

URGENT ACTION

BROTHER OF KILLED JOURNALIST AT RISK

Following the killing of Honduran journalist Juan Carlos Argeñal on 7 December, his brother, Mario Argeñal, has become the target of intimidation and harassment for speaking publicly about the incident and demanding justice from the authorities. The investigation into Juan Carlos Argeñal's death has not moved forward.

Mario Argeñal has given several interviews to national media since the killing of **Juan Carlos Argeñal** on 7 December, making a link between the journalist's exposure of corruption in local government and his killing. Mario Argeñal has also been liaising with the authorities to demand justice. The Argeñal family is concerned that nearly three months after the killing of Juan Carlos, the investigation has not moved forward.

Amnesty International was informed that Mario Argeñal has been subjected to acts of intimidation and harassment since he began demanding justice on behalf of his brother. On several occasions between 11 and 15 December 2013, two pickup vehicles with no licence plates drove around his house late at night. Most recently on 24 February between 2 and 4pm, a man was stationed outside Mario Argeñal's house in a car for several hours before driving off. Mario Argeñal is at risk of further intimidation and harassment because of his quest for justice.

Please write immediately in Spanish or your own language:

- Reminding the authorities of their obligations to carry out a full, impartial and independent investigation into the killing of Juan Carlos Argeñal, to make the results public and to bring those responsible to justice;
- Urging them to take immediate steps to fully provide appropriate protection to Mario Argeñal and his family, in strict accordance with their wishes;
- Calling on them to establish a protection mechanism for human rights defenders and journalists following consultation with civil society in accordance with their recommendations and needs.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 15 APRIL 2014 TO:

Attorney General

Oscar Chinchilla Banegas
Ministerio Público, Lomas del Guijarro
Avenida República Dominicana
Edificio Lomas Plaza II
Tegucigalpa, Honduras
Fax: +504 2221 5667
Twitter: @MP_Honduras
Salutation: Dear Attorney General

Minister of Interior

Sr. Arturo Corrales
Secretaría de Estado en el Despacho de
Seguridad
Aldea el Ocotal, Antiguo Local de la
Academia Nacional de Policía ANAPO
Tegucigalpa, Honduras
Email: comunicacionCNDS@gmail.com
**Salutation: Señor Ministro del Interior/
Dear Minister of Interior**

And copies to:

Central America team
Amnesty International
Email: equipoca@amnesty.org

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the first update of UA 329/13. Further information:

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR37/018/2013/en>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

On 7 December 2013 Juan Carlos Argeñal, a journalist who reported on corruption, was shot dead by two unidentified men in his house in Danlí, in the southern department of El Paraíso. He was a correspondent for both Radio Globo and Globo TV, as well as the owner of a local TV station and an activist for the Freedom and Re-foundation Party (Partido Libertad y Refundación LIBRE).

Journalists defending human rights play a critical role in exposing human rights violations that otherwise would remain shrouded in secrecy. In Honduras Amnesty International has documented an increase in the number of death threats and attacks against human rights defenders, journalists and bloggers, as affirmed in the regional report *Transforming Pain into Hope: Human Rights Defenders in the Americas*, published 7 December 2012, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR01/006/2012/en>.

Aníbal Barrow, a journalist for Globo TV in Honduras, was abducted on 24 June. After news of his abduction came to light, the authorities began a search for him in the area surrounding San Pedro Sula. Following two weeks of searches by the authorities, the journalist's dead body of Aníbal Barrow was found and four individuals were arrested in July 2013. An additional arrest in relation to the case was made in November 2013 (see UA 165/13, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR37/004/2013/en>).

According to the National Commissioner for Human Rights, 30 journalists and 70 lawyers have been killed in Honduras since January 2010 when the current government took office. In November 2013 there were general elections in Honduras. In the months before the polls, media reported of dozens of attacks against candidates or party activists. A significant quantity of these attacks occurred against LIBRE party activists.

Impunity is rife in Honduras. Among the dozens of cases of human rights violations and abuses committed against human rights defenders in the last five years, according to the information Amnesty International has received, in only one case were those responsible prosecuted, convicted and sentenced. In April 2013, the then Attorney General explained to the National Congress that the Attorney General's Office only had the capacity to investigate 20% of the country's homicides. This institution is overwhelmed by the high levels of violence and crime in the country and it lacks the necessary resources to do its job effectively. In some cases even the prosecutors themselves have been afraid of taking action given the dangerous context. The justice system in the country should be strengthened and adequately resourced.

Name: Mario Argeñal, Juan Carlos Argeñal
Gender m/f: m

Further information on UA: 329/13 Index: AMR 37/004/2014 Issue Date: 4 March 2014