

# Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/panama-radio-station-owned-murdered-22-11-2011,41431.html>

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Americas - Panama

Harassment and corruption

## Radio station owned murdered during media campaign against violence

22 November 2011

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The murder of a radio station owner has punctuated the "Basta ya!" campaign in defence of freedom of expression that Panama's most influential news media have been waging since last month in response to a growing number of threats and attacks on journalists.

**Darío Fernández Jaén**, the owner and programme director of *Radio Mi Favorita*, was murdered by two individuals in Penononé, in the central province of Coclé, as he was returning home with his son on 6 November. Fernández was also a leading member of the opposition Democratic Revolutionary Party (PRD) and had been Coclé's governor in the past.

"Even if Fernández was not a professional journalist, he spoke on the air on a subject of public interest – corruption – thereby taking the risks that many journalists take," Reporters Without Borders said. "We would like justice to be rendered promptly in this case, for the sake of freedom of information and diversity of opinion.

"Solving this murder quickly would be the best possible signal that the authorities could send to the media, which are rightly concerned about the currently government's tendency to complicate and often [obstruct their work](#)."

Fernández hosted a programme in which he was very critical of the current president, Ricardo Martinelli, and his administration. The murder motive may have been linked to his recent claims that illegal land titles had been issued in Coclé province. Two people have been named as the suspected perpetrators of the murder and one of them, after being arrested, reportedly confessed to having been hired to carry it out.

The fight against corruption and impunity is one the battle-cries of the current campaign by representatives of eight media including the dailies *La Prensa* and *Mi Diario* and the TV station *TVN*. One of its main criticisms is harassment by police, government agencies and prominent pro-government figures of journalists and members of the public who dare to speak out about corruption.

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