

Mexican journalist and two-year-old son missing

PARIS, FRANCE / VIENNA, AUSTRIA / MEXICO CITY, MEXICO: The International Press Institute (IPI) and the World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers (WAN-IFRA) have called on Mexican authorities to immediately investigate last Friday's mysterious disappearance of a Mexican crime journalist and her two-year-old son.



Hypathia Stephanía Rodríguez Cardoso, who works for *Zócalo Saltillo* newspaper in the state of Coahuila, was last seen attending a celebration with her son and several colleagues late on Thursday night in honour of Freedom of Expression Day, according to Mexican media sources.

She reportedly telephoned colleagues just after 0200 Friday morning to say she had arrived home safely, but did not show up for work later that day.

Concerned family members who had come to look for Rodríguez Cardoso found her home in disarray, news reports said. A camera belonging to the journalist had been smashed and her car was missing.

Extremely concerned

IPI deputy director Anthony Mills said: "We are extremely concerned for the well-being of Stephanía Cardoso and her son. While the reason for her disappearance is not yet known, Mexican journalists, particularly those who cover organised crime and police activity, are being targeted because of their work with chilling frequency. Local, state, and federal officials must act with the utmost urgency to find Stephanía and her son and ensure their safety."

WAN-IFRA director of Press Freedom, Alison Meston said: "It is the duty of the state to guarantee the safety of media professionals in a democracy.

Authorities need to put an immediate end to the wave of violence currently curtailing the free flow of information and freedom of expression in Mexico."

After the journalist's mother officially reported her daughter and grandson missing to authorities on Saturday, Coahuila governor Rubén Moreira Valdez ordered state prosecutor Homero Ramos Gloria to open an investigation, *Zócalo Saltillo* and *Proceso* reported.

Rodríguez Cardoso's disappearance comes less than three weeks after a crime journalist in Sonora, Marco Antonio Ávila García, was kidnapped and later found tortured and killed. Five journalists have been murdered in Mexico since April 28, including well-known *Proceso* investigative reporter Regina Martínez.

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