



PRESS RELEASE

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AFP PROTESTS PHOTOJOURNALIST'S EXPULSION FROM NICARAGUA

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE SENT A LETTER TO THE NICARAGUAN GOVERNMENT TO PROTEST CHILEAN PHOTOJOURNALIST HECTOR RETAMAL'S ARREST AND EXPULSION FROM MANAGUA.

"On behalf of AFP, I strongly protest Hector Retamal's arrest and conditions of detention. He was held for four days without being allowed to communicate with the outside world. He was denied legal assistance, then deported," wrote AFP's director for Latin America, Juliette Hollier-Larousse, in her letter to Mrs Rosario Murillo, the president's spokesperson and the first lady of Nicaragua.

AFP demands an explanation for the treatment of photojournalist Hector Retamal, who was arrested on Tuesday 7 May while doing his job. He was on his way to the presidential residence to cover the meeting between President Ortega and Palestinian foreign minister Riyad al-Malki.

Mr Retamal was held for four days at the police station which handles terrorism, drug trafficking, and organised crime. During his detention, Mr Retamal was not able to meet with a lawyer. Only twice was he allowed visits from the Chilean consulate. He was deported Saturday to San Jose, Costa Rica.

No official explanation has been given. "I am outraged that our photojournalist was treated this way," added Juliette Hollier-Larousse. "In Nicaragua, AFP was doing its job of reporting the news in an objective, reliable manner, just as it does in the other 149 countries where we work. It is absolutely crucial that we are able to continue to work under satisfactory conditions." She concluded by expressing her confidence that the Nicaraguan government would allow this to happen.

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