

ABOUT OSSIGENO PER L'INFORMAZIONE

OSSIGENO per l'informazione is a Centre of Information on the journalists threatened and on the news overshadowed by violence in Italy. It was promoted in 2008 by Federazione Nazionale della Stampa Italiana (FNSI) and Ordine Nazionale dei Giornalisti in association with other civil rights promoter: Libera Informazione, Unione Nazionale Cronisti Italiani and Articolo 21. The editor on duty is Alberto Spampinato, Fnsi National Councillor. Co-Editor is Angelo Agostini, professor of Journalism at the IULM UNiversity in Milan, and editor of the quarterly magazine "Problemi dell'Informazione", published by "Il Mulino". In the Joint Working Committee Fnsi-Ordine are: Lorenzo del Boca, Stefano Sieni, Lirio Abbate, Roberto Natale, Alberto Spampinato, Paolo Perucchini.

SOCIAL PURPOSE - OSSIGENO aims to document all the Italian cases of violent or abusive limitation of freedom of expression against journalists, writers, intellectuals, politicians, trade unionists, public officials and other citizens, and pay special attention to information and to what happens in journalism in the areas where strong and deeply rooted is the influence of organized crime.

ANNUAL REPORTS - OSSIGENO per l'informazione produce an annual Report. In the 2010 Report the threats and intimidating actions and other relevant episodes listed, referred to years 2009 and 2010 are 78, 54 of which against individuals and 24 against groups. Thus the estimation of involved journalists is 400.

Modality of threats are different. Of the episodes, 13 are Physical assaults; 15* Damages; 34 Threats and intimidation (oral and/or written**); 16 Complaints and legal actions abuses. Among the damages are included the hacker attack to the LiberaInformazione website. Treaths category includes the sending or finding of bullets and other materials.

The 2010 Ossigeno Report is at this link

http://www.fnsi.it/Osservatorio/O2_Full_English_2010_Report.pdf

HOW OSSIGENO WORKS

Ossigeno is used to work in italian, but now is trying to establish relations with similar organizations operating in various countries, with United Nations rappresentatives and with European Union committee who defend press freedom and human rights. For this purpose Ossigeno is enforcing his small organisation to publish regularly in english annual Reports and the weekly newsletters about new serious cases of threat of which the observatory become aware.

Ossigeno gather information through the reports collected from correspondents, or received from trade unionists, or from press news. Ossigeno's rule is to carefully check each case, directly or through his staff of confidence.

At the moment more than one case most concern Ossigeno. The first one, is about Lirio Abbate, that lives under police protection since almost four years. Another is that of the journalist Nello Rega, that was threatened with death several times and only some week ago had a partial protection despite repeated calls to the police and the government and some parliamentary questions.

There are many other cases of concern, although they not present a risk as high. Ossigeno is concerned in particular about what is happening in Calabria, where there are 2 million people and 28 journalists threatened in the last three years. In Calabria many other journalists say it is better not to mention the threats because, in their report, to speak

about the threats increases the risk. We think the opposite and are trying to promote a large public meeting with all the journalists threatened.

The President of the Republic is one of Ossigeno supporters. UNESCO Italy has decided to grant Ossigeno a sponsorship. All work for Ossigeno is voluntary and free. So far that many times we have done personally to pay the costs. At least in December 2010 Ossigeno had two small donations from the Order of Journalists that are being used to pay for certain tasks to check and print the necessary materials to promote solidarity with the threat.

“For us it is a moral commitment. For me – tell the Editor Alberto Spampinato - , it is connected to the memory of my brother Giovanni, as I’m the younger brother of a journalist that was killed in Sicily in 1972. I told his story on two recent books and, starting from that story, I launched the project “Ossigeno per l’informazione”, since 2007. To do this I became an elected member of the National Council of the Federazione Nazionale della Stampa Italiana (FNSI), that is the journalists' trade union; and since three years I’m the editor of this permanent observatory promoted by the same FNSI and the Ordine nazionale dei Giornalisti Italiani (OdG). We have established it to survey the condition of many Italian journalists targeted with threats and other kind of attacks, and to discover also the news darkened by violence because many today threats are reminiscent of those forgotten stories”

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