

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/honduras-journalist-and-human-rights-27-04-2012,42392.html>

Americas - Honduras

More threats

Journalist and human rights activist Dina Meza threatened again

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Reporters Without Borders is appalled by the threats received by journalist and human rights activist **Dina Meza**, the latest in a long list of acts of intimidation against journalists in recent months. The targets have included two other women journalists after they organized a protest in defence of free expression outside the presidential palace last December that was dispersed violently.

"We firmly condemn the repeated threats to Meza and other journalists and human rights defenders in Honduras and we urge the authorities to take whatever measures are necessary to deal with this situation, which limits freedom of expression and obstructs human rights work," Reporters Without Borders said.

Meza is a member of the Committee of Families of Detainees and Disappeared in Honduras (COFADEH) and works with the [Defensores en Línea](#) website. As a journalist, she often covers land conflicts in the Bajo Aguán region. She has reported being the target of repeated threats and acts of intimidation since February.

On 22 February, she received two SMS messages signed "Commando Alvarez Martinez" (CAM), a pseudonym often used for sending threats to human rights activists and journalists after the 2009 coup d'état. One said: "We are going to burn your 'pipa' (vagina) with caustic lime until you scream and then the whole squad will have fun. CAM." And the other said: "You'll end up dead like the Aguán people, there's nothing better than screwing whores."

While near her home with her son on 6 April, she saw two men taking photos of them. She reported receiving three calls on her mobile phone at different times of the day on 14 April from someone who said nothing. When she finally called back, a man calling himself Miguel answered and, at the end of the call, said: "Look after your pipa."

"There have been repeated acts of intimidation against [journalists and human rights activists](#) in the Aguán region, which has been militarized in response to major peasant protests about access to farmland," Reporters Without Borders said. "We alert public opinion to the gravity of this situation, in which members of peasant organizations are not the only ones who are paying dearly.

"Like Amnesty International, which recently issued an 'Urgent Action' alert about the dangers to which Meza is exposed, we urge the Honduran authorities to take effective measures to protect her, as requested by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), an offshoot of the Organization of American States.

"The authorities will be held responsible for whatever happens to Meza following these threats, which are similar to these received in December and January by 'Journalism for Life' collective

members [Itsmania Pineda Platero](#) and [Gilda Silvestrucci](#). The dissemination of pluralist news and information is largely dependent on human rights activists and civil society organizations in Honduras.”

Meza told Reporters Without Borders she is still not getting any protection from the authorities and that, as she still feels threatened, she has changed her daily routines. She is due to have a meeting in the ministry of public security in the coming days to put her case and request protection.

Although she has reported the threats to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the IACHR rapporteur for human rights defenders, she thinks the Honduran government will adopt no more than temporary measures and will not address the root of the problem.

With a total of 26 journalists killed in the past decade (including 19 since the 2009 coup and two since the start of this year), Honduras is ranked 135th out of 179 countries in the latest Reporters Without Borders [press freedom index](#).

Reporters Without Borders has also learned that TV presenter Noel Valladares was gunned down in Tegucigalpa on 23 April. He hosted the “El show del Tecolote” on *Canal 66 Maya TV*.
