

Introduction of McClatchy Courage Award by ABC newsman Bob Woodruff:

This has been the most dangerous war for journalists. I have American and British friends who have died there. Still, Iraqi journalists have suffered the most. More than 80 percent of the reporters who have died there are Iraqis.

They are courageous and busy, day to day traveling on the streets. Among the best of these journalists are the six Iraqi women from McClatchy's bureau whom we honor today. They have become the eyes and ears of a nation... their nation.

They words say it all:

"Abu Salah heard the screeching tires and gunfire outside his home in central Baghdad, and cowered. He's feared this moment. He'd even plotted leaving the city. Now invaders had entered his street, and he knew that as the only Sunni on a street filled with Shiites, he was probably their target, whoever the invaders might be." – Zained Obeid

"I left my home Monday. As my family fled the fighting that's engulfed our neighborhood in Baghdad, I gazed out the car window, thinking that I might never again see the fruit stand off our street, the shops where my sisters and I bought soft drinks, the turquoise-domed mosque where we prayed in the Holy month of Ramadan." – Shatha al Awsy

"We were asked to send the next of kin to whom the remains of my nephew, killed on Monday in a horrific explosion downtown, can be handed. From the waist down was all they could give us. 'We identified him by the cell phone in his pants' pocket. If you want the rest, you will just have to look for yourself. We don't know what he looks like.' Now begins the horror that surpasses anything I could have possibly envisioned." – Sahar Issa

These six Iraqi women have reported the war in Baghdad from inside their hearts. They have watched as the war touched the lives of their neighbors and friends and then they bore witness as it reached into the lives of each and every one of them.

All the while, they have been the backbone of the McClatchy bureau, sleeping with bullet-proof vests and helmets by their beds at night, taking

different routes to work each day, trying to keep their employment by a Western news organization secret.

All have lost family members or close friends. All have had their lives threatened. All have had narrow escapes with death.

(Then a video about the McClatchy bureau, including interviews with Leila Fadel and Nancy Youssef.)

With us today are four of the incredible journalists from McClatchy's bureau: Ban Adil Sarhan, Huda Ahmed, Alaa Majeed and, accepting the award for all of them, Sahar Issa.

We ask that you refrain from photographing them, because if their identities should become known, it would pose a threat to both themselves and their families living in Iraq.

Sahara Issa...