

# Syrian regime celebrated after Marie Colvin assassination, US lawsuit claims

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Marie Colvin



By Bethan Staton, News Reporter

**A stash of evidence alleging Bashar al Assad's Syrian regime assassinated journalist Marie Colvin has been unsealed in a Washington DC court.**

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The files include a graphic Skype video that captures the final moments of Ms Colvin and fellow journalist Remi Ochlik, as well as testimonies from high-ranking defectors that claim officials celebrated their deaths.

The two journalists were killed in February 2012 when a rocket hit the media centre in Homs where they were covering the escalating Syrian civil war.

The lawsuit is the first instance of a [case for war crimes](#) against the Assad government reaching a court, seven years into a brutal conflict that has seen more than half a million people killed.

Journalists globally have expressed solidarity with the dead reporters

In the video, one of nearly 200 files released in court on Monday, explosions can be heard growing closer as frantic voices shout in Arabic, before one can be heard shouting "she's dead".

Other documents include testimony by a Syrian defector who said an official responsible for the strike was rewarded with a luxury car, and recalled an intelligence officer responding to news of Colvin's death with morbid glee.

"Marie Colvin was a dog and now she's dead. Let the Americans help her now," Major General Rafiq Shehadeh is accused of saying.

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Witnesses also claim a network of informants carefully tracked the location of journalists and fixers in Syria, while testimony from the scene of Ms Colvin's death alleged artillery falling on the media centre was "not indiscriminate".

Other high-ranking defectors say they heard officials plotting to falsify evidence about rebel violence and saw journalists and media activists as a major threat.

The accounts cannot be independently verified by Sky News but have been shown to be consistent with evidence from other sources.

Large swathes of Syria have been levelled in the years after Colvin's death

Ms Colvin, a US citizen and veteran war correspondent writing for the Sunday Times, had been covering the violent government response following democracy protests in Syria.

In one of her final reports, published by the Sunday Times, she wrote "the scale of human tragedy" in Homs has been "immense" with inhabitants "living in terror".

"On the lips of everyone was the question: 'Why have we been abandoned by the world?'" she wrote.

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More than six years after she was killed, no foreign journalists are known to remain in rebel-held areas of Syria, some of which have now been described as "hell on earth" as they face continuing bombardment and siege.

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Since February, eastern Ghouta has come under particular onslaught, with recent allegations that a chemical attack killed more than 70 people in the suburb of Douma.

The Syrian government has not issued an official response to the lawsuit, but has previously made a blanket denial of the claims, stating Ms Colvin entered Syria illegally and was responsible for her own death.

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