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Outspoken Italian journalist dies

Oriana Fallaci, an Italian journalist best known for her abrasive interviews and provocative stances, has died in a hospital in Florence.



She was 76 and had been diagnosed with cancer.

Ms Fallaci made her name interviewing such leaders as former US Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, and the late Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat.

She triggered a row with her blunt criticism of Islam in a book after the 11 September 2001 attacks in the US.

Ms Fallaci had lived in New York for years and had come back recently to her home town of Florence as her condition worsened.

A resistance fighter during World War II, she became one of the first women war correspondents, reporting on conflicts in the Middle East and Latin America, as well as the Vietnam war.

But she was best known for her uncompromising interviews with world leaders. They included the Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, the Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir and Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini.

Henry Kissinger wrote after being interviewed by her that the interview was "the single most disastrous conversation I have ever had with any member of the press".

After the 11 September 2001 attacks in the United States, Oriana Fallaci provoked a storm with her interviews and books assailing Islam.

Her best-selling book, *The Rage And The Pride*, led to accusations of inciting hatred against Muslims.

An anti-racism group in France unsuccessfully sought in court to ban the book.

Later a judge in Italy ordered her to stand trial for defaming Islam but the case never went to court.

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