

## More Intimidation and Lawsuits Against Brazilian Newspapers

Contributed by Newsroom  
Wednesday, 01 July 2009

Brazilian newspapers "Integração", based in Tatuí, and "Jornal da Cidade", based in Adamantina, both in the interior of São Paulo state, are being sued. Carlos Balladas, the president of the Countryside Newspapers' Association of São Paulo (Adjori-SP), considers the lawsuits against the newspapers to be an attempt to intimidate them.

"All newspapers, especially the small ones, are constantly threatened. In most cases, the suits are groundless. In these cases, for instance, the newspapers only reproduced information and now they are being accused. It is abusive, a threat to freedom of speech."

The newspaper "Integração" is being sued for "moral damages" by Henrique Autran Dourado, the head of the Conservatory of Music. The lawsuit refers to several articles published by the newspaper, and the compensation being requested by Autran Dourado is equal to 70% of the income that the newspaper earns in a month.

In a post published in his blog, newspaper editor José Rainer stated, "Among the articles considered offensive are included: a sentence praising the citizens of Tatuí, who managed the Conservatory; speculation about the changes in the guidance of the Conservatory; a note from the editorial office commenting on a letter sent by Ronaldo Bianchi, deputy secretary of the State Department of Culture, which was published by the newspaper; an article entitled "Federal Constitution Protects the Teachers of the Conservatory;" and, finally, an article about a "motion to reject" carried out by Tatuí city councilor Joaquim Amado Véio Quevedo, aimed at the elimination of the AACT (Association of Friends of the Conservatory) art director position occupied by Maestro Antonio Carlos Neves Campos."

In an interview with ABRAJI (Brazilian Association of Investigative Journalism), Reiner said, "What is in danger is freedom of the press. We didn't do anything except publish the facts. If we cannot publish the truth, it is not worth having a newspaper. If we do not have the freedom to publish the truth, and not just information that is favorable to the city council, then we would prefer to shut down the newspaper. It would be 33 years of journalism for nothing. But we believe that the constitution itself will favor us. We still believe in freedom in this country."

The newspaper "Jornal da Cidade" is being sued by the mayor, José Francisco Figueiredo, who belongs to the DEM Party. The newspaper published a quote by a councilwoman named Cleusa, from the Pastoral Congregation of Santo Antônio, saying, "according to what I was told, the group of Kiko (the mayor's nickname) does not accept me as the vice because I am fat, poor and from the PT party".

The mayor is suing the newspaper, not the councilor. In the lawsuit, he is asking for the equivalent of US\$ 4,600 to be donated to charity. This level of compensation for damages would bring serious financial problems to the newspaper, which has a monthly income of 6,000 Reais (approximately. US\$ 3,000). A hearing in this case is scheduled for September 23.

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