



As we enter 2014, Syria remains the world's most dangerous country for journalists. More than 110 news providers have been killed in the course of their work in Syria since March 2011, and more than 60 are currently detained, held hostage or missing, as shown in the report ['Journalism in Syria, impossible job?'](#) by Reporters Without Borders.

"Most journalists have to enter Syria accompanied by different rebel groups. The problem is that there are competing rebel groups in the country, with completely different political agendas, and many of them view Western reporters as spies", says Jonathan Lundqvist, president of RWB.

Veteran war reporters describe covering Syria as a lottery or Russian roulette. "A few months ago," one said, "you were already taking a risk to go to Syria, but now you need a lot of luck to get out alive or not be taken prisoner."

"War reporting has always involved risks, but reporters and their assistants are not supposed to

be targeted by the belligerents. They are not supposed to be the prey of snipers, soldiers firing mortars or hostage-takers. The terrain is so fluid and the protagonists so entangled that even the most experienced reporters, those who know where to go without taking excessive risks, lose their bearings in Syria. It is harder than in other wars to know who controls what neighbourhood, to decipher the alliances and, sometimes, just to know who is who. It is a country where the sinister art of political dissimulation and manipulation has been cultivated during decades of rule by the Assad clan,” the report writes.

As efforts intensify to bring the Syrian sides to a negotiating table in Switzerland, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has voiced his [grave concern](#) about the continued and indiscriminate use of heavy weapons and mortar shelling in the ongoing conflict, most recently in hard-hit Aleppo which has been the site of a “barrel bomb” campaign by Government forces.

“Further escalation of violence will only serve the agendas of those who see military means as the only way forward, at the expense of the Syrian people who have suffered enough already,” Mr. Ban’s spokesperson said in a statement.