

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/philippines-death-threats-against-reporter-who-31-01-2014,45816.html>

Asia - Philippines

Threatening texts

Death threats against reporter who survived 2004 murder attempt

31 January 2014

Reporters Without Borders is very concerned about the harassment and death threats to which **Arthur "Jun" Sapanghari, Jr.**, an investigative radio reporter based in Valencia City, in the southern province of Bukidnon, has been subjected since early December.

"Sapanghari's investigative reporting seems to be the main cause of these threats and there is every reason to be concerned, given the level of danger for media personnel in the Philippines and the impunity enjoyed by those who murder journalists," said Benjamin Ismaïl, the head of the Reporters Without Borders Asia-Pacific desk.

"We urge the Valencia City authorities to provide this journalist and his family with good protection and to conduct an investigation in order to establish who is responsible for these threats."

Sapanghari, who works for *dxDB Radyo Bandilyo*, has been receiving SMS messages threatening him and his family. He has also reported that individuals have been watching both him and members of this family during their movements around the city.

He did not take the threats seriously until an individual with his face partially covered went to his home on 17 January and asked his wife where he was. When she said he was at work, the masked individual left hastily on his motorcycle, the licence number of which was concealed.

Aware that he was in danger, especially after one of his friends was also threatened for helping him, Sapanghari requested protection from the Bukidnon police. He was assigned two police officers for his protection but they were withdrawn after a week.

Sapanghari's investigative reporting resulted in the recent arrests of a man allegedly implicated in illegal logging and a man suspected of involvement in trafficking in children.

Sapanghari survived a murder attempt in November 2004 after he covered a corruption case implicating a municipal employee in neighbouring Maramag. In March 2010, he was beaten by several individuals, possibly in connection with a report about the closure of pig farm.

One of the messages he received in December said: "You're not going to make it to Christmas. You're next after Dignos." It referred to [Joash Dignos](#), a journalist who was gunned down in Valencia City in November.

Dignos is one of a total of four journalists who have been killed in the Philippines since September. The others are [Jesus Tabanao](#), [Michael Diaz Milo](#) and [Rogelio Butalid](#).

Ranked 140th out of 179 countries in the 2013 Reporters Without Borders [press freedom index](#), the Philippines is [one of the world's deadliest](#) countries for journalists.

Credit photo: PCIJ
