

# This Is Why So Many Journalists Are at Risk Today | The Washington Post

By Anne Applebaum

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Anne Applebaum, in the wake of the disappearance of journalist [Jamal Khashoggi](#), comments on the disappearances, violence against, and murders of journalists in recent memory. She argues that in the contemporary era, politicians have more interest than ever before in hiding from journalism, and this puts journalists in danger.

In all of these countries, newspapers, websites and activist groups that publish stories about hidden wealth, illicit business activity, secret wars and secret funding schemes are dangerous: They undermine the claims of powerful politicians, both democrats and autocrats, to be acting on behalf of “the people.” They demonstrate hypocrisy. They sometimes reveal the existence of crimes. They sometimes cost politicians their jobs. Kuciak’s murder led to the downfall of the Slovak government. An anti-corruption street protest in Ukraine became a [revolution](#). An anti-corruption protest in Armenia more recently led to a [change of power](#) there as well.

To protect themselves, some politicians seek to discredit the media. President Trump calls journalists “enemies of the people” on Twitter and directs mob anger against them at staged public events. Rodrigo Duterte, the president of the Philippines, [has called](#) journalists “spies,” in Trump’s presence. In Russia, the authorities use a different tactic: They seek to drown accurate information in a flood of state-sponsored garbage, producing reams of contradictory stories designed to undermine the very notion of “truth.”

Given what’s at stake, it’s hardly surprising that quite a few governments have gone further. The Turkish government [has arrested](#) more than 200 journalists. More than 40 [are in prison](#) in China. Those who can get away with more extreme tactics will use those, too. Precisely because we now live in a global information network, the death of a single journalist could usefully frighten the rest — not only in one country but around the world.

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