

EMBASSY OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Paris, September 23, 2019

Mr. Guy Berger
Director, Division for Freedom of Expression and Media Development
Communication and Information Sector
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
7, place de Fontenoy, Bureau 5.010
75352 Paris

Dear Mr. Berger:


Thank you for your letter dated September 12, 2019 regarding the status of the legal investigation of the killing of Jacinto Hernández Torres, a journalist whose body was discovered on June 13, 2016 in Garland, Texas; and the legal investigation of the killings of Gerald Fischman, Rob Hiaasen, John McNamara, Rebecca Smith, and Wendi Winters in the Capital Gazette shootings in Annapolis, Maryland on June 28, 2018. Your letter also invited the United States to provide information on steps it has undertaken to promote journalist safety and address the issue of impunity. Upon receipt, the United States Department of State immediately passed your request to the Garland Police Department in Garland, Texas, and to the Anne Arundel County Police Department in Annapolis, Maryland. However, due to a delay in communication from UNESCO this year, we may not receive their reply before the deadline for the finalization of your report. In this context, we are providing this official acknowledgement of your letter in order to maintain our record of participation, and we will follow up with our submission of updates on the status of the investigations for the six cases outlined in your letter as soon as we have the information.

The United States strongly supports efforts to promote respect for freedom of expression, including for the media, and to protect the safety of journalists. As part of our foreign policy, we use diplomacy, support multilateral and multi-stakeholder efforts, and promote programs to draw attention to laws and policies that impose undue restrictions on freedom of expression. We advocate for the release of journalists imprisoned for their work, and we promote accountability for violence against journalists and media workers. The Department of State also supports programs to equip media professionals in Central America, East Africa, Eurasia, and the Middle East with the means to manage and mitigate risks while continuing their important work to uncover injustice, expose corruption, and promote accountability. Since 2013, the State Department has supported journalists and new media professionals with state-of-the-art trainings on physical security, digital security, and psychosocial care. To date, more than 2000 media professionals have been supported through this work. Additionally, in July 2019, the United States joined with like-

mindeds at the Global Conference on Media Freedom in London to launch a multi-year global campaign in support of media freedom. We endorsed the Global Media Freedom Pledge – a nonbinding pledge highlighting many of the important steps States can take to promote media freedom worldwide. We also committed to participate in the Media Freedom Coalition initiative, which aims to facilitate joint diplomacy on individual cases of violence against journalists and coordinated action in multilateral forums.

The information contained in this response can be released publicly.

Sincerely,


for Laila Hasan
First Secretary – Political Officer