

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/paraguay-paraguayan-reporter-gunned-down-on-09-03-2015,47668.html>

Americas - Paraguay

Murder

Paraguayan reporter gunned down on Brazilian side of border

9 March 2015

Last week's murder of Gerardo Servian Coronel, a radio journalist based in the Paraguayan border town of Zanja Pytá, in the eastern department of Amambay, has again highlighted the dangers for journalists working in Paraguay's northeastern border region.

Servian, who worked for *Radio Ciudad Nueva*, a local station, was gunned down by two men on a motorcycle on 4 March while in the nearby Brazilian border city of Ponta Porã.

The Paraguayan Union of Journalists (SPP) said Servian was critical of the local government. *Radio Ciudad Nueva* owner **Miguel Orlando** said he did not know if Servian had received threats.

Servian's brother, fellow journalist Gerardo Servian, received death threats after working with **Santiago Leguizamón**, a radio journalist whose April 1991 murder is still unpunished. Leguizamón ran *Radio Mburucuyá*, a station based in Pedro Juan Caballero (15 km northwest of Zanja Pytá).

"We urge the Brazilian authorities to conduct an exhaustive, independent and impartial investigation into Servian's murder and to not rule out the possibility that it was linked to his journalistic work," said Claire San Filippo, the head of the Reporters Without Borders America's desk.

"His death must not join this border region's long list of unpunished murders of journalists. We urge the Paraguayan and Brazilian authorities to establish effective protective measure for journalists in this region so that they can work without fearing for their lives."

According to organizations that defend Paraguayan journalists, Servian is the 17th journalist to be murdered in Paraguay in the past two decades. Most of these murders have been reprisals for investigative reporting on the links between organized crime and politics.

Servian was murdered one day after Wilmar "Neneco" Acosta, the former mayor of Ypehú, a Paraguayan border town in the neighbouring department of Canindeyú, was arrested in the Brazilian city of Dourados for allegedly instigating the murders of *ABC Color* reporter **Pablo Medina** and his assistant, **Antonia Ledesma**, in Canindeyú in October 2014.

Medina had been threatened repeatedly in connection with his coverage of drug trafficking in the region.

Paraguay's northeastern border region, including Amambay department, is a hub of trafficking of drugs to South America's Southern Cone. It is extremely dangerous for journalists, who are the frequent victims of violence by traffickers and corrupt local authorities.

Two journalists were murdered in Paraguay in direct connection with their work in 2014. Impunity continues to be the rule and the country suffers from the lack of a national mechanism for protecting media personnel.

Paraguay is ranked 109th out of 180 countries in the [2015 Reporters Without Borders press freedom index](#).
