

# Reporters Without Borders

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Middle East/North Africa - Syria

Deadliest country

## Japanese reporter killed in Aleppo, two Al-Hurra TV journalists missing

21 August 2012

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**Mika Yamamoto**, a Japanese reporter for the *Japan Press* agency, was killed yesterday in Aleppo while covering fighting between government forces and rebels in the eastern district of Suleiman Al-Halabi. The Japanese foreign ministry confirmed Yamamoto's death. Her body has been transferred to Turkey.

Fellow Japan Press reporter Kazutaka Sato, who was with her at the time, told Japan's *NTV* that they were caught in a shoot-out and ran into "soldiers in camouflage fatigues."

Sato said: "The one in front was wearing a helmet and I immediately thought they were government troops. I told [Yamamoto] to run. At the same moment, they opened fire. We must have been just 20 or 30 metres away. We scattered in different directions. After that, I didn't see Yamamoto again. Then they told me to go to the hospital and I found her body."

Another Japanese TV station, *TBS*, quoted Sato as saying Yamamoto was shot in the neck.

Reporters Without Borders offers its heartfelt condolences to Yamamoto's family, friends and colleagues. Aged 45, Yamamoto was a seasoned journalist who was used to covering wars. Her death is a reminder that Syria is now the world's most dangerous country for media personnel.

Yamamoto was the fifth foreign journalist to be killed since the start of the war in Syria, following **Gilles Jacquier**, a French reporter for *France 2*, on 11 January 2012 in Homs; French photographer **Rémy Ochlik** and **Marie Colvin**, a US reporter for the *Sunday Times*, on 22 February 2012 in Bab Amru, and **Ali Chaabane**, a Lebanese journalist working for Lebanon's *Al-Jadeed TV*, on 9 April 2012.

**Anthony Shahid**, a US journalist with the *New York Times*, died from an acute asthma attack on 16 February during a clandestine reporting visit to Syria.

Around 30 Syrian journalists and citizen-journalists have also been killed since the start of the war.

Middle East Broadcasting Networks, the non-profit organization that operates *Al-Hurra TV*, [reports](#) that contact was lost yesterday with two *Al-Hurra* journalists – Palestinian reporter **Bashar Fahmi** and Turkish cameraman **Cuneyt Unal** – who were with Yamamoto in Aleppo.

According to a [video](#) posted by the rebel Free Syrian Army, they were seized by government forces.

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