



UNITED STATES MISSION TO UNESCO

June 14, 2018

Mr. Guy Berger
Director
Division for Freedom of Expression and
Media Development Communication and Information Sector
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
7 place de Fontenoy
75352 Paris 07 SP

Dear Mr. Berger,

Thank you for your letter dated April 4, 2018 regarding the status of the legal investigation of the killing of Jacinto Hernández Torres, a journalist whose body was discovered on June 13, 2016 in Garland, Texas. Your letter also invited the United States to provide information on steps it has undertaken to promote journalist safety and address the issue of impunity.

The United States Department of State passed your letter to the Garland Police Department in Garland, Texas. In response, the Garland Police Department notified us that they have no new information to report in the investigation. The suspect, Anibal Mejia, remains at large and has not been arrested. We have noted in our response in the enclosed document that the Garland Police Department does not suspect that the murder of Mr. Hernandez Torres is connected to his profession as a journalist.

The United States strongly supports UNESCO's efforts to foster freedom of expression and media freedom, including its programs that advocate for the safety of journalists and address the issue of impunity. The United States remains engaged on this issue by co-sponsoring related decisions and resolutions at UNESCO, the UN General Assembly, UN Human Rights Council, and the UN Security Council; by supporting the mandate of the UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression; and by supporting UNESCO's role in implementing the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity.

The United States also engages in a broad range of related activities to foster freedom of expression. The Department of State's "Free the Press" campaign in 2017 highlighted cases of journalists who were detained, persecuted, missing, or whose whereabouts were listed as unknown. Our International Visitor Leadership Program supports the promotion of freedom of the press by inviting hundreds of journalists each year to the United States to meet with stakeholders who promote media freedom around the world.

The Department of State's "Securing Access to Freedom of Expression (SAFE) Initiative" provides training on digital and physical security and psychosocial care for journalists, bloggers and other media actors; compiles and continually updates region-specific information on digital and physical security and psychosocial care for journalists, bloggers, media actors, and those who train journalists; provides threat-mitigation plans to the most at-risk journalists; and maintains Regional Security Advisory Networks that assist journalists under threat, build multistakeholder networks, and raise awareness of journalist safety issues among governments and international organizations.

The information contained in this response can be released publicly.

Sincerely,

for Edie Backman
Political Advisor

Chris Hegadorn
Chargé d'Affaires, a.i.

Enclosure :

Impunity Monitoring Mechanisms Model Guidelines – U.S. Response - 2018

Model Table assisting responses by Member States

Section 1: Table

Current List of Journalists Killed (as condemned by the UNESCO Director-General) and Legal Investigations (as reported by UNESCO Member States)

Date: To be sent to UNESCO before 30 May 2018

Name of journalist	Gender	Date of alleged murder	Investigating Authority	Case Number	Current Status	Verdict	Additional remarks
Jacinto Hernández Torres	Male	June 13, 2016	Garland, TX Police Department	F-1624159	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Case is under official investigation - Suspect not yet apprehended 	<p>Date of verdict: Suspect is still at large.</p> <p>Name of alleged perpetrator(s): Anibal Edilfredo Chirino Mejia</p> <p>Sentenced to: N/A</p>	<p>The Garland TX Police Department does not suspect Mr. Hernández Torres was killed as a result of his line of work.</p> <p>For more information, see:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Garland TX Wanted Suspects - July 27, 2016 report in the Garland Texan - Search for courts case information at Dallas County

Section 2: Positive or Innovative Measures the Member State is taking to promote safety of journalists and combat impunity

Activity	Actors	Outcome(s)
2017 “Free the Press” campaign	U.S. Department of State	Publication of cases of journalists who were detained, persecuted, missing, or whose whereabouts were listed as unknown
International Visitor Leadership Program	U.S. Department of State sponsored program; government, civil society and media actors	Program supports the promotion of freedom of the press by inviting hundreds of journalists each year to the United States to meet with stakeholders who promote media freedom around the world.
“Securing Access to Freedom of Expression (SAFE) Initiative”	Government officials, civil society and media actors	Provides integrated trainings on digital and physical safety and psychosocial care to journalists, bloggers, media actors and social communicators in twelve countries around the world; provides threat-mitigation plans to the most at-risk journalists; and maintains Regional Security Advisory Networks that assist journalists under threat, build multistakeholder networks, and raise awareness of journalist safety issues among governments and international organizations.

Section 3: Steps the Member State has taken to consider the specific risks faced by women journalists in the exercise of their work

The United States did not program any events specific to women journalists or gender equality issues in the media in 2017.

Section 4: Agreement to post the submitted information on UNESCO’s dedicated webpage

The U.S. Department of State agrees to post the submitted information on UNESCO’s dedicated webpage.