

Reporters Without Borders

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Asia - Philippines

Murder attempt

Radio journalist wounded in shooting amid growing dangers and impunity

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Reporters Without Borders is shocked by yesterday's attempt to murder radio commentator **James Michael Licuanan** in Cagayan de Oro City, on Mindanao island. Licuanan was badly wounded when he was ambushed and shot at around 9:30 p.m. as he was returning home on a motorcycle after hosting a programme on *Bombo Radyo-Cagayan de Oro*.

"We are outraged by the continuing violence against Philippine media and we voice our full support for Licuanan," Reporters Without Borders said. "This shooting attack, which is typical of the dangers accompanying media work in the Philippines, has again underscored the urgent need for the authorities to combat crimes of violence against journalists. It must be investigated thoroughly so that it does not go unpunished."

Two gunmen on a motorcycle carried out the attack on Licuanan, who was seriously injured by a bullet that entered through the left buttock and exited through the abdomen. His assailants continue to shoot after he fell from his motorcycle but he managed to take refuge in a nearby fire station and the gunmen left on their motorcycle.

He was unconscious when he was taken to a hospital but he is no longer in danger.

Colleagues who asked not to be identified said Licuanan received anonymous telephone threats two weeks ago after discussing a drug trafficking case and local corruption on the air. He had reported on the arrest of a local drug trafficking suspect, Sammy Yusop, by the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency and had accused police of colluding with drug traffickers.

Cagayan de Oro police chief Gerardo Rosales told the German news agency *DPA* that the police believed the attack was linked to Licuanan's work as a journalist.

The Philippines is one of the world's most dangerous countries for the media, with a total of seven journalists killed so far this year. In two of the cases, the motive was clearly linked to their work as journalists. The motive has not yet been clearly established in the other cases.

Reporters Without Borders meanwhile reiterates its full support for the families of the 32 journalists who were butchered by the private militia of the then governor of Maguindanao province almost exactly two years ago, on 23 November 2009, in what was the biggest ever massacre of media personnel.
