

Death of Spanish journalists in Iraq sparks protests

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Journalists and broadcasters from Spain's *Telecinco* struck work on April 9 and held a lobby outside the American Embassy to protest the killing of 37-year-old cameraman José Couso on April 8 when American tanks shelled the Palestine Hotel in Baghdad.

His colleagues took all their photographic equipment and pointed it at the Embassy in a symbolic gesture. Many reporters, cameramen and staff from other media outlets as well as the general public joined them.

Couso's death will intensify the bitter antiwar and anti-government campaign in Spain. He is the second Spanish journalist to be killed in Iraq. Though Julio Anguita Parrado was killed by an Iraqi missile on April 7, he was the son of the ex-general secretary of the Communist Party of Spain, Julio Anguita, a leading light in the United Left (Izquierda Unida—IU) which opposes the war against Iraq.

Parrado, aged 32, was a special war correspondent for *El Mundo* and was embedded with the 3rd Infantry Division of the US army at the communications centre 15 kilometres (nine miles) south of Baghdad. The division was hit by an Iraqi missile that also killed German journalist Christian Liebig, 35, and two US soldiers.

The Cordoba City Council, which is governed by a coalition of the IU and PSOE declared a day of mourning on April 8 and journalists of the city where Parrado started his career called a rally in his memory. Messages of condolence sent to the families and the government take the opportunity to denounce the war and particularly the support given to it by Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar.

It is revealing as to the extent of military press censorship that while *El Mundo* described the attack on the 3rd Infantry Division's communications centre as "the most devastating individual offensive of all the

missiles that Iraq has launched," it was hardly reported by the US and British media.

The Spanish minister of defence instructed media outlets to recommend to their reporters that they leave Iraq, but the other war correspondent of *El Mundo*, Monica G. Prieto, wrote an emotional letter defying the recommendation and saying she is staying for the sake of Julio (Parrado) and José (Couso). In part the letter reads:

"In less than 24 hours I have lost two friends and colleagues who were fighting to tell the truth.... We are beginning to wish that Washington wins, because, unfortunately, that will be the only way to end this horror soon. Then we can go and forget that in the new wars civilians and journalists are the targets, that fighting between armies disappeared centuries ago."



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