

Reporters Without Borders

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Americas - Brazil

Constant violence

Journalists are World Cup's big losers

18 July 2014

Police and demonstrators attacked a total of 38 Brazilian and foreign journalists during the FIFA World Cup in Brazil from 12 June to 13 July – a competition used by Reporters Without Borders as a peg for a [campaign to draw abuses against journalists](#) to the attention of governments and the international community.

The highest daily figure was registered on the day of the final in Rio de Janeiro on 13 July, with 15 attacks on journalists covering protests against the World Cup and FIFA.

The victims included Canadian freelance photographer **Jason O'Hara**, who was kicked in the face by military police after being thrown to the ground while filming a protest. *Reuters* photographer **Ana Carolina Fernandes** was the victim of a teargas attack. **Felipe Peçanha** of *Mídia Ninja*, an independent news website, was one of several bloggers and netizens roughed up by police during the same protest.

"We urge the authorities to ensure that the acts of violence against journalists by members of the military police do not go unpunished," said Camille Soulier, the head of the Reporters Without Borders Americas desk. *"Despite the government's promises, journalists cannot always count on the state protection they are supposed to receive under a national protective mechanism."*

At a meeting in the presidential palace in Brasilia last week, presidential aides told Reporters Without Borders secretary-general Christophe Deloire that the military police are trained in how to handle peaceful demonstrations. However, the government does not have direct control over the military police, they said.

The aides also told Reporters Without Borders that an entity is being created to monitor violence against journalists but does not as yet have any staff.

According to the Brazilian Association of Investigative Journalists ([ABRAJI](#)), 120 cases of abusive treatment of professional and non-professional journalists were reported by media and unions during more than a year of street protests against government spending resulting from the World Cup.

These 120 cases, 38 of which occurred during the World Cup itself, included insults, threats, robbery of equipment, arbitrary arrests and physical attacks.

One of the worst cases came on the first day of the tournament, on 12 June, when military police arrested *Mídia Ninja* journalist **Karinny de Magalhães** during a demonstration in Belo Horizonte, and subjected her to several hours of verbal, physical and sexual aggression until she lost consciousness.

Bandeirantes TV cameraman **Santiago Ilídio Andrade** was fatally injured by an explosive device while covering a protest in Rio de Janeiro on 6 February.

Ranked 111th out of 180 countries in the [Reporters Without Borders press freedom index](#), Brazil is Latin America's second deadliest country for the media, with 15 journalists killed in connection with their work in the past for years.

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