

Mexican radio journalist fatally shot in Veracruz state

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A journalist holds a sign that reads 'Justice for our comrade Jacinto' during a march to protest against the Mexican radio journalist's killing [Felix Marquez/AP]

Mexico City, August 21 (RHC)-- A Mexican radio journalist has been fatally shot in the Mexican Gulf coast state of Veracruz. Jacinto Romero Flores was gunned down in the community of Potrerillo, in the township of Ixtaczoquitlan, on Thursday, Hugo Gutierrez Maldonado, the head of Veracruz state security agency, said on Twitter.

"We reiterate that there will be no impunity nor will we allow anyone to intimidate the population," Gutierrez said. Romero worked for Ori Stereo 99.3 FM. "The media are not the cause nor the effect of violence in the country, but we do suffer the consequences for carrying out journalism and communication," it said in a statement.

The State Commission for Attention to and Protection of Journalists condemned the killing and called on the state prosecutor's office to open a full investigation, including into what role, if any, Romero's journalism played in his murder.

Press freedom organisation Article 19 said Romero had received threats. The U.S.-based Committee to Protect Journalists said on Twitter it "learned of and strongly condemns the murder of reporter Jacinto Romero in the state of Veracruz and urges authorities to undertake a swift, transparent and exhaustive investigation into the killing."

Veracruz has for years been one of Mexico's most deadly states for reporters. Multiple organised crime groups operate within the state and have infiltrated local and state government. Journalists marched late on Thursday in the port city of Veracruz in response to Romero's killing.

Press groups say nine journalists were killed in Mexico in 2020, making it the most dangerous country for reporters outside of war zones. Romero is at least the fifth journalist killed in Mexico this year.

Prior to Romero's killing, at least 141 journalists have been murdered in the country because of their work since 2000, according to a tally kept by Article 19. Earlier this month, the Jalisco New Generation cartel publicly threatened to kill a prominent television news anchor.

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