

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/peru-five-journalists-attacked-during-06-07-2012,42973.html>

Americas - Peru

State of emergency

Five journalists attacked during protests against Conga mining project

6 July 2012

Five journalists were attacked and injured during violent protests against a proposed mine in the northern Cajamarca region yesterday, a day after the government declared a state of emergency in three of the region's provinces in response to the protests.

Much of the violence against the media was blamed on the special police units that intervened to disperse the demonstrations, but protesters unhappy with the media's coverage were also responsible in some cases.

"An administrative and criminal investigation into serious abuses by the police should begin at once, without awaiting a negotiated solution to the conflict," Reporters Without Borders said. "The state of emergency, which bans demonstrations, does not justify the flagrant attacks on the journalists covering these events. Their coverage is necessary. The police must not limit the public's ability to conduct an informed debate about their actions."

President Ollanta Humala's government declared the state of emergency after a day of clashes in which three demonstrators were killed and 21 were wounded, but the violence has not let up since then.

Ramiro Sánchez, the editor of the local newspaper *El Mercurio*, was clubbed by police yesterday in the city of Cajamarca. The Press and Society Institute (IPYS), a regional media freedom organization, reported that, shortly after this incident, a teargas grenade was fired at a group of journalists, injuring the photographer **Frank Chávez Silva**.

The IPYS correspondent in Cajamarca, **Luis Chillón**, told Reporters Without Borders that covering the conflict entailed an "enormous risk" for the media. He said that in the nearby town of Celendín, the site of the proposed mine, some journalists had been forced to stay indoors because of the constant shooting.

Special police units hit three journalists – ATV reporter **Francisco Landauri Miranda**, ATV cameraman **Néstor Galazar Mandujano** and *Radio Programas del Perú* reporter **Yudith Cruzado Lobato** – when they tried to cover the arrest of one of the leaders of the protests, Marco Arana.

Environmental concerns, especially the impact on local water supplies, are fuelling the strong opposition to the construction of the proposed Conga gold mine by a company in which US-based Newmont Mining Corporation is the major shareholder. The project was suspended in 2011 after local demonstrations but last week's decision to let it go ahead has sparked a renewed outcry in Peru and even internationally.

This is by no means the first time that Reporters Without Borders has seen journalists and other observers exposed to danger when they try to cover this kind of environmental or labour dispute. It has also been seen recently in various forms in [Chile](#), [Panama](#), [Colombia](#) and [Bolivia](#).

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