

Honduras: International Organizations Condemn Serious Attacks on the Press

August 25, 2025 - ARTICLE 19 Mexico and Central America, ASOPODEHU, the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), Reporters Without Borders (RSF), Free Press Unlimited (FPU), PEN Honduras, and PEN International collaborated on a joint report to the United Nations Universal Periodic Review (UPR) concerning the state of press freedom in Honduras. Ahead of the August 26-29 UPR pre-sessions, the organizations express grave concern over recent attacks on journalists and media outlets, occurring within a broader context of escalating harassment, threats, criminalization, and stigmatization by state actors.

On May 18, 2025, journalist Frank Mejía was [harassed](#) at his home, where National Police agents allegedly entered illegally in Comayagüela, claiming they were searching for a missing person. During the operation, Mejía was reportedly handcuffed, beaten, threatened with death, and stripped of his personal belongings. The journalist expressed fear for his safety, that of his family, and his colleagues.

The aggression against Mejía is part of a series of judicial criminalization cases against media outlets and journalists. At least [12 media outlets](#), including *El Herald*o, *La Prensa*, *La Tribuna*, *Radio América*, *Abriendo Brecha*, *CHTV*, *HCH*, *Criterio HN*, *Noticias 24/7*, *Q'Hubo TV*, *Hondudiario*, and *RCV*, are facing ongoing legal complaints with the Public Prosecutor's Office. These actions are reportedly promoted by state authorities, including senior military officials, in response to reporting on matters of public interest.

On May 26, the official publication of the Armed Forces, *FF.AA. Digital*, released an article titled "Hitmen of the Truth," unjustifiably [accusing](#) three journalists —Rodrigo Wong Arévalo, Dagoberto Rodríguez, and Juan Carlos Sierra— of being enemies of the state. The publication included their photos, aiming to stigmatize, intimidate, and criminalize their journalistic work.

This attack came after a report published by *Abriendo Brecha*, led by Wong, on the misappropriation of funds by the Armed Forces, and Rodríguez's show of solidarity during the reception of the Álvaro Contreras Award given by the Honduran Journalists' Association. It followed the [statement](#) issued jointly by the Secretariat of National Defense and the Armed Forces against Wong. It also came after Dagoberto Rodríguez denounced irregularities in the delivery of electoral materials during the primary elections — a responsibility of the Armed Forces — during the award ceremony.

On June 1, it was [reported](#) that 50-year-old Salvadoran journalist Javier Antonio Hércules Salinas was shot and killed in Santa Rosa de Copán, western Honduras, while driving a taxi home. According to public information, two men on a motorcycle shot him inside the vehicle. Hércules had been under state protection through the Protection Mechanism since 2023, after receiving threats and being kidnapped in November that year. He worked for the channel *ATN a Todo Noticias*.

A day after Hércules' case became public, reporter Gustavo Bustillos and his cameraman from *Televiscentro* were [victims](#) of pursuit and intimidation. On Monday, June 2, after a live broadcast

at around 6 a.m., while they were in a vehicle, an unknown man on a motorcycle repeatedly made his presence known. He then followed them along San Isidro Avenue from Central Plaza to La Ceiba's City Hall, where they took refuge in the National Police facilities. On June 3, one of them was informed that two armed men had visited their office asking about both of them.

Furthermore, in the department of Colón, journalism remains at risk. Land and territorial conflicts, exacerbated by the presence of organized crime in the area, increase the likelihood of violence against journalists covering these issues. This includes cases like that of Héctor Madrid from *TN5* in Tocoa, who nearly a year ago was [attacked](#) through damage to his vehicle and is now facing stigmatizing accusations and threats to his physical safety.

The signatory organizations have submitted a [report](#) to the United Nations Universal Periodic Review Working Group, warning of the ongoing crisis of freedom of expression in Honduras. The analysis includes laws that restrict freedom of expression and the press; killings and assaults against journalists and community and Indigenous media; threats to academic freedom; limited equal participation of women journalists and authors in media and publishing in the country; as well as violence against women journalists and historically marginalized communities.

The report emphasizes that Honduras has one of the most complex and unstable human rights contexts in Latin America and requires immediate attention from the international community. The conditions for exercising freedom of expression and press have deteriorated due to current political polarization. Impunity rates remain high, and given the extension of the state of emergency in Honduras, the outlook for the general elections on November 30 is concerning.

The organizations call on the State of Honduras to:

- Immediately and thoroughly investigate the attack against Frank Mejía and the murder of Javier Hércules, ensuring justice and full reparation for their families and the journalism community.
- Guarantee effective and immediate protective measures for the threatened journalists, especially Rodrigo Wong Arévalo, Dagoberto Rodríguez, and Juan Carlos Sierra.
- End the use of criminal mechanisms to intimidate or censor media and journalists, close ongoing legal complaints, and ensure editorial independence.
- Halt stigmatization and smear campaigns promoted by state institutions, including the Armed Forces.
- Ensure conditions for the free and safe practice of journalism in the pre-election context and beyond, fostering an environment that respects pluralism and public criticism, and improve the functioning of the Protection Mechanism to address violence against journalists.

