

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/philippines-radio-host-s-murder-highlights-03-12-2013,45543.html>

Asia - Philippines

Continuing impunity

Radio host's murder highlights dangers for journalists

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Reporters Without Borders is deeply saddened by radio journalist **Joash Dignos'** targeted killing on 29 November in Valencia City, on the southern island of Mindanao, and urges the Philippine authorities to take preventive security measures whenever a journalist is threatened.

"We offer our heartfelt condolences to the family and friends of Dignos, whose murder has again highlighted the dangers to which journalists are exposed in the Philippines," Reporters Without Borders said.

"Coming six days after the anniversary of the 2009 massacre of 32 journalists in nearby Maguindanao, now commemorated as International Day to End Impunity, the murder shows that the Philippine authorities still have a great deal to do to fulfil their duty to protect journalists and combat the continuing impunity.

"We hail the creation of a special task group to catch the perpetrators and instigators of this murder, but the authorities must act preemptively to end violence against journalists. Dignos had been threatened for some time and should have had protection. A special task group could have been created after the first threats. Execution-style killings of journalists should not be regarded as inevitable."

Dignos was murdered while with friends in a restaurant on the evening of 29 November. When he went to the toilet, four unidentified individuals gunned him down and then left on motorcycles. At least 28 gunshot wounds were found on his body.

The host of a show called *Bombardier* on *dxGT Radio Abante*, 48-year-old Dignos tackled substantive issues, did not hesitate to criticize the authorities, including Valencia's mayor, and had received death threats.

Last June, a grenade was thrown at the radio station while his programme was being broadcast. It had been pre-recorded for safety reasons and, as result, a security guard was the only person injured.

The manner of his murder was similar to that of fellow radio journalist **Jesus Tabanao**, who was shot five times by a man on a motorcycle in Kamputhaw, Cebu City, on 14 September. One of the shots hit him in the heart, killing him on the spot.

A former presenter on *Bombo Radyo Cebu*, Tabanao was a commentator for a programme on *DyRC Radyo Calungsod* that combats drug abuse and had worked for the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency since 2008.

He was killed while on his way to pick up his wife, who had been with friends celebrating the award of the "Miss Press Freedom" prize to the journalist **Jessa Marie Agua** as part of Cebu City's media freedom week.

The police said they thought Tabanao was killed in connection with his work and took his mobile phones in an attempt to establish whether he had recently received threats.

The Philippines is ranked 140th out of 179 countries in the 2013 Reporters Without Borders [press freedom index](#).

Credit photo : The PCIJ Blog
