

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/chile-three-news-websites-hacked-10-11-2011,41375.html>

Americas - Chile

Polarization

Three news websites hacked, newspaper publisher bombed

10 November 2011

The explosion of a home-made bomb outside the headquarters of the media company Copesa, publisher of the daily *La Tercera*, and cyber-attacks on three news websites during the past few days have punctured the non-existent dialogue between the government and [the vast, student-led protest movement](#) that has rocked Chile since the start of the year.

Amid mounting social tension and outbreaks of violence at the generally peaceful demonstrations, [journalists are increasingly exposed](#) to hostility and police repression. Reporters Without Borders fears a negative effect on the media and on the public debate that Chile badly needs.

"All the Chilean media, both alternative and traditional, are threatened by these online attacks on three news websites and the homemade bomb attack on Copesa," Reporters Without Borders said. "This climate of violence must be checked by police and judicial action and by a political response to the public's calls for media pluralism. A broad debate involving all of society cannot be put off any longer. Otherwise the situation will keep deteriorating and there will be a dangerous increase in intolerance and polarization."

Mauricio Tolosa, the co-founder and editor of the [Sitiocero](#) website, was the target of a cyber-attack on 4 November which caused him to lose all the site's records since June and forced him to suspend operations for 24 hours. Two alternative news websites, [La Otra Voz](#) and [Puro Periodismo](#), were also hacked at around the same time without suffering as much damage.

Tolosa, who is also concerned about polarization, told Reporters Without Borders: "Both our site and the two other sites provide analysis and contextualization, and debate broad issues of interest to the public. They are not overtly political or activist sites." *Sitiocero* has had 200,000 visitors in the past six months, he said. A source close to the Anonymous movement told *Sitiocero* that the hackers were probably Neo-Nazis.

The homemade bomb explosion outside the Copesa building on the night of 1 November shattered some windows but caused no injuries. The building houses *La Tercera*, one of Chile's leading dailies.

A hitherto unknown group calling itself the Voltaire Argandoña/F.A.I-F.R.I Autonomous Commando claimed responsibility in [an online communiqué](#) three days later. It said it wanted to "generate insecurity" against *La Tercera* and was targeting two journalists, **Andrés López** and **Sebastián Labrín**, in particular.

Reporters Without Borders unreservedly condemns such acts of violence accompanied by incitement to hatred and violence, and hopes there will soon be results from the investigations into these incidents, which do not bode well for the free circulation of ideas and opinions.
