

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/bolivia-stalled-investigation-into-threats-09-04-2015,47772.html>

Americas - Bolivia

Impunity

Stalled investigation into threats against TV journalists

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Reporters Without Borders is worried about the lack of progress in investigations into violence against journalists and the climate of impunity resulting from the slowness of judicial and police procedures.

Its concern has been reinforced by the threats received in recent weeks by two journalists working for the *ATB* television network's regional office in the city of Cochabamba (370 km west of La Paz).

Two weeks ago, **Escarley Pacheco** discovered a death threat at her home in the form of a blood-stained letter with a bullet that "*has your name on it,*" the letter said. A week before that, **José Miguel Manzaneda** found a blood-stained message that just said: "*Watch yourself, JM.*"

In the course of investigating police corruption, *ATB* Cochabamba's reporters have exposed several cases of alleged irregularities and abuses by on-duty police officers. They include the alleged rape of a woman by seven policemen and the presence of policemen in brothels during working hours.

[Last September, the city's police chief threatened Pacheco](#) after she asked him about his ex-wife's claims that he had subjected her to physical and psychological violence.

President Evo Morales immediately called for an investigation into the latest threats and interior minister Hugo Moldiz offered *ATB* "all the necessary guarantees so that its journalists can do their work."

But the police and judicial investigation has made no progress. At the same time, more and more threats and insults are being made against *ATB* and its journalists on social networks.

"*More than three weeks have gone by since the first threat and we are worried to see the investigation at a virtual standstill,*" said Claire San Filippo, the head of the Reporters Without Borders Americas desk.

"*We urge the authorities to bring those responsible for threats and violence against journalists to justice in order to end the impunity they enjoy. The justice system's slowness or inaction is only too often a contributing factor in the failure to punish abuses against news providers in Bolivia.*"

Reporters Without Borders has monitored half a dozen judicial investigations into violent attacks and murders of Bolivian journalists that have been marked by unjustified delays.

No conclusive findings have ever been reported to the family of [Carlos Quispe](#), who died from injuries he received in a mob attack on his radio station in March 2008, or on the [double-murder of brother-and-sister journalists Verónica and Victor Hugo Peñasco](#) in El Alto, a city adjoining La Paz, in February 2012.

And there is still no progress in the investigations into the [October 2012 arson attack on Radio Popular in Yacuiba](#) (near the Argentine border in the southern department of Tarija) and the [January 2014 disappearance of Cristian Mariscal Calvimontes](#), who worked for Tarija-based Red Plus TV.

Bolivia is ranked 94th out of 180 countries in the 2015 [Reporters Without Borders press freedom index](#).
