

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/honduras-rsf-condemns-attacks-on-radio-25-05-2015,47933.html>

Americas - Honduras

Report

RSF condemns attacks on Radio Globo in report marking Honduran Journalists Day

25 May 2015

To mark Honduran Journalists Day on Monday 25 May, Reporters Without Borders (RSF) is publishing a report on *Radio Globo*, one of Honduras' most popular independent broadcasters. RSF interviewed members of its editorial staff who give their assessment of the state of freedom of information in the country and speak out about the difficulties faced by *Radio Globo*.

Read the report [here](#).

Entitled *How Radio y TV Globo journalists broadcast the news amid crimes, threats and attacks*, the report highlights the pressure being put on the independent broadcaster, which the Honduran authorities have had in their sights since the June 2009 coup d'état. Staff members told RSF's correspondent **Dina Meza** about how they perceive the pressure they are under. The report also sheds light on the Honduran government's repressive policies towards independent news organizations.

"Honduran Journalists Day is marred by the dire situation of independent news organizations and by the lack of freedom of information in the country," said Virginie Dangles, RSF's deputy programme director.

"We deplore the fact that those working in the Honduran media must choose between fear and self-censorship. We urge the authorities to comply with their international commitments and support media freedom and freedom of information."

In recent months, the staff of *Radio Globo* have been subjected to many forms of pressure, which RSF has regularly highlighted. On May 14, [Radio Globo director David Romero Ellner received death threats](#). Speaking on the programme "Interpretando la Noticias", the journalist said he was threatened after he alleged that President Juan Orlando Hernández was implicated in a case of embezzlement of funds from the Honduran Institute for Social Security (IHSS).

The *Radio Globo* director said he learned that a contract had been taken out on him and he had been given police protection. The threats are all the more worrying since this year the station had already lost 21-year-old journalist **Erick Arriaga**, shot dead in February while he was on his way home. The authorities denied that his death was linked to his work, [presenting it as gang-related](#).

To date five members of the *Radio Globo* staff have been murdered. In December 2011, programme presenter **Luz Marina Paz Villalobos** was shot dead by contract killers. In June 2013, [Anibal Barrow](#), the station's programme director, was abducted and brutally murdered near San Pedro Sula. Exactly four months later, cameraman **Manuel de Jesús Murillo Varela** was gunned down. In December that year, [Juan Carlos Argeñal](#), a local correspondent for *Radio Globo*, was murdered outside his home in the southeastern town of Danlí.

Besides physical violence, several journalists have been subjected to judicial harassment. RSF has several times condemned the [judicial sanctions against Globo TV journalist Julio Ernesto Alvarado](#) who was banned from working as a journalist for 16 months after a long-drawn-out trial. The decision was confirmed by an appeal court in December 2014, despite a request from the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights a few weeks earlier to refrain from implementing the measure.

Alvarado told our correspondent: "We feel we are being persecuted, sometimes in an obvious manner and sometimes more subtly. I confess I don't have as much freedom as previously. I worry about contract killers, prosecutions and even government pressure..."

Worsening situation

Since the 2009 coup d'état, [Honduras has been among the deadliest countries for journalists in Latin America](#). A number of independent news organizations have faced threats, attacks and murder. In its [Press Freedom Barometer](#), RSF records that 12 journalists have been murdered in Honduras since the 2009 coup. This is particularly worrying since crimes against those who work in the media generally go unpunished. According to the National Commission for Human Rights (CONADEH), [96 percent of the murders of journalists recorded since 2003 remain unpunished](#).

To this can be added pressure by the authorities to muzzle freedom of information, using lawsuits against independent media organizations and creating a legislative framework conducive to censorship. At the time of its Universal Periodic Review by the UN Human Rights Commission on 8 May this year, the government presented its Law on Official Secrets and Classification of Public Information, passed by the Congress in January 2014, as a step forward for freedom of expression. But the main objective of the law, reassigning the responsibility for classifying information of public interest to each ministry and state agency, [has been described by Reporters Without Borders as an additional barrier to freedom of information](#). [The concentration of news and information in the hands of several large media groups and the widespread practice of "journalism for hire" severely hamper independent and critical news reporting](#).

[Honduras is ranked 132nd of 180 countries in the World Press Freedom Index](#) published by Reporters Without Borders in February this year.

You can download those documents on our website :

- , (JPEG - 37.3 kb)
 - , (PDF - 836 kb)
-