

URGENT ACTION

JOURNALISTS OUT OF IMMEDIATE DANGER

Menchi Barriocanal and Oscar Acosta, Paraguayan journalists and married couple who were threatened with imprisonment by President Horacio Cartes, have stopped receiving threats and seem to be out of immediate danger of being arbitrarily detained.

Menchi Barriocanal informed Amnesty International that the president's imprisonment threats stopped after the organization launched its Urgent Action on their situation in late June 2017 and their case received international media coverage.

President Horacio Cartes threatened Menchi Barriocanal and **Oscar Acosta** with imprisonment on 23 June during his participation in a rally in Ciudad del Este, where he falsely accused them of inciting violence during demonstrations that took place in Paraguay in March.

Menchi Barriocanal and Oscar Acosta had actively exposed a bi-partisan manoeuvre supported by the president of Paraguay to amend the Constitution to allow re-elections. The exposed proposal resulted in popular outrage with scores of people demonstrating against it on the streets. Police responded with use of tear gas and rubber bullets. The Paraguayan Congress was set on fire and the first day of protests ended with one death, dozens of people injured, and more than 200 people detained. When protests erupted, representatives from the ruling party (Partido Colorado) immediately publicly accused Menchi Barriocanal and Oscar Acosta of igniting the protests and inciting violent incidents, although the journalists had simply reported on the attempted Congressional amendment.

No further action is required of the UA network at this time. Many thanks to all who sent appeals.

This is the first update of UA 154/17. Further information: www.amnesty.org/en/documents/amr45/6614/2017/en/

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