



World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters
Association mondiale des radiodiffuseurs communautaires
Asociación mundial de radios comunitarias

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February 8, 2016

To whom it may concern,

The World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC) stands in support of Bill 4087, Community Media Law, which is currently being considered in the Guatemalan Congress. A vote on this bill could be scheduled for as soon as Tuesday, February 9th and in order for it to pass, 105 of the 158 members of congress must vote in its favor. Bill 4087 would modify the Guatemalan telecommunications laws to allow access to non-profit community radio licenses for each municipality in Guatemala.

Currently, the Guatemalan telecommunications law does not allow licenses for non-profit community radio, despite promises made by the Guatemalan Constitution and Peace Accords. This lack of access to non-profit community radio broadcast licenses is in direct opposition to citizens' rights to freedom of expression and Indigenous Peoples' right to have their own media in their own languages. Numerous recommendations from the United Nations, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, and the Guatemalan Constitutional Court have urged the passage of legislation to provide access to broadcast licenses for non-profit, community radio stations.

Community radio stations, which currently operate in a legal grey area with the risk of police raids and jail time for radio volunteers, serve the vital function of distributing information about important news and educational programming like emergency disaster relief, voter registration, public health campaigns to listeners in their own native languages, and reach even the most rural areas where radio is the only affordable form of communication. For Indigenous communities, they provide access to programming in their own languages that promote their cultures, traditions and belief systems.

It is urgent that we stand with the citizens of Guatemala and unite in support of this bill as supporters of democracy, freedom of expression and human rights. We urge fellow organizations and friends to spread the word on this bill and express their support for freedom of expression and democracy in Guatemala.

Francesco Diasio
Secretary General
AMARC