

PERÚ: RADIO STATION'S LICENSE IS CANCELLED. MEASURE SEEN AS A PUNISHMENT FOR THE WAY IN WHICH IT REPORTED ABOUT THE AMAZONIAN CONFLICT, Instituto Prensa y Sociedad (IPYS)

Lima, 12 June 2009

On 8 June 2009, the Ministry for Transport and Communications (MTC) canceled Radio La Voz de Bagua Grande's license stating it cannot operate because it has not had its transmitter homologated. The station operates from Bagua, a town in the Amazonas region, in northeastern Perú.

The radio station's director, José Flores Burgos, stated to IPYS that the measure is a form of reprisal against the station from the government because of the way in which it reported on the confrontation between the native communities and the Police which took place in that area on 5 June and caused the death of 24 policemen and 9 civilians.

Flores explained that on the day, the station was open to all citizens who wished to denounce the alleged abuse committed by the authorities against the natives, such as the disappearance of several of them. The radio also reported a higher number of casualties and disappearances based on unofficial figures quoted by citizens, human rights NGOs and members of the Catholic Church.

After the events, the Home Secretary, Mercedes Cabanillas, asked publicly for the radio station to be closed down, accusing it of instigating the population to violence during the confrontation.

Flores declared to IPYS that the station will appeal against the MTC's measure, as it is already processing the homologation of its equipment. The journalist stated to IPYS that last February they were informed by the MTC itself that their request was being processed; but that they would wait for other media outlets to present the same request in order process them all as a group.