

Reporters Without Borders

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Americas - Honduras

Joint complaint

Fifteen women journalists file complaint against president, army chiefs

22 December 2011

Reporters Without Borders supports the complaint against President Porfirio Lobo Sosa, armed forces chief of staff Gen. René Osorio Canales and presidential guard chief Gen. Andrés Felipe Díaz that 15 women journalists from the "Journalism for Life and Free Expression" collective filed yesterday before special prosecutor for human rights Sandra Ponce.

The complaint concerns the violence used by police and soldiers to disperse a march by around 50 journalists, human rights activists and civil society representatives on 13 December in Tegucigalpa as it passed in front of the presidential palace.

"We have three reasons for supporting this joint complaint, a copy of which we have received," Reporters Without Borders said. "Firstly, it is a legitimate response to serious abuse of authority against defenceless people. Secondly, it challenges the government's outrageous propaganda portraying the victims as attackers. Why was a demonstration by journalists able to go ahead in the same place four days earlier without any clashes?"

"Lastly, aside from the specific events it addresses, this collective complaint asks the pertinent question why impunity persists in what is, after Mexico, now the deadliest country in the hemisphere for those who provide news and information, especially about the very alarming human rights situation. We add our voice to theirs to demand that justice finally be rendered in Honduras."

A total of 24 journalists have been killed in Honduras since 2003, [17 of them since the June 2009 coup d'état](#).

14.12.11 - Soldiers use clubs to disperse women journalists demonstrating outside presidential palace

Reporters Without Borders condemns the violence used by police and soldiers to disperse yesterday's demonstration by journalists – mostly women – outside the presidential palace in Tegucigalpa to demand justice for the 24 journalists killed since 2003, 17 of them since the June 2009 coup d'état. The latest journalist to be murdered, last week, was a woman.

"The Honduran government's only response to the dire human rights and civil liberties situation is repression," Reporters Without Borders said. "This attitude shows that it is completely responsible for this situation and that the persecution that began after the coup is continuing. The 'national reconciliation' bandied about since the [Cartagena Accord](#) is no more than empty words.

"The international community and the governments of Latin America must insist on tangible results in 2012 in the investigations into human rights violation and on full cooperation from the Honduran authorities with these investigations. Otherwise there will be a danger of chaos again in the run-up the major elections scheduled for 2013."

Yesterday's demonstration, which set off from the Francisco Morazán Teachers' Training University, was convened by the Journalists for Life and Free Expression Collective in response to the 6 December murder of radio host [Luz Marina Paz Villalobos](#), first woman journalist to

have been killed in Honduras.

The Honduran Committee for Free Expression (C-Libre), a Reporters Without Borders partner organization, said the protesters also condemned the censorship and systematic harassment to which alternative and community media, human rights activists and civil society representatives are exposed. Dogged by political violence since the 2009 coup, Honduras has one of the world's worse crime rates, with an average of 86 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants a year.

One of the participants in yesterday's protest told Reporters Without Borders: "We managed to move the security barrier a bit and thereby reach our goal. This enraged the soldiers guarding the presidential palace, who were waiting for us behind another metal barrier further down. They pushed us back, hit us with batons and used teargas to force us to disperse."

She pointed out that the journalists who took part in a previous march organized by the Association of Honduran Journalists (CPH) on 9 November were able to demonstrate without any problem.

Honduras is the western hemisphere's deadliest country for the media after Mexico. Five Honduran journalists have been killed since the start of this year. In three of the cases, the motive was directly or very probably linked to the victim's work.

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