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<http://www.rsf.org/venezuela-death-threats-against-three-28-11-2014,47294.html>

Americas - Venezuela

Threats

Death threats against three journalists by National Guard members

28 November 2014

Two newspaper photographers and a TV cameraman received death threats from members of Venezuela's Bolivarian National Guard (GNB) in charge of security at David Viloría Penitentiary (also known as Uribana prison) in the western state of Lara on 24 November.

The three journalists had gone to the prison to enquire about a hunger strike that inmates had reportedly begun in protest against mistreatment by prison staff.

La Prensa photographer **Abraham Palencia** said he was manhandled by a GNB officer, who confiscated his memory card and said that he would "end up in ditch" if he published any report about his visit. The GNB also threatened *El Impulso* photographer **Edickson Durán** and *Promar Televisión* cameraman **Tomas Gaona** and seized their equipment.

"We firmly condemn these threats against journalists and urge the authorities to carry out an investigation in order to identify those responsible and bring them to justice," said Claire San Filippo, the head of the Reporters Without Borders America's desk.

Filippo added: "It is unacceptable that the Bolivarian National Guard is again preventing journalists from doing their work. These abuses must not go unpunished."

The GNB, which is in charge of internal security in Venezuela, was already guilty of abusive treatment of media personnel earlier this year. Many local and foreign journalists were insulted, attacked and arbitrarily detained during a wave of street protests in the first few months of 2014.

The National Union of Venezuelan Journalists (SNTP) reported that there were a total of 231 cases of journalists being subjected to abusive treatment during the first six months of the year, and that the GNB was responsible for [62 per cent of the cases](#).

Prison conditions are appalling in Venezuela. The prisons are violent, overcrowded and disease-ridden, and prison staff corruption is endemic. At least 13 inmates reportedly died today from pharmaceutical drug intoxication in David Viloría Penitentiary.

Venezuela is ranked 116th out of 180 countries in the 2014 Reporters Without Borders [press freedom index](#).
