



As Guatemala's elPeriódico closes, SIF reiterates its support for independent journalism in Central America

May 12, 2023. Guatemala's elPeriódico reported this morning that it will stop publishing its daily edition as of Monday, May 15. After ten months of resistance following the arrest of its President and Founder José Rubén Zamora, and measures to respond to the constant political, legal and economic pressures against them, the media outlet announced its closure.

The Seattle International Foundation (SIF) deeply regrets the closure of one of the bastions of journalism in Central America. elPeriódico has been a benchmark for investigative journalism, monitoring actors in power, and quality reporting throughout its 27 years of existence. Both its President and journalists received numerous national and international awards for their work.

Zamora and his team of journalists were permanent watchdogs of public spending and courageously exposed abuse of power in Guatemala. With its seasoned, innovative, and creative journalism, elPeriódico contributed to forming a more informed and critical public, and compelled the country's institutions to fulfill their role and initiate proceedings against beneficiaries of corruption and impunity.

Along with other independent media outlets in the country, elPeriódico has contributed to the defense of the rule of law and, ultimately, to the development of a country whose citizens, like its media, are fighting back despite the persecution, harassment and attacks against them.

The closure of Guatemala's elPeriódico is deeply concerning, not only because it is a loss for journalism and for the general public, but also because it represents a serious blow to democracy. It is indicative of the persecution that journalists suffer for informing the public and exercising their freedom of expression.

Our Independent Journalism Fund (IJF) stands in solidarity with José Rubén Zamora and his family who had to make this difficult and unfortunate decision, as well as in the legal fight that lies ahead. We also express our solidarity with the journalists and allies who accompanied elPeriódico until the very end, and with the journalism sector at large, given the restrictions to do their work, and the persecution many are facing. We stand with the people of Guatemala whose rights to access of information and freedom of expression are being curtailed.

We reiterate our commitment to support independent journalism in the country and in Central America, and to contribute to the defense of freedom of information and expression, inalienable and fundamental rights in any democracy.