

## PROSECUTING JOURNALISTS

India may boast of a most powerful and free press in the developing world. But, the situation is changing very fast in recent months with many journalists, mostly in countryside being arrested and put behind bars for their alleged links with Left Wing extremists.

While prominent journalists like Prashant Rahi in Uttarakhand, Praful Jha in Chattisgarh, Srisailum and Indian Journalist Union (IJU) national council member and former president of Warangal Working Journalist Union Pendyala Venkata Kondal Rao from Andhra Pradesh and P Govindan Kutty (*People's March*) from Kerala are behind bars, Sunita, writer and owner of *Daanish Books* of Nagpur is being implicated in false charges.

Govindan Kutty who was on a hunger strike for a couple months and was now being force-fed by the administration. He has been booked under the draconian Unlawful Activities Prevention Act and his magazine—*People's March*—has been banned.

Many think the situation is worse than the Emergency period in 1975. Over the past decade corporate sector has become too powerful and has been influencing as to what should go in press and what should not.

In truth these journalists are paying the price for raising their voice against the forced eviction of millions of people in the name of development.

"Around 3.5 to 4.5 crore people have been uprooted in India in the name of development since independence which is the size of an average European country." For one thing the danger to the press freedom also comes from some journalists who paint their persecuted colleagues in bad light on the basis of what was said by the official agencies.

**A Correspondent,**

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## GEORGE HABASH

Dr George Habash, the founder and first secretary general of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and one of the greatest revolutionary leaders of the Palestinian people passed away on 24 January 2008, at the age of 82.

Today, the heroic Palestinian people are continuing to resist, whether in the breaking of the barrier with Egypt to alleviate the genocidal siege of Gaza, or in the martyrdom operation at Dimona, the nuclear site where imperialism and its stooges do not demand inspections, to express a sense of grief at the loss of Al-Hakim, Dr George Habash who gave more than six decades of his life to the revolution. He was born into a prosperous Greek orthodox family in the Palestinian city of Lydda.

At that time, the Palestinian people were under the rule of the British colonial mandate, which was systematically preparing the way for the creation of a Zionist settler colonial state, which, in the words of Sir Roland Storrs, the first British governor of Jerusalem in the 1920s, would form "*for England a 'little loyal Jewish Ulster' in a sea of potentially hostile Arabism*".

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London