

# Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/mayan-journalist-and-activist-held-20-03-2015,47714.html>

---

Arbitrary detention

## Mayan journalist and activist held for past six months

20 March 2015

---

**Reporters Without Borders is alarmed by Mayan journalist and human rights activist Pedro Canché's detention for the past six months in Felipe Carrillo Puerto, a town in the southeastern state of Quintana Roo, for criticizing the state's governor.**

[Canché](#) continues to be held although a Quintana Roo district judge ruled on 24 February that the proceedings brought against him on "sabotage" charges were arbitrary and that he had been denied due process.

His lawyer, María Araceli Andrade Tolama, told Reporters Without Borders that she filed another appeal against his arbitrary detention on 13 March but the local authorities were under clear instructions "to keep Pedro in prison for as long as possible."

"What's the point of getting a judge to recognize that proceedings violate the federal constitution's guarantees if he does not protect the victim's human rights?" said Claire San Filippo, the head of the Reporters Without Borders Americas desk.

"We call for the immediate withdrawal of all the charges against Canché on the grounds of the arbitrary nature of the proceedings against him, and we call on the Mexican authorities to stop using the judicial system to criminalize critical journalists."

Canché was arrested in Felipe Carrillo Puerto on 30 August for allegedly sabotaging the local water supply. A few days before his arrest, he published photos of local protests against water tariff hikes and a video in which he was very critical of Quintana Roo's governor.

As is often the case, the Mexican authorities began by denying that Canché was a journalist, although he has been working in journalism since the 1990s, as **Lydia Cacho**, one of Mexico's most famous investigative journalists, has confirmed.

"He poses a danger to Governor Roberto Borge both as a journalist and as an indigenous Mayan activist," Cacho said.

[Free speech NGO Article 19 has been defending Canché ever since his arrest, accusing the governor of orchestrating acts of harassment and aggression against both him and his family.](#)

Witnesses also accuse the head of the Quintana Roo branch of the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) and the private secretary of the office for State Public Defence of being involved in the campaign.

Both are known for harassing journalists and media that criticize local government policy on social media, including Lydia Cacho, Proceso reporter Sergio Caballero, and Luces del Siglo. According to Article 19, Canché continues to be persecuted in prison.

Mexico is [ranked 148th out of 180 countries in the 2015 Reporters Without Borders press freedom index](#).

(Photo: Pedro Canché's Facebook)

---