

# Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/argentina-journalists-suffer-new-threats-as-24-08-2012,43279.html>

Americas - Argentina

Two attacks in 6 days

## Journalists suffer new threats as atmosphere of impunity prevails

24 August 2012

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Reporters Without Borders is deeply shocked at the attacks and threats suffered by two journalists in Argentina in the past 10 days.

In the central city of Sancti Spiritu, **Hernán García** (photo), manager of the radio station *FM UNO*, was threatened at gunpoint by the mayor, who told him he would kill him.

A home-made bomb badly damaged the private car of **Silvio Novelino**, director of the monthly *El Pepirí*, in Bernardo de Irigoyen in the north-eastern province of Misiones.

"These two cases are all the more shocking since physical attacks on journalists are less frequent in Argentina than in other countries in the region," Reporters Without Borders said.

"We urge the relevant local authorities to take all the necessary steps to ensure these two incidents do not go unpunished and to [guarantee the safety](#) of the two journalists concerned."

García was summoned to a meeting by the Sancti Spiritu mayor, Abel Fontenla, on 14 August to discuss allegations he had made a few days earlier of irregularities in the public accounts. The journalist told Reporters Without Borders what happened took him completely by surprise.

According to García, Fontenla threatened him with a pistol, which he put into his mouth, telling him: "I have come to kill you. I already told you I was going to kill you."

The journalist managed to escape after a struggle. "I ran for four kilometres without looking back," he said. "I abandoned my car, I left everything behind."

García [recorded the incident](#) on his cell phone, which he had turned on before arriving for the meeting. He subsequently recounted it on air at the radio station and reported it to the authorities. Fontenla was taken to a police station where he denied it ever took place.

According to the journalist, Fontenla had telephoned the officer in charge of the police station and told him that if García made a complaint against him, he should not believe him. He was later released. The journalist told Reporters Without Borders: "I can't go on working after this attack. It is too difficult."

A few days later, about 3 a.m. on 20 August, unidentified attackers threw a Molotov cocktail that set fire to Novelino's car, which was parked in a garage at his home in Bernardo de Irigoyen. The journalist, who was inside the house at the time, was unhurt. He managed to move the car out of the garage and put out the fire.

Novelino told Reporters Without Borders he had received threats since he took over as director of *El Pepirí* 18 months ago. He added that he was in no doubt that the attack was linked to his exposure of corruption among local politicians.

"It is tragic, but there is no justice here," he concluded.

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