

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/honduras-no-real-protection-for-opposition-15-11-2011,41392.html>

Americas - Honduras

Commonplace terror

No real protection for opposition journalists from threats blamed on military

15 November 2011

Two journalists have reported receiving credible threats in early November although the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) had asked the Honduran authorities to provide them with protection.

They are **Arnulfo Aguilar**, the head of *Radio Uno*, a radio station located in the northwestern city of San Pedro Sula, and **Luis Galdamez**, programme director at Tegucigalpa-based *Radio Globo*. Both are critics of the June 2009 coup and both have provided critical coverage of the activities of the armed forces and police.

"The protective measures requested by the IACHR for persecuted journalists have long been a dead letter in the absence of real implementation by the authorities, who must end the ordeals of Aguilar and Galdamez by providing them and their news media with proper security." Reporters Without Borders said.

"Compliance with this requirement was one of the undertakings that the Honduran government gave in return for its readmission to the Organization of American States. It must be respected."

Aguilar, who narrowly escaped an armed ambush outside his home on 27 April, has notified the Committee of Families of Detainees and Disappeared in Honduras (COFADEH) that he received threats against himself and his daughter on his mobile phone. Aguilar has repeatedly been targeted by the security forces since the coup and one of his journalists, **Medardo Flores**, was murdered on 8 September.

According to the Committee for Free Expression (C-Libre), a Reporters Without Borders partner organization, Galdamez was on the air, hosting his programme "Tras la Verdad" (Behind the Truth), when he received a threatening call from an individual who identified himself as a member of the armed forces. The caller said: "Come over here, we are waiting for you, as you spend your time ranting on about the police and army."

Galdamez has also been the victim of military violence since the coup. He was one of the journalists who were with deposed President Manuel Zelaya after his clandestine return to Honduras, when he sought refuge in the Brazilian embassy.

In a separate development, Gabriel Álvarez Padget, the son of *Televisión* journalist **Renato Álvarez**, was threatened by individuals who put a gun to his head as he left their Tegucigalpa home on 9 November. Renato Álvarez recently called for a purge of the police force after at least eight of its members were accused of involvement in the murder of two students. The murder investigation has ground to a halt because the police are not cooperating.

"The government's anti-crime drive, Operation Lightning is not going to solve the problems of violence and impunity," Reporters Without Borders added. "There will be no progress on that front until the former and current commanders of the police and armed forces publicly account for the human rights violations since the coup and hand over all the documents needed to solve the 16 murders of journalists since 2010."

Operation Lightning has aroused a great deal of concern among community and grass roots

movements, especially in the militarized Lower Aguán region where many human rights violations and extra-judicial executions have been reported.

A survey of community radio broadcasting is urgently needed to satisfy the right to media diversity and the right of Honduran communities to their own radio stations, which are the target of attacks by landowners, often with the complicity of the armed forces.
