

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/honduras-another-journalist-slain-special-16-08-2012,43232.html>

Americas - Honduras

Turning point?

Another journalist slain, special mechanism for protecting journalists announced

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José Noel Canales Lagos, a 34-year-old journalist who had worked for the [Hondudiarío](#) news website for the past 12 years, was gunned down in the capital on 10 August, bringing the number of journalists killed in the past decade to 30 (25 of them since the [June 2009 coup](#)).



This latest tragedy took place during a visit to Honduras by the UN special rapporteur for freedom of expression, Frank La Rue, from 7 to 14 August, as a result of which the government announced on 9 August that it would create a special entity for protecting journalists and solving the many murders of journalists in recent years.

"Even if this announcement expresses a real political determination, it nonetheless follows years of impunity and lack of action that have been largely responsible for the scale of the death toll," Reporters Without Borders said.

"The government's plan refers to the mechanisms for protecting journalists in Colombia but we are inevitably reminded of the Special Prosecutor's Office for Crimes against Freedom of Expression created in Mexico in 2006, which fell very far short of producing the desired results. The Mexican precedent showed that creating a special entity is less important than setting it concrete objectives and giving it the resources required to combat impunity.

"Like their Mexican colleagues, Honduran journalists – along with human rights workers, civil society representatives, lawyers and academics who provide information – will not break free of the spiral of [violent crime and censorship](#) until the way the police and judicial apparatus functions is completely overhauled.

"Will this new entity be finally capable of implementing the protective measures that the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights requested for several journalists? Will it be free to resume all the investigations that were botched or shelved? Will it be able to take account of all the violence generated by the 2009 coup and its impact on human rights and freedom of information?"

Reporters Without Borders added: "We should be wary of measures that are announced for effect when what the authorities could and should be doing is apply the law in the Canales case as it should have done in all the preceding cases."

Canales was driving to work when armed individuals aboard a taxi opened fire, hitting him in the head. The motive is not yet known. While stopping short of suggesting that the motive was linked to his work, *Hondudiaro* noted in a [tribute](#) to Canales that he had often been threatened since 2009.
