

# Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/brazil-third-journalist-s-murder-confirms-14-02-2012,41875.html>

Americas - Brazil

Mexican-style violence?

## Third journalist's murder confirms disastrous start to year for Brazilian media

14 February 2012

**Paulo Roberto Cardoso Rodrigues**, a journalist based in Ponta Porã, in the southwestern state of Mato Grosso do Sul, died yesterday from the gunshot injuries he received the previous day, when two individuals on a motorcycle fired a total of 12 shots at him, hitting him five times, as he was driving his car in the town.

Also known as **Paulo Rocaro**, Rodrigues, 51, edited a local daily, *Jornal da Praça*, and the [Mercosul News](#) website. Coming just three days after online journalist **Mário Randolpho Marques**' murder in Rio de Janeiro state, his killing was the latest in a spate of physical attacks and threats against media and journalists since the start of the year.

"This was the third murder of journalist in Brazil since the start of 2012, although the first, **Laércio de Souza**'s murder on 3 January in Bahia state, seems not to have been linked to the victim's work as a journalist," Reporters Without Borders said. "This violence sadly confirms last year's trend, which caused Brazil to fall 41 places to 99th position in the latest [Reporters Without Borders press freedom index](#)."

"Is Brazil going to become as dangerous as Mexico or Colombia? No region of the country has been spared this tragic violence, which calls for the development of programmes to protect media personnel and, in the short term, a thorough investigation of each case. The possibility that the two most recent murders were acts of political revenge needs to be explored."

Rodrigues lived in a region along the [Paraguayan](#) border that has a tradition of violence and is rife with drug trafficking. A source close to the victim told Reporters Without Borders that Rodrigues usually covered local politics, which are often characterized by irregularities and questionable practices. It cannot therefore be ruled out that he was murdered on the orders of a local politician in an increasingly disturbing trend for the media to be the target of violence.

### Arson and beatings

The fire that badly damaged *Ibicoara FM*, a community radio station in Ibicoara, in the northeastern state of Bahia, on 8 January, was almost certainly arson. The station's manager, **Emerson Silva Bispo**, said it was a reprisal for the repeated criticism of the authorities voiced on its "Voz do Povo" (Voice of the People) programme.

The other fire on 8 February caused considerable damage to *Folha do Boqueirão*, a newspaper in Curitiba, in the southern state of Paraná, that is owned by municipal councillor Francisco Garcez. It may have been caused by short-circuit but Garcez said he had been the target of recent threats possibly linked to investigations carried out under his leadership as chairman of the municipal government's ethics committee.

**Jorge Estevão**, the editor of [HiperNoticias](#), a news website based in Cuiabá, in Mato Grosso state, was threatened on a Cuiabá street on the morning of 11 February by an individual who pointed a gun at him and told him he was "being a nuisance" and "invading my territory." Estevão, who covers politics and corruption, said he did not know who was responsible for the threat.

The police have also had a role in some of the violence against the media since the start of the year. Reporters were mistreated, warning shots were fired at them, and some were summarily detained during a military police operation to evict 9,000 residents in the poor neighbourhood of Pinheirinho, in São José dos Campos (in São Paulo state) at the end of January. [This video](#) shows the methods used by the police.

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