

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/honduras-hondurans-urged-to-rebuild-rule-of-22-11-2013,45503.html>

Americas - Honduras

Election challenges

Hondurans urged to rebuild rule of law, media pluralism, after elections

22 November 2013

Reporters Without Borders calls for justice for journalists who have been persecuted or killed and an overhaul of the entire Honduran media after the parliamentary elections that are due to be held on 24 November.

Represented by an observer on the ground, Reporters Without Borders hopes that key issues that are important to the population, such as agrarian reform, environmental conflicts, a purge of the police and obviously human rights, will be the vehicles of a new pluralism and the restoration of the rule of law, which has been sacrificed since the June 2009 [coup d'état](#).

Audio interview of *Radio Progreso* news director Karla Rivas by Reporters Without Borders on 19 November 2013 (in Spanish)



**Entrevista con
Karla Rivas**

Summary of interview (in English)



**Interview with
Karla Rivas
transcript**

Impunity and ignored appeals

A total of 27 journalists have been murdered since the coup and, in ten of these cases, a direct connection has been established between the murder and the victim's work. There have been [shooting attacks](#) and two more murders in 2013, of which one, that of *Globo TV* programme head [Aníbal Barrow](#), was particularly barbaric.

These murders have taken place against a backdrop of generalized political violence in which many [human rights defenders](#), labour leaders, civil society representatives, lawyers and activists have also been victims. The run-up to this election has only exacerbated the situation and increased the polarization.

The protection of journalists and other news providers and the fight against impunity need to be addressed during the next parliamentary period. Reporters Without Borders has repeatedly stressed this need but its [appeals](#) have been ignored.

The few cases that have come to trial have resulted in the conviction of individual perpetrators – such as Roger Mauricio Garcia, 22, found guilty of murdering the journalist [Héctor Medina Polanco](#) in 2011 – but the motives and instigators have never been identified. *Specific investigative and protective mechanisms need to be established for cases of violations of freedom of information as part of an overhaul of the Honduran judicial system.*

Seized frequencies and news “black holes”

Protection for news and information providers and the fight against impunity must be accompanied by new broadcasting legislation as small, local-level broadcasters have been [sidelined](#) under the current situation.

As well as having become one of the world’s deadliest countries for journalists in a very short space of time, Honduras has also broken records for censorship by means of direct violence, above all through the military seizure of individual media, especially [community radio stations](#).

The Honduran regions experiencing major social conflicts have become “black holes” from which little news and information emerge. The Zacate Grande peninsula, the Valle and Choluteca regions, and the militarized Bajo Aguán region are the main examples. Private militias act like predators in these regions, with the complicity of the army and police. *New broadcast frequency allocation rules must be adopted so that the broadcast media are representative of Honduran society. But to achieve these goals, the targeted persecution of news providers in the most country’s most troubled region must also be stopped at once.*

Finally, Reporters Without Borders has not forgotten the direct involvement of certain leading media in the June 2009 coup. Freedom of expression cannot be used as a pretext for such a grave attack on democracy. As part of the national dialogue we seek, the media must be questioned about their role and the way they operate.

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