

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/colombia-three-journalists-forced-to-flee-25-04-2012,42369.html>

Americas - Colombia

Death threats

Three journalists forced to flee

25 April 2012

Reporters Without Borders expresses deep concern over threats by armed groups that compelled three community journalists to flee their towns. These events occurred amid a worsening climate of intimidation for Colombia's community journalists.

Dionisia Morales, a host on *Briceño Estéreo*, a community radio station in Briceño, in the north-western department of Antioquia, received death threats on 14 April. These came in the form of calls and messages to her mobile phone from a member of the Autodefensas Gaitanistas, a paramilitary "self-defence" organization.

The caller ordered Morales to leave the city immediately. She is now in the departmental capital of Medellín. Morales said she did not understand the motive for the threats, because the station had halted political coverage last year.

Edilberto Agudelo, Morales' husband, the director of the same radio station, had been forced to leave Briceño on 13 December of last year after receiving threats. These followed his reporting on ties between criminal gangs and public employees in the region. Those threats are what led the station to halt political reporting.

Jesús Antonio Pareja, a host on *La Voz de la Tierra*, a community radio station in Roncesvalles in the west-central department of Tolima, was threatened with death by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). A member of the guerrilla group told Pareja in a phone call on 9 April that he had become a target because the radio station broadcast public-service announcements on behalf of the Colombian army and hydro-electric companies, and publicized a new law on land restitution. Pareja, who had worked for the radio station for 13 years, left his town for the departmental capital of Ibagué.

The director of *La Voz de la Tierra*, **Luís Alberto Cardona**, told Colombia's Foundation for Press Freedom (FLIP) that the station's main purpose is to broadcast educational material for schoolchildren.

"We deplore these threats against Dionisia, Edilberto and Jesús Antonio," Reporters Without Borders said, adding that internal exile threatens press freedom. "These cases demonstrate the dangers that Colombian community radio journalists face from the country's armed groups. We demand that the authorities provide ample protection for these colleagues, who have been prevented from working."

The press freedom organization also noted that Colombia has [more journalists in foreign and domestic exile](#) than any other South American country.

Paramilitary "self-defence" groups are categorized by Reporters Without Borders as [major threats to press freedom](#) in the Americas.

Colombian filmmaker **Juan Lozano** told Reporters Without Borders that an improvement in safety conditions for journalists in Colombia's major cities has been accompanied by a worsening situation in outlying towns. Community and regional radio journalists, he said, run the greatest risks. Lozano and journalist **Hollman Morris** co-directed a major film on the paramilitary threat, *Impunity*.

The film was shown in Paris on 23 April. Further screenings are scheduled 25 April at 20:15 (8:15 pm) at l'Espace Saint-Michel cinema, and 26 April at 20:00 (8 pm) at the 7 Parnassiens cinema and 20 April at 20:15 (8:15 pm) at l'Espace Saint-Michel. Lozano will be present for the showings, and for discussions that follow.

The film's trailer:
