



Remembering Gerry Ortega on the 15th Anniversary of his murder, the Fight for Justice Continues

January 23rd 2026 – Tomorrow will mark 15 years since the murder of Gerry Ortega, a courageous broadcast journalist and environmental defender whose life was taken because he spoke truth to power. Ortega's commitment to exposing corruption and defending the public interest lives on in the memory of his family, colleagues, and all who believe in press freedom.

Press freedom organisations Free Press Unlimited (FPU), the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), and Reporters Without Borders (RSF) continue to stand with the Ortega family and together, they met with head of the Presidential Task Force on Media Security and embassies in the Media Freedom Coalition in Manila this week to press for justice ahead of the anniversary.

Fifteen years on, the alleged mastermind behind his killing - former Palawan governor Joel T. Reyes - is now on trial. However, until a conviction is secured, impunity continues to persist. This prolonged delay in accountability undermines the rule of law and sends a chilling message to those who hold power to account.

“Fifteen years is far too long to wait for justice. This prolonged impunity sends a chilling message: that truth-tellers can be silenced, and killed, without consequence. It tells the world that the facts itself can be erased along with those who dare to speak it. Tragically, this has become the norm- but it is a norm we must confront and change.” - FPU, CPJ & RSF

While the passage of time has deepened the pain and frustration surrounding this case, recent positive developments offer renewed hope that accountability may finally be within reach. These developments must now translate into concrete action and a swift conclusion to the long-delayed proceedings.

On this anniversary, we honour Ortega's legacy not only by remembering his life and work, but by renewing our call for a fair, swift, and impartial prosecution of all those responsible for his murder, and for a fair and credible resolution to the case. Justice delayed for 15 years must not be justice denied any longer- not for Ortega, and not for the many journalists who continue to risk their lives in pursuit of truth.

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Spokespeople are available for interviews in English:

Free Press Unlimited (Amsterdam): Jos Bartman bartman@freepressunlimited.org

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A Safer World For The Truth is a collaboration between Free Press Unlimited (FPU), Reporters Without Borders (RSF) and the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ). We investigate murders through a series of cold case investigations to push for justice on the national level, and we organize the People's Tribunal on the Murder of Journalists to put a spotlight on states' obligation to protect journalists and to investigate all attacks against them. To learn more about the project, visit our website <https://www.saferworldfortheruth.com/>. Please see A Safer World for the Truth report about Gerry Ortega's case published in 2022.