

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/honduras-freelancer-needs-protection-while-07-11-2012,43644.html>

Americas - Honduras

Eternal impunity

Freelancer needs protection, while new election cycle fuels concern

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Karla Zelaya, a freelance journalist and spokesperson for the Aguán United Peasant Movement (MUCA), needs urgent protection and international solidarity amid continuing threats since her abduction on 23 October, when she was held for three hours and tortured and interrogated about her activities, Reporters Without Borders said today.

Although hiding in the capital, Tegucigalpa, and receiving support from the Committee of Families of Detained and Missing Persons (COFADEH), Zelaya has told Reporters Without Borders she has to keep changing the place where she stays because of the continuing danger.

"Zelaya's plight is unfortunately typical of the political murders, violence, harassment, threats and censorship that have constantly obstructed the use of constitutional freedoms ever since the [June 2009 coup d'état](#)," Reporters Without Borders said.

"A young woman who helps local communities to defend their land and works as a journalist for various media, Zelaya is a symbol of how freedom of information is in permanent danger. The complaint she filed with the prosecutor's office after her abduction on 23 October must be addressed. It is unacceptable that she has been given no protection. We undertake to help pay for protection, if need be."

Reporters Without Borders is also very worried about the primaries being held by on 18 November by various political parties (including the Freedom and Foundation Party led by Manuel Zelaya, the president ousted by the 2009 coup), which will be the first step in a long process culminating in a presidential election in November 2013.

"Violence and threats are already taking place and the media coverage of this long election process will require more vigilance than ever in defence of those who risk their safety to report what is going on." Reporters Without Borders said.

Karla Zelaya has been getting messages warning her that she is going to die soon ever since her arrest on 21 August during [a crackdown](#) on civil society groups and human rights defenders in various parts of the country including Aguán, a northern region under military control.

She told Reporters Without Borders that, a week after her three-hour abduction in Tegucigalpa on 23 October, an unidentified person called her sister's mobile into order to give her a one-week ultimatum to stop being MUCA's spokesperson

Before that, on 20 September, she was told: "You and your friends are going to die, and I am going to start with you." This was two days before the fatal shooting of Antonio Trejo, a lawyer who defended peasant communities in the Aguán region, and four days before human rights prosecutor Eduardo Diaz's murder.

Police and judicial investigations into the many murders and attempted murders of journalists

rarely make any [progress](#) and, even when they do, there is no guarantee that the target will be out of danger.

Selvín Martínez, *JBN* television's correspondent in the northwestern department of Cortés, was the target of two murder attempts in April and June, and he and his family continue to receive [death threats](#) from Joaquín Molina Andrade, the man who is being held for the second murder attempt.

The Committee for Free Expression (C-Libre), a Reporters Without Borders partner organization, reports that Martínez still fears for his safety although he is receiving protection.

Finally, Reporters Without Borders calls on the judicial authorities to initiate proceedings against Roosevelt Avilés, the mayor of Talanga (in the central department of Morazán), for two flagrant cases of censorship of media that criticized him.

In one case he suspended *Telecentro TV's* local operations. In the other, he bought a large number of copies of an issue of the newspaper *El Heraldo* containing a critical article. According to some sources, he has closed or excluded seven broadcast media in the past six years.
