
Brazil: Murdered Journalist's Wife Harassed for Seeking Justice

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The family of Brazilian journalist Luiz Carlos Barbon Filho is being harassed a year and a half after he was murdered in Porto Ferreira, in the state of São Paulo, in southeastern Brazil. There are concerns that this is linked to their participation in the investigation of the crime perpetrated on him.

After Barbon was murdered on May 5, 2007, their house was attacked and his widow, Kátia Rosa Camargo, received several silent phone calls.

In February 2008, after giving an interview to a national TV station, Kátia received a telephone call telling her to be quiet or she would end up like her husband. On 12 November 2008, Kátia was fired from her job as a secretary at the radio station "Rádio Primavera".

The same day, journalist João dos Reis (known as Jota Reis) was also fired. He had originally been responsible for covering the case as a news reporter at the local radio station "Porto FM", but was first transferred to a musical program and then dismissed.

Kátia and the family's lawyer, Ricardo Ramos, believe that she was fired due to her active promotion of the investigation of the assassination of her husband.

Luiz Carlos Barbon Filho worked for the radio station "Porto FM" and the local newspapers Jornal do Porto and JC Regional before he was shot dead by an unidentified man while in a public place. According to his wife, he had been receiving death threats by telephone and email some weeks before he was killed.

At the time of his death, he was investigating a robbery in which members of local authorities were allegedly involved. Five men - four from the military police - have been detained in connection with his murder.

International organization Article 19, named after Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which fights in favor of freedom of expression, has expressed solidarity with Barbon's family and urged Brazil's investigators to ensure that all those responsible for the crime against him are brought to justice so that the underlying motivation for the murder can be clarified.

Impunity in cases of violence against journalists leads to fear and self-censorship and, unless such crimes are actively investigated and prosecuted, freedom of expression will remain under threat.

Article 19 has also urged the authorities to investigate all aspects of the case with a view to ensuring that no one is at risk simply for demanding justice in this case.