

## Drug cartel to release journalists

BOGOTA. Colombia (AP) — The Medellin drug cartel announced Sunday it has ordered the release of two kidnapped journalists in an effort to persuade the government to end extradition of suspected traffickers.

## World

The cartel said it ordered Francisco Santos and Maruja Pachon freed.

Santos, the editor of Colombia's largest-selling newspaper, El Tiempo, was abducted eight months ago. He also belongs to one of Colombia's most influential families.

Pachon, a former television producer who is now the director of the Colombian Film Institute, was kidnapped on Nov. 9. She is also the sister-in-law of Sen. Luis Carlos Galan, a leading presidential candidate murdered by drug traffickers in August 1989.

Neither Santos nor Pachon had appeared by late Sunday However, it often takes several hours for orders to be carried out in Colombia's underground drug network.

Santos and Pachon were among nine journalists kidnapped by drug traffickers since last year. Five have been released.

Magazine publisher Diana Turbay was killed during a failed rescue mission. She was the daughter of former President Julio Cesar Turbay.

In their statement, the cartel said they were releasing Santos and Pachon "to erase any doubt about our pressure over the national constitutional assembly," which is currently deciding if future extraditions should be allowed to the United States, where many Colombians are indicted on drug charges.

The assembly is expected to vote on the matter this week.

President Cesar Gaviria effectively canceled the extradition policy in the first weeks of his administration last year.

Gaviria offered to prohibit extraditions and reduce prison terms of drug traffickers if they surrendered to authorities.

Three brothers who helped run the Medellin cartel with fugitive Pablo Escobar — Jorge Luis, Juan David and Fabio Ochoa — accepted the president's offer and surrendered.





Page 20