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## ARTICLE 19

For immediate release – 10 October 2008

### Brazil: National Campaign for the Freedom of Expression of Teachers

**SAO PAULO – On 7 October, ARTICLE 19 and local partner Acao Educativa were joined by the National Union for Professionals working in the public schools system in a public seminar and debate in Sao Paulo to coincide with the launch of a campaign blog [www.falaeducadorfalaeducadora.livreacesso.net](http://www.falaeducadorfalaeducadora.livreacesso.net)**

This follows on from a year-long campaign led by ARTICLE 19, Acao Educativa and the Union of the Teachers of Public Schools of the State of Sao Paulo (APEOESP) against restrictions imposed on teachers' freedom to speak in public on matters concerning their schools or colleges.

The campaign aimed at documenting cases of restriction in the State of Sao Paulo and facilitating a public debate on the topic.

Another campaign objective was to revoke articles 241 and 242 of the Statute of the Civil Servants of the State of Sao Paulo. Article 241 states that civil servants should not publicly comment on government acts and on authorities in depreciative terms, while article 242 restricts disclosure of information about the public school system. Such legislation was promulgated during Brazil's dictatorship period. At least 14 other states have similar legislation.

ARTICLE 19 and its partners collected more than 1,500 signatures in a petition calling for these legal provisions to be revoked. The signatures and testimonies were presented to the Secretariat of Education; the Head of the State's Public Prosecutor's Office; MPs and to the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education. By the end of 2007, two State MPs had decided to present bill proposals to revoke those legal provisions.

#### **NOTES TO EDITORS:**

- For more information: please contact Paula Martins, [paula@article19.org](mailto:paula@article19.org) +55 3057-0042
- 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 free speech.