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<http://www.rsf.org/argentina-newspaper-editor-facing-12-years-14-05-2014,46281.html>

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Americas - Argentina

Grave charges

## Newspaper editor facing 12 years in prison under anti-terrorism law

14 May 2014

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Reporters Without Borders condemns the serious charges that are being brought against regional newspaper editor **Juan Pablo Suárez** in connection with his coverage of police demonstrations for more pay in the northern city of Santiago del Estero last December.

The editor of the *Última Hora* daily, Suárez spent ten days in detention on an initial charge of sedition after being [arrested on 9 December while covering the violent arrest](#) of one of the protest leaders.

Suárez is still being investigated and it turns out that he is being charged with "inciting collective violence" and "terrorizing the population" under an anti-terrorism law that carries a possible 12-year jail sentence.

*"We call for the immediate withdrawal of these absurd charges against Suárez,"* said Camille Soulier, the head of the Reporters Without Borders Americas desk. *"How can filming an arrest be construed as a terrorist activity? By using the anti-terrorism law against a journalist for the first time, the Santiago del Estero authorities are sending a clear message that they will tolerate no criticism."*

Suárez's lawyer, Víctor Nazar, told Reporters Without Borders: "There are no legal grounds for the sedition charge and still less for applying the anti-terrorism law because the only thing Suárez did was cover a protest for more pay. The reasons are political. He is the only journalist who firmly criticizes the government's policies and the only one to cover all the pay demands."

The anti-terrorism law is the result of a 2007 reform of the penal code. Article 212, the one being used against Suárez, says: *"Publicly inciting collective violence against groups of persons or institutions is punishable by three to six years in prison for just the act of incitement."*

According to article 41, a 2011 addition, all sentences in the penal code are doubled if the crimes are committed *"with the aim of terrorizing the population."* One of the main criticisms of this law is the lack of precision about the term "terrorist acts" and the fact that this leaves the way open to abuses.

Argentina is ranked 55th out of 180 countries in the 2014 Reporters Without Borders [press freedom index](#).

Photo: Twitter

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