



Daphne Caruana Galizia: Malta's **'one-woman WikiLeaks'**

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In the past year Europe was rocked by the murders of two investigative journalists who were killed for their work. One year after Daphne Caruana Galizia was killed by a car bomb, little progress has been made in the murder investigation. Her son Paul will speak at Free Press Live about his family's quest for justice. This is the story of the assassination of his mother, Malta's most famous investigative journalist.

Daphne Caruana Galizia published her last ever blog post on October 16th 2017 at 2:35pm.

"There are crooks everywhere you look now. The situation is desperate," the Maltese journalist wrote.

About 30 minutes later, Caruana Galizia would be dead. A bomb planted on her rented Peugeot 108 detonated as she drove away from her home in Bidnija. The explosion it caused flung the car onto a field 80 metres from where the bomb went off.

"I am never going to forget, running around the inferno in the field," her eldest son Matthew wrote of the day in a Facebook post.

"I looked down and there were my mother's body parts all around me."

'A one-woman WikiLeaks'

Daphne Caruana Galizia, who was 53 on the day of her assassination, was Malta's most prolific investigative journalist. Her tenacious reporting had won her admirers and enemies alike.

Politico chose her as one of 28 people influencing Europe in 2017 and described her as "a one-woman WikiLeaks". John Dalli, a former European commissioner who was the subject of repeated scrutiny by Caruana Galizia, once called her "a terrorist".

The assassination of Caruana Galizia was not the first time her opponents tried to silence her. In the mid-1990s, her front door was set on fire and on a separate occasion the family's pet dog was left on her doorstep with a slit throat. In 2006, her home was targeted in another arson attack.



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In an interview with UK newspaper the Guardian which took place after the assassination, Caruana Galizia's son Matthew said death threats were an almost daily occurrence.

"We grew up with them. Phone calls, letters, notes pinned to the door. Then when mobile phones arrived, text messages. And later of course, emails, comments on her blog. Not to mention the lawsuits. So many lawsuits," he said. Caruana Galizia faced 47 libel lawsuits at the time of her death.

Foes in high places

A main outlet for Caruana Galizia's investigative reporting was Running Commentary, the blog she launched in 2008. The site reportedly drew as much as 400,000 readers on good days. Only about 430,000 people live in the Mediterranean island nation of Malta.

Caruana Galizia's investigations implicated some of Malta's highest-ranking government officials including the prime minister's chief of staff and a former energy minister in corruption. They denied the charges. She claimed the wife of Prime Minister Joseph Muscat had received payments from the daughter of Azerbaijan's president through a Panama-based company. Michelle Muscat denied the allegations and has since been cleared by a magisterial inquiry.

Caruana Galizia also reported on the Italian mafia, fuel smuggling from Libya and Malta's passports-for-cash programme.



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‘Stalling’ investigation

The killing of Caruana Galizia sparked an outcry that reached far beyond Malta. The European Commission said they were “horrified” by the “targeted attack”. Pope Francis sent a rare message of condolence to Malta.

Prime Minister Muscat said he would not rest until justice was delivered for the slain journalist and asked the US Federal Bureau of Investigations to help with the case. In December, three men were arrested and charged with the murder. They each pleaded not guilty.

But little is known about who ordered the attack. Three members of the European Parliament who went on an ad hoc mission to Malta in late 2017 released a report in which they claimed the investigation was “stalling” and that police were not thoroughly following up on leads.

Caruana Galizia’s family has accused local authorities of failing to conduct a proper investigation and is calling for a public inquiry into whether her murder could have been prevented. Prime Minister Muscat has ruled out such an inquiry.

The Daphne Project

Six months after Caruana Galizia was killed, a global consortium of 45 journalists from 18 media outlets announced 'The Daphne Project', aimed at continuing her work.

"Cooperation is without a doubt the best protection," Laurent Richard, the founder of the Forbidden Stories platform which coordinated the project, wrote in the Guardian.

Under the banner of the project, media outlets including the New York Times and Süddeutsche Zeitung have investigated Malta's corruption problem and the island's passports-for-cash programme.

"What is the point of killing a journalist if 10, 20 or 30 others are waiting to carry on their work?" Richard wrote in the Guardian.

"Wherever you go, you will be questioned by the world's press. Whatever you are trying to hide will be magnified."

One year after her death, the work of Daphne Caruana Galizia remains alive.

Learn more about the work Free Press Unlimited does to end impunity and protect journalists [here](#).

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