

Police said Serwa Abdul-Wahab, in her mid-30s, was on her way to work when gunmen forced her from her taxi in eastern Mosul, 390 km north of Baghdad, and shot her once in the head.

A colleague said she had received a text message on her phone three weeks earlier warning her to stop reporting or she would be killed.

There were conflicting reports about who she worked for and police were not immediately able to say why she might have been attacked. Police and fellow journalists said she was a contributor to [www.muraslon.org](http://www.muraslon.org), an Iraqi news website.

Iraq, which witnessed significant growth in the media after the 2003 U.S.-led invasion, is the most dangerous place in the world for journalists to work, according to New York-based journalism watchdog the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ).

Iraqi journalists have been targeted because of their work or caught up in the cross-fire of Iraq's many-sided conflict. Most television stations and newspapers in Iraq are owned by political, religious sects or ethnic groups.

The CPJ estimates that 127 journalists, both Iraqi and foreign, have been killed since 2003. That figure does not include Abdul-Wahab.

Gunmen killed the head of Iraq's biggest journalist organisation, Shihab al-Tamimi, 74, in an attack on his car in Baghdad in February. In all, three journalists have been killed this year, the CPJ said. A count by Reuters, however, put the toll at five.

The CPJ, which calls the Iraq war the deadliest conflict for journalists in recent history, said in a report last week that Iraq had the worst record of failing to solve murders of journalists. There were 79 unsolved murders, it said.

Journalists in Mosul keep a low profile, fearful of attracting the attention of al Qaeda, which has threatened many media workers there with death. The U.S. military says Mosul is the last urban stronghold of the Sunni Islamist group.