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Colombia: FARC urged to release French journalist

The FARC should release a French journalist held captive since 28 April immediately and unconditionally, said Amnesty International today.

Roméo Langlois was seized by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) during a confrontation between the armed group and the military in Caqueta, a department in South Colombia. The journalist was travelling with the Colombian army.

In a statement released on Monday, a spokesperson for the FARC outlined a series of conditions for his release including a demand for a public debate on the way media outlets cover the conflict in the South American country.

"While a debate on freedom of expression and the manner in which the media cover the conflict in Colombia could be positive, it should not be used as a pretext to hold a journalist captive," said Susan Lee, Americas Director at Amnesty International.

"Langlois must be released immediately without any conditions and measures should be taken to ensure that all journalists in Colombia can carry out their work freely."

Over the past decades, Amnesty International has documented hundreds of cases of unlawful killings, hostage-taking, forced displacement and the recruitment of children at the hands of guerrilla groups in Colombia, including by FARC and the National Liberation Army (ELN).

Paramilitary groups and the security forces, either acting alone or in collusion with each other, are also responsible for crimes under international law, including unlawful killings, enforced disappearances, and forced displacement.