

## 'A very intentional strategy': Assad regime tracked and killed journalist Marie Colvin, sister says

Court documents released this week implicate the Syrian government in the 2012 death of reporter Marie Colvin

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Cat Colvin, left, with her sister Marie. Marie Colvin was killed in Homs, Syria, in 2012 when a rocket hit the makeshift media centre where she filed as a reporter for the Sunday Times of London. (Submitted by Cat Colvin)



Marie Colvin was known for her fearless reporting — and her black eye patch.

Colvin was a journalist for the Sunday Times, covering the civil war in Syria. In February of 2012, she was killed when a rocket hit a makeshift media centre in the Syrian city of Homs.

Now, there are new details about her death. Unsealed documents allege that Colvin was assassinated by the Syrian regime. And she wasn't the only journalist targeted.

The civil suit was filed by the Center for Justice and Accountability, on behalf of Marie's sister — Cat Colvin.

It is the first war-crimes case against the Syrian government to reach the courts.

- [Colvin's courage took her to deadliest places](#)
- [Marie Colvin's family says the Assad regime tracked and killed her to silence her voice](#)

Colvin spoke with *As It Happens* host Carol Off from Oyster Bay, N.Y. Here is part of their conversation.

**Ms. Colvin, these are remarkable documents that have been released by the courts. What story do they tell about your sister's death?**

Well, it was clear to me from the beginning, after speaking to Paul Conroy — who you may recall was injured with Marie — that she was targeted.

The challenge was proving it.

And the [Center for Justice and Accountability](#) has spent literally years interviewing defectors, refugees, and experts in the field to collect this evidence — which makes it extremely clear that the Assad regime marshalled all of their political, security, and military apparatus to target the journalists, not only Marie, and silence the news and prevent the truth from getting out.





Marie Colvin (Sunday Times via The Associated Press)

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**There was a statement that has been revealed, made by a Syrian general, Rafiq Shahadah, who said, "Marie Colvin is a dog. And now she's dead. Let the Americans help her now."**

That was the hardest part of the evidence for me to read. I really adored my sister. I was just angry at her being taken away from me.

But reading that celebration — and imagining them laughing, jeering, getting rewarded with cars for this successful attack — you really hit the most difficult part of the testimony for me to absorb.

**I'm so sorry. She was for so many people an inspiration, for how courageous she was. She was able to get into Homs through an underground water tunnel in 2012. What was she reporting out of [the Homs neighbourhood of] Baba Amr?**

Well, ironically they used her satellite signal on the last night of her life. She was reporting on the targeted attacks on civilians — and in particular a little baby who was dying in the hospital.

And Marie reported that no matter what you're hearing from the Assad regime, he is targeting civilians. And as important as she was to me, she was such an important voice for the innocent victims of war.

That's what she cared most about, and that's what she was reporting on.

**Her signal was — you're saying — what ultimately drew the fire to her. Can you tell us about that?**

They intercepted the satellite signal — she was on a satellite phone. That was not the only way they targeted her. They were surveilling her even before she went into Syria.

They also had informants on the ground, including a woman who was stationed outside of the makeshift media centre that was set up in Homs.

And that was shocking to me, because Marie was always such a strong supporter of women — not only women journalists, but girls and young women in all walks of life. She really believed in women supporting women.



The suffering that I've felt, and that my children and mother have felt — that is multiplied by thousands and thousands of Syrians."

- *Cat Colvin*

**The evidence gathered was principally provided by an intelligence defector, a Syrian, code-named Ulysses. Documents have been filed that corroborate what he has to say. Can you tell us a bit about those depositions?**

What's so interesting is that the Syrians are very bureaucratic. And he was in a position where he had access to a significant number of documents which he was able to bring out of the country — showing, for example, the Syrian regime prioritized the silencing of the news as their highest goal.



Cat and Marie Colvin's mother, Rosemarie Colvin, at her home in East Norwich, N.Y. (Kathy Kmonicek/The Associated Press)

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### **The court case that you're now involved in — what are you hoping comes out of it?**

I wanted to find justice for my sister, on a personal level. And the suffering that I've felt, and that my children and mother have felt — that is multiplied by thousands and thousands of Syrians.

I thought that Marie's murder would be some kind of a watershed event, and that the U.S. government would find it intolerable for an American citizen to be targeted and murdered. But nothing has changed.

And finally, highlighting the risk that journalists take bringing the truth to us. You can't have any freedom without a free press.

*Written by Kevin Ball. Interview produced by Sarah Jackson.*

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