

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/paraguay-amid-continuing-concern-for-08-10-2012,43497.html>

Americas - Paraguay

Radio blown up

Amid continuing concern for journalists' safety, EPP guerrillas claim bombing of radio station

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Reporters Without Borders joins the Paraguayan Journalists' Union (SPP) in demanding justice and protection for the journalists who were the target of a bomb attack by two gunmen last week in the northern department of Concepción, and for all other journalists working in high-risk regions like Concepción.

Claiming to be members of the Paraguayan People's Army (EPP), the two gunmen left three bombs inside *Guyra Campana*, a privately-owned radio in the town of Horqueta on the evening of 4 October. Two of them exploded, causing serious damage and forcing the station off the air. Police defused the third after it failed to go off.

"During a visit in 2011, we saw the degree to which journalists in this region are isolated and [exposed to danger](#) from both the drug cartels and the EPP", Reporters Without Borders said. "Effective security provisions need to be prepared in coordination with media organizations so that journalists can go about their work without fearing reprisals and without having to censor themselves."

The organization added: "Is it prudent for media that are so exposed to be broadcasting the government's offers of rewards for information leading to the arrest of EPP members? It renders these media liable for the safety of their personnel."

Guyra Campana owner and manager **César Rojas** said two men arrived on motorcycles and stormed into the radio station at around 9 p.m. as presenter **Teresa Fleitas** was ending a programme. Brandishing automatic firearms, they ordered all the staff to leave the station so that they could "blow it up".

They also announced that three journalists – presenters **Juan Benitez** and **Maria Victoria Piccardo** and Rojas's son, **Freddy Rojas**, the daily *ABC Color's* regional correspondent – would be killed for repeatedly criticizing the EPP, and they left a communiqué "for the journalists of Concepción and Horqueta," accusing the media of waging a campaign to smear the EPP.

Launched in 2008, the EPP claims to be a guerrilla organization that supports the cause of agrarian reform but its methods – which include kidnapping and extortion – resemble those of organized crime.

Reporters Without Borders has been told that the radio station was quickly given protection after the attack and its installations are being repaired.

Political tension since last June's parliamentary coup against President Fernando Lugo combined with the continuing violent crime are taking their toll [on journalists](#). The level of fear is especially high among the many [community radio stations](#) in rural areas.
