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Asia - Nepal

Suspected mastermind

Police arrest alleged mastermind of journalist's 2009 murder

23 September 2013

Reporters Without Borders welcomes last week's announcement by the police that they have arrested the suspected mastermind of the murder of journalist and women's rights activist [Uma Singh](#) in the southeastern city of Janakpur in January 2009.

"We hail this determination to bring the person responsible for Singh's murder to justice and we hope that five years of impunity in this case will soon be over," Reporters Without Borders said. "We also urge the police to keep investigating the murders of two other journalists, [Arun Singhaniya](#) and [Jamin Shah](#), in 2010.

"As the Federation of Nepali Journalists (FNJ) has said, last week's arrest in the Singh murder has helped to make the police more credible and, we hope, will help to deter other attacks against journalists."

A reporter for *Radio Today* and *Janakpur Today Daily*, Singh was fatally stabbed in her Janakpur apartment on 11 January 2009 by around 15 intruders armed with knives.

The police thought the murder motive was of a personal nature but the Federation of Nepali Journalists pointed out that Singh was an outspoken critic of the region's Maoists and blamed them for the deaths of her father and brother in 2005.

The police announced on 19 September that the suspected mastermind of Singh's murder, Umesh Yadav (also known as Swamiji), was arrested as he was about to cross the border into India. He was being actively sought by the police and is suspected of involvement in other similar cases.

Prosecutors intend to request a sentence of life imprisonment and confiscation of all his property for Singh's murder.

The police have also announced that they are pursuing a lead in the murder Arun Singhaniya, the owner Janakpur Today and Radio Today, and hope to make an arrest soon.

When Singhaniya was gunned down by two men on a motorcycle in Janakpur on 1 March 2010, three armed groups claimed responsibility. They were Teri Janatanrik Party-Madesh (TJPM), Terai Army (TA) and Janatanrik Terai Mukti Morcha (JTMM).

Nepal is ranked 118th out of 179 countries in the 2013 [Reporters Without Borders press freedom index](#).

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