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Americas - Mexico

Murder

Community radio director gunned down in Oaxaca state

20 April 2015

Reporters Without Borders condemns the murder of a community radio station director on 14 April in the south of Mexico, the western hemisphere's deadliest country for journalists.

The victim was **Abel Manuel Bautista Raymundo**, founder and director of Radio Espacio 96.1 FM in Juchitahuaca (in Oaxaca state) and president of the Vara 7 Association of Community Radio Stations.

According to the information obtained by Reporters Without Borders, Bautista had just driven away from the radio station when he was intercepted and shot by three individuals in a car.

The motive for his murder is not yet known. In 2012, friends of Bautista mentioned a person "[envious](#)" of his success in a song without going into any detail.

A local contact told Reporters Without Borders that the authorities raided several community radio stations in the area on 17 April, confiscating broadcasting equipment. In Mexico, community radio stations often lack legal broadcast frequencies, which exposes them to repeated harassment by the authorities.

"We condemn this murder and call on both the federal and Oaxaca state authorities to conduct an independent, impartial and thorough investigation that does not rule out a possible connection to the victim's work as a journalist," said Claire San Filippo, the head of the Reporters Without Borders Americas desk.

"The priority for the authorities should be solving this murder instead of persecuting the region's community radio stations. The situation for media personnel in Mexico will continue to be disastrous as long as the police and judicial authorities fail to do their work and crimes of violence against journalists remain unpunished."

Human rights defenders and community media journalists are often the targets of violence in Oaxaca state, a region where social conflicts between indigenous communities and local authorities are frequent and criminal organizations traffic in locally produced drugs.

After *Radio Mixteca* was the target of an attack in 2009, its director, **Melchor López Rendón**, blamed municipal officials for the death threats that had been made against him. Radio station owner **Jorge Alberto Vera Carrizal's** body was found in February 2013, two months after he was abducted. His murder is still unsolved two years later.

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

(Credits: Crónica de Oaxaca)
