



PRESS RELEASE

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Brazil: ARTICLE 19 Condemns Aggression Aimed at TV Workers in Paraná

On 10 March 2008, a journalist and a cameraperson from local TV channel RIC-TV, in the town of Almirante Tamandaré, Paraná, were reportedly intimidated by a police officer. The TV workers had just finished taking images at the city government building for a report on the shortage of vacancies within a municipal day care center when a police officer, working as a guard for the government building, tried to confiscate their equipment and pointed a gun to their driver's head. According to the Journalists Labor Union in Paraná there have been other attacks on journalists in state recently.

“ARTICLE 19 strongly condemns the police officer's actions and calls for a full enquiry into the incident, including an investigation of chain of command arrangements and an examination of police guidelines. The inquiry should also explore other possible incidents and institutional responsibilities and responses”, said Dr Agnès Callamard, ARTICLE 19's Executive Director.

Journalist Simone Munhoz and cameraman Marcelo Dorce said they had an authorization to film inside the building. However, the police officer tried to confiscate the camera and said he would delete the images. The police officer then followed the journalist and the cameraman and tried to prevent them from entering their car. It was then that the officer reportedly pointed a gun to their driver's head.

The military police arrived at the scene soon after the event and Military Police Command stated that the police officer's actions would be looked into. In addition the Secretary of Public Security in Paraná stated publicly that the police officer would be punished. On 13 March, the mayor of Almirante Tamandaré, Vilson Rogério Goinski, visited the TV Channel and apologized for the event.

ARTICLE 19 commends the government authorities for criticizing the aggression, but asks that concrete measures be taken to ensure those responsible are brought to justice and further acts of violence against the media are prevented.

NOTES TO EDITORS:

- For more information, please contact Maíra Magro at 55 (21) 8225-9817 ou maira@article19.org.
- ARTICLE 19 is an independent human rights organisation that works around the world to protect and promote the right to freedom of expression. It takes its name from Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which guarantees freedom of expression.