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Americas - Dominican Republic

Targeted reporter

Gunmen open fire on El Nacional reporter Pedro Fernandez

1 July 2014

Journalist unhurt in second attack in a week after reporting on city's illegal drugs trade.

Unidentified gunmen opened fire on **Pedro Fernandez**, the *El Nacional* correspondent in the town of San Francisco de Macorís, yesterday as he was driving through the Los Chiripos neighbourhood, known for its illegal drugs trade.

He was able to get out of his car and take shelter, escaping unhurt from what did not appear to be a random attack. A week earlier, tear gas grenades were thrown at his house by unidentified attackers after the journalist reported that he had [evidence of a plot to kill him in January](#).

A hand-written letter left at the scene warned the journalist that he would be killed unless he stopped writing about the city's drug outlets. He had received several death threats since writing about attacks at several centres of the drugs trade, according to the newspapers *El Dia* and *El Jaya*.

"*Reporters Without Borders strongly condemns these attacks,*" said Camille Soulier, head of the organization's Americas desk. "*Pedro Fernandez should be given the protection of a bodyguard immediately. We urge the Dominican authorities to undertake an investigation as soon as possible to find the perpetrators of the attack and those behind it.*"

Violence towards journalists has been growing in recent weeks. In early June, two journalists were [summarily detained in a heavy-handed manner by the police narcotics squad](#).

The Dominican Republic is ranked 68th of 180 countries in the 2014 [World Press Freedom Index](#) compiled by Reporters Without Borders.

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