

# Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/honduras-tv-anchor-still-facing-ban-on-03-04-2014,46082.html>

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Americas - Honduras

Arbitrary sentence

## TV anchor still facing ban on working as a journalist

3 April 2014

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*Globo TV* programme host **Julio Ernesto Alvarado** will now be able to avoid serving a 16-month jail sentence by paying a fine of 10 lempiras a day (for a total of 246 US dollars) but the Supreme Court of Justice could still ban him from working as a journalist during the 16-month period.

The court imposed the sentence on Alvarado last December after finding him guilty of criminally defaming Belinda Flores, the former economics faculty dean at the Autonomous University of Honduras.

Reporters Without Borders criticized the court's sentence in a letter (see below) in February to President Juan Orlando Hernández and communication minister Hilda Hernández that was given to the government with the help of the journalist Dina Meza.

The communication minister acknowledged receipt of the letter on 28 March. The Supreme Court's judges were also notified of its contents. The next hearing is expected for June 2014.

"We reiterate our rejection of the court's decision," said Camille Soulier, the head of the Reporters Without Borders Americas desk. "Preventing a journalist from working is tantamount to censorship and violates the fundamental right to information. We urge the Supreme Court's judges to quash this sentence and dismiss all the charges against Alvarado without delay."

11 February 2014 Press release :

Journalist facing jail term and work ban in defamation case

*Globo TV* programme host **Julio Ernesto Alvarado** is facing a 16-month jail term and ban on working as a journalist for alleged defamation under a sentence passed by the Supreme Court of Justice in December 2013.

"We strongly disapprove of the court's decision to prevent this journalist from doing his job of reporting news and information," said Camille Soulier, the head of the Reporters Without Borders Americas desk. "We urge the court to recognize the absurd nature of the case against him and to overturn this disproportionate and draconian sentence without delay."

Alvarado has been convicted of criminally defaming Belinda Flores, the former economics faculty dean at the Autonomous University of Honduras, by reporting allegations that she falsified university degrees, which have been recognized by the Supreme Court of Justice.

Flores' initial defamation action against Alvarado was rejected by a Tegucigalpa lower court on 25 March 2011 but she appealed to the Supreme Court, which overturned the lower court's decision and found Alvarado guilty of criminal defamation on 9 December. Its verdict and sentence are pending confirmation.

Alvarado has been the target of threats and acts of intimidation in the past, including being followed by suspicious-looking cars and individuals in March 2012.

(Picture: Conexihon.hn)

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