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<http://www.rsf.org/r-dominicaine-two-dominican-journalists-arrested-24-06-2014,46510.html>

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Americas - Dominican Republic

Heavy-handed arrests

## Two Dominican journalists arrested summarily during drug raids

24 June 2014

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**Reporters Without Borders is shocked by the heavy-handed arrests of two journalists by drug police during separate operations in the past two weeks, and the arrests of the daughters of a third journalist in one of the incidents, especially as violence against journalists is rare in the Dominican Republic.**

In both cases, local prosecutors endorsed the arrests by members of the National Directorate for Drug Control (DNCD), whose actions were condemned as "anti-journalistic, anti-democratic, anti-citizen and illegal" by Olivo de León, the head of the Dominican Journalists' Union (CDP).

When contacted by Reporters Without Borders, DNCD spokesman Miguel Medina defended the DNCD's actions.

*"Such heavy-handed behaviour must not become the norm," said Camille Soulier, the head of the Reporters Without Borders America's desk. "The authorities must guarantee a serious and independent investigation so that such crimes do not go unpunished. No explanation by Medina justifies the police brutality and the arbitrary actions of the prosecutors".*

In the first incident, **Gerardo de Jesús Abreu**, the producer of the programme "Tiempo Informativo" on local TV station *Valle Visión Canal 10*, was arrested while filming a drug raid in the central province of La Vega on 11 June.

The DNCD took his camera and mobile phone, handcuffed him and detained him in his own car while continuing the raid. The prosecutor in charge of the operation, Leonidas Suárez, told him: "You journalists have a nerve, you just spoil other people's work. You needing a good beating." De Jesús was eventually released.

Medina's only explanation for the journalist's arrest was his presence.

In the second incident, DNCD officers led by prosecutor Cindy Burgos accosted and arrested journalist **Genry Morel** outside the home of well-known radio presenter **Ramón Sánchez** in the northern city of Santiago de los Caballeros on 14 June. Then they went into Sánchez's home and harassed and arrested his two daughters, Gissel and Saihya Sánchez, who had been filming Morel's arrest.

The prosecutor subsequently offered to release them in exchange for their promise not to file a complaint against her.

Medina claimed that Morel had refused to show any ID to the police, while the two sisters attacked one of the police officers.

The Dominican Republic is ranked 68th out of 180 countries in the [Reporters Without Borders press freedom index](#).

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