

# Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/chile-government-scrap-plan-to-force-23-01-2012,41745.html>

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Americas - Chile

A first success

## Government scraps plan to force journalists to inform police

23 January 2012

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Thanks to a wave of demonstrations and protests in Santiago the government has abandoned plans to force journalists to hand over images to police under controversial new legislation sponsored by interior minister Rodrigo Hinzpeter, who announced on 18 January that he would withdraw that section of the bill.

"Congress has been instructed not to approve it," **Mauricio Weibel**, president of the association of foreign correspondents in Chile, confirmed to Reporters Without Borders.

[The bill](#), known as the "Hinzpeter Law", was submitted to Congress on 1 October last year in response to student protests. As originally drafted, it contained provisions to criminalize expressions of opinion, and to grant "a new power for the law enforcement and security forces, under which they can request the voluntary transmission of recordings, film or other electronic media material that may serve to substantiate the existence of crimes or participation in crimes, without a prior order from the state prosecutor".

"With the 'Hinzpeter Law', there was a real risk of seeing journalists become accessories to the police, in contravention of constitutional principles concerning freedom of expression and information," Reporters Without Borders said.

"While we welcome the news that this section has been withdrawn, the bill is still in the hands of Congress. The summer holiday period means its discussion – and, we hope, rejection – by the lower house and the Senate has been postponed until March.

"This inappropriate and dangerous legislation must be scrapped as a matter of urgency."

Reporters Without Borders hopes that a letter on the subject sent to members of Congress by the Chilean [College of Journalists](#) will be favourably received.

The scheduled withdrawal of this section of the "Hinzpeter Law" is an encouraging symbol at the end of what has been a difficult year for Chilean and foreign journalists in the country, who have often been abused for reporting on many demonstrations in the country, not just those by [students](#).

Besides calling for steps to be taken to guarantee their security, Reporters Without Borders continues to press for a full debate, a subject first raised during the demonstrations, on [media pluralism](#) in Chile and the legal framework that would make this possible.

Also at issue is the need to overhaul the legislation on community media and radio stations.

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