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Americas - Peru

Organized crime

Journalist wounded in kidnap attempt, organized crime suspected

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Feliciano Gutiérrez Suca, the daily *La República's* correspondent in the southern city of Juliaca, was shot in the leg while resisting a kidnap attempt by two gunmen near his home on 5 November. The attempted abduction appears to have been prompted by a story he wrote last month October implicating the local police in contraband activities.

"We hope there will be a thorough investigation into this attack and that, until it is completed, Gutiérrez will be given effective protection," Reporters Without Borders said. "It is hard not to suspect organized crime's involvement and its possible infiltration of the local government apparatus. For this reason, and because of the stories Gutiérrez have been covering, the police themselves must also be investigated."

Gutiérrez was approaching his home in the company of fellow journalist **Lourdes Torres Calla** on the evening of 5 November when two gunmen got out of a parked car.

"The first one told me to say nothing while the second grabbed me by the neck and then by the leg," Gutiérrez told the [local press](#). "It looked as though they wanted to kidnap me, but as I resisted, they shot me in the thigh and started to leave. They fired at me again when I managed to grab one of them, who was injured, and I pulled off his mask."

A month ago, Gutiérrez reported that a gang of smugglers known as "La Culebra" (The Snake) had bribed members of the local police to look the other way whenever contraband goods were move through Juliaca. On the basis of judicial reports, he also revealed several cases of irregular practices by the local police, including forging of certificates and use of a police vehicle for illicit activities. TV reporters were threatened after repeating Gutiérrez's allegations.

Another 60-day extension was declared yesterday to the state of emergency that has been in force for the past two years in several regions – Ayacucho, Cusco, Huancavelica and Junín – on the grounds of the need to combat organized crime and the remnants of the Sendero Luminoso guerrilla group.

The state of emergency suspends or restricts several fundamental freedoms, including freedom of assembly and freedom of movement. "It must not, however, limit the media's ability to provide the necessary investigative coverage of subjects of major public interest such as organized crime and smuggling," Reporters Without Borders added.

Read the Reporters Without Borders [report](#) on organized crime.
