

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/brazil-brazil-spring-criticism-of-media-21-06-2013,44835.html>

Americas - Brazil

Injuries and insults

“Brazilian Spring” criticism of media OK, but not violence against journalists

21 June 2013

More than 20 journalists have reportedly been physically attacked or injured in the past two weeks of protests in Brazilian cities against bus and subway fare hikes and the poor state of public services.

The military police appear to have been responsible for most of these [acts of violence](#), which in some cases have been accompanied by arrests. But some cases were the result of hostility on the part of demonstrators towards news media covering the protests.

As the protest movement has grown, fed by online social networks, the range of protest targets has also expanded and now includes [Brazil's mainstream media model](#).

“Criticism of the media and their coverage of the protests is permissible, but not expressions of hatred towards reporters on the ground and still less threats or physical violence against them,” Reporters Without Borders said.

“In their desire to question Brazil’s social model, including the relationship between citizens and the media, the protesters must not yield to excesses that endanger civil liberties. The right to cover the news, like the right to demonstrate, is guaranteed by the 1988 democratic constitution. Journalists must be free to cover the protests without fearing for their safety.”

After a respite on 17 June, clashes and violence between demonstrators and police grew in intensity again on 18 June, especially in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, despite cancellation of the public transportation price hikes that had triggered the protests in the first place.

Agence France-Presse reported that, on 18 June, around 100 protesters in São Paulo tried to expel **Caco Barcellos** of *TV Globo* from their march, shouting “manipulator.” *TV Globo* is part of the Globo media group, Brazil’s largest media conglomerate.

Soon afterwards, a group of radical protesters threw stones at a TV Record truck near the São Paulo city hall and set fire to it after it had been ridded of its occupants. TV Record is Brazil’s second biggest TV broadcaster.

Finally, also in São Paulo on 18 June, vinegar was thrown in the face of **Rita Lisauskas** of *TV Bandeirantes* while she was in the thick of a group of protesters chanting slogans criticizing the “one-sided” and “sensationalist” mainstream media. As a result, some journalists decided not to display their media’s logo.

Despite appeals for calm and [statements](#) by several union groups and by Brazilian and international organizations that defend freedom of information, the police continue to be accused of frequent violence against journalists.

Vladimir Platonow of *Agência Brasil* and several demonstrators were beaten with batons by security guards at the local train station when they tried to escape from a charge by a special unit of the Military Police (PM) in Niterói, near Rio de Janeiro, on the night of 19 June. *Agência Brasil* is part of the state-owned *Empresa Brasil de Comunicação*.

Empresa Brasil de Comunicação cameraman **Murilo Azevedo** was also injured by a teargas

canister fired by the PM on 19 June in Niterói.

Finally, **Pedro Vedova**, a journalist with *GloboNews* (a 24-hour TV news channel that is part of the Globo group), was [hit in head by a rubber bullet](#) fired by a police officer outside Rio de Janeiro's city hall last night.

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