



LATIN AMERICA

The Assembly of Delegates of PEN International meeting at its 79th World Congress in Reykjavik, Iceland, 9th to 12th September 2013

The continued state of undeclared war in many regions of Latin America among drug cartels, corrupted political interests, and rogue state security elements has resulted in the deaths of tens of thousands of people in recent years, including scores of writers and journalists:

In Mexico, since December 2006, at least 49 print and internet journalists and writers have been killed, with a particular spike in 2011 and 2012. At least nine other print journalists have disappeared since December 2006. Nearly all these crimes remain unsolved and unpunished. According to the government's own statistics, in the first four months of President Enrique Peña Nieto's mandate an average of 35 people were killed each day as the result of organised crime.

Honduras is currently one of the most dangerous countries for journalists in the region and in the world. Up to 36 journalists have been murdered since the June 2009 coup d'état.

In Brazil, at least 11 print and internet journalists have been murdered since 2010.

Writers in other Latin American states have likewise suffered rising threats and attacks.

In the light of this dire situation, PEN International calls on the governments of the region, and in particular those of Mexico, Honduras and Brazil, to:

- Ensure that all murders and disappearances of journalists and writers, as well as any other unsolved murders and disappearances, are properly investigated and the perpetrators brought to justice;
- Make public information on the state of the investigations into the murders and disappearances of these journalists and writers;
- Ensure that all allegations of attacks against journalists and writers being carried out by government entities at any level are fully and promptly investigated as a matter of urgency;
- Ensure that all necessary laws are in place enabling authorities to investigate and prosecute crimes against journalists and freedom of expression, and that sufficient financial, material and human resources are allocated in order to carry out this work;
- Address and correct weakness in current protection mechanism for journalists and human rights defenders.

It further calls upon all the relevant committees and working bodies within PEN International to redouble their efforts to make the relevant governments accountable for serious investigations into the murders, leading to prosecutions and convictions of the perpetrators.