

Reporters Without Borders

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Americas - Colombia

Civilian hostage pledge

FARC urged to keep promise and release captive French reporter

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Reporters Without Borders received direct confirmation last night that **Roméo Langlois**, a French freelance journalist who went missing in the southern department of Caquetá on 28 April, is being held by members of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), a leftist guerrilla group.

"The army has verified the claim that a female member of the FARC's 15th Division made in phone calls to several media," Reporters Without Borders was told by a representative of the French TV news station *France 24* who has been in Caquetá since the start of the week. *France 24* is one of the media for which Langlois works as a stringer.

The *France 24* representative also confirmed to Reporters Without Borders that Langlois sustained an injury to his left forearm during the 10-hour firefight between soldiers and guerrillas that preceded [his disappearance](#).

After it was confirmed that the FARC are holding Langlois, military operations aimed at locating him were suspended in the hope that the rebels would release him quickly.

"The FARC formally undertook on 26 February to no longer take civilians hostage," Reporters Without Borders said. "They must now keep their word by freeing Langlois as quickly as possible. His release is also justified by his need for appropriate medical attention."

Aged 35, Langlois has been based in Colombia since 2002 stringing for media in France (*Le Figaro*, *Marie-Claire* and *VSD*, as well as *France 24*), Switzerland (*L'Hebdo* and *24 heures*) and Canada (*Radio Canada*). An experienced reporter aware of the dangers, he has established contacts with all parties to the Colombian conflicts and his work in the field has been widely recognized.

"Langlois is neither a war correspondent nor a 'prisoner of war'," Reporters Without Borders said. "He is just a journalist. His accompanying soldiers on an anti-drug operation is not grounds for questioning his independence, which has always been a central principle of his journalism. We again pay tribute to his courage by dedicating this World Press Freedom Day to him."

Photos : AFP

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