

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/colombia-letter-to-colombian-president-22-08-2013,45093.html>

Americas - Colombia

Attacks on journalists

Letter to Colombian president urging respect for work of journalists

22 August 2013

Reporters Without Borders has registered more than 20 attacks on journalists by both police and demonstrators during a national strike by farm workers, miners and public sector employees that began on 19 August.

As a result, Reporters Without Borders wrote to President Juan Manuel Santos today voicing concern about the ability of media personnel to work safely and calling on the authorities take whatever measures are necessary to protect reporters during demonstrations.

President Juan Manuel Santos Casa de Nariño Presidential Palace Bogotá, Colombia

Dear President Santos,

Reporters Without Borders, an international organization for defence of freedom of information, is writing to you again to express its concern about the increase in physical attacks on journalists with various media. Journalists continue to be in constant of danger of vilification from all sides for covering a particular event or for covering it in a way contrary to the interests of their assailants.

At least 20 cases of attacks on journalists, especially journalists with alternative news media, were registered in a total of eight departments during the first 48 hours of the general strike called by a coalition of various civil society sectors.

Thorough and impartial investigations should be conducted on each of these cases. Reporters Without Borders therefore urges the Colombian government, especially Defence Minister Juan Carlos Pinzón and the new National Police Director, Rodolfo Palomino, to issue the necessary orders so that the men under their command respect the work of the media and so that the right of all Colombians to know what is happening in their country is guaranteed.

We also call on the police to protect journalists, so that the right to demonstrate is not tarnished by behaviour hostile to freedom of expression.

As guarantor of the Colombian Constitution and of the international treaties ratified by your country, it is your responsibility to ensure them.

Freedom of information is a right enshrined in article 20 of the Colombian constitution. Under article 73 of the constitution, journalistic activity must be protected in order to guarantee its freedom and independence.

At the same time, the Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression of the Inter-American System of Human Rights stresses that everyone, without discrimination, has the right to freedom of expression, and that the right to journalistic work must be respected regardless of political views or views of any other nature. It also says that obstructing the free flow of information violates the right to free speech.

This information will also be sent to various international human rights bodies so that they take it into account when evaluating the respect and the guarantees that the Colombian state provides for the work of the media, both commercial and alternative.

I thank you in advance for the attention you give to this letter.

Sincerely,

Christophe Deloire Secretary-General Reporters Without Borders



You can download those documents on our website :

- , (JPEG - 46.4 kb)
-