



## **Arévalo-Harris Dialogue: Free Press Organizations Urge Concrete Action**

On the occasion of the upcoming visit of Guatemalan President Bernardo Arévalo to the White House, we, freedom of expression organizations, urgently call on Vice President Kamala Harris and President Arévalo to address the press freedom situation in Guatemala during their meeting scheduled for March 25.

It is imperative that the agenda for discussion includes the current state of press freedom in Guatemala, which has been severely attacked in recent years. We especially highlight the case of journalist Jose Rubén Zamora, who has spent more than 600 days in indefinite conditional imprisonment.

Zamora's case starkly illustrates how the judicial system is manipulated to target journalists and erode press freedom in Guatemala. The Guatemalan government must undertake an extraordinary response to remedy the ongoing injustice against Zamora, a prominent veteran journalist. Since February, his retrial hearings have been delayed three times without clear cause, a blatant tactic to prolong Zamora's detention and hinder his ability to mount a proper defense or seek alternative solutions.

It is also of utmost importance to address the persistent impunity for crimes committed against journalists and the urgent need for the Arévalo government to fulfill its commitment to establish an effective mechanism for the protection of journalists' rights and safety. This mechanism must guarantee significant participation of journalistic voices in its formulation to ensure the effectiveness and durability of protection measures.

The threats faced by the Guatemalan press have been extensively documented in a report prepared by a press freedom mission in 2023, which registered a system of intimidation, silencing and restrictions to the free exercise of journalism. Notably, local and indigenous press has suffered harassment and criminalization in territories where national and international companies have partnered with organized crime and local authorities to silence journalistic investigations.

President Arevalo's visit to Vice President Harris represents a unique opportunity to make a strong joint statement in defense of press freedom, support efforts to free Zamora and defend journalists criminalized in recent years.

We urge Vice President Harris and President Arévalo to take concrete actions to promote and protect press freedom in Guatemala, recognizing its fundamental role in strengthening democracy and respect for human rights in the country.

**Signatures:**

Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ)  
Protection International- Mesoamerica Office  
Fundamedios  
ARTICLE 19 Oficina para México y Centroamérica  
Free Press Unlimited  
Reporteros Sin Fronteras (RSF)  
Freedom House  
National Press Club  
Inter American Press Association (IAPA)