

## Brazilian Journalist Beaten Up for Reporting on Corruption

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Abraji, the Brazilian Association for Investigative Journalism and the Rio Grande do Sul State Professional Newspersons' Union have both condemned the aggression suffered by Graciliano Rocha, a correspondent for the Brazilian newspaper Folha de S. Paulo in the city of Porto Alegre, capital of the southernmost Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Sul.

Abraji calls the attack "an attempt against freedom of expression and the Brazilian democracy" and insists that an investigation be opened and punishment given. The Newspersons' Union of Rio Grande do Sul also presented its complaint and stated that the attack "was aimed toward slashing out at the freedom of information."

On October 26, 2008, Rocha was threatened by one of the PMDB's (Party of Brazilian Democratic Movement) militant members while he waited for the mayor's press conference. Rocha was assaulted in front of the campaign committee facilities of the re-elected mayor of the capital of Rio Grande do Sul, José Fogaça of the PMDB. In October, Porto Alegre residents voted to reelect the mayor.

The press conference was canceled and the reporter was hit in the face in front of the committee building by a party supporter who threatened him. He fell on the sidewalk and was kicked by two of the mayor's supporters.

The reporter filed a complaint at the 10th Police Precinct and underwent a forensics examination for injury.

The reason for the aggression was a recently published feature in the newspaper Folha de S. Paulo, alleging that only 48 hours before locals went to the polls, the Porto Alegre City Hall had given away bonuses for home purchases to some citizens who had been evicted when public works projects began on the outskirts of the city.

The reporter stated by e-mail that he is doing well and suffered only mild scratches. Clóvis Magalhães, the campaign's general coordinator, issued a note in which he said he regretted the incident and repudiated the facts involving the reporter.

The coordinator believes this to be an isolated event and says the campaign coordinators are paying due attention to follow-up and are waiting for action to be taken by the police authorities.