

Unable to Answer Tough Questions Brazilian Top Senator Tries to Gag Reporter

Contributed by Edison Bernardo DeSouza
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As if accusations of corruption and public funds misappropriation weren't enough for Brazilian Senate President José Sarney, he has just made more headlines on Brazilian news this week. This time it involved physical aggression towards a journalist from one of São Paulo major TV channels - Rede Bandeirantes de Televisão.

Danilo Gentili, who is a journalist from popular humoristic TV Program CQC - (Custe of que Custar - Cost What It May), was pushed onto the ground and kicked by the Senator's security guard, in an attempt to prevent Gentili from interviewing the senator.

CQC show in Brazil from Bandeirantes TV network has become a huge success and it is the only TV program in Brazil that interviews politicians and Brazilian famous personalities about polemic topics such as corruption, violence or poor administration.

At the time of the incident, Gentili was trying to ask Sarney, whether the Brazilian Senate crisis could possibly become any worse if he were to leave the Senate. The senator refused to answer the question, alleging he was not able to walk with so many people around him.

When the reporter asked him "what it was like to feel not as powerful as he thought he was" security guards immediately pushed him onto the ground, trying to block the interview.

The episode aggravates Brazilian Senate crisis, as the movement "Fora Sarney" (Get out Sarney) is gaining strength and more Brazilians are pushing for change in Brazilian politics.

Despite the political chaos, popular São Paulo daily O Estado de S. Paulo published on it first page July 3rd that, President Lula is not in favor of Sarney's dismissal. This despite the fact that the senator is also being accused of nepotism as well as tax evasion for not having declared a US\$ 2 million-dollar mansion on his income tax.

The crisis has also affected president Lula's Party, as Aloizio Mercadante, Workers Party leader in the Senate, has declared not being in favor of Sarney resignation, but he would consider in the country's best interest that Senator Sarney would leave the presidency of the Senate temporarily.

Images of the incident involving Daniel Gentili can be seen at

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yXo10BYef-0>

Edison Bernardo DeSouza is a journalist, having graduated in Social Communication Studies at Pontifical Catholic University in São Paulo, Brazil . He lived in the US and Canada for close to 10 years and participated in volunteering activities in social works agencies. DeSouza currently lives in São Paulo where he teaches English as a Second Language for both private English Language Institute and Private High-School. He has already participated as an actor in three English plays in Brazil and is pursuing further advancements in his career. He is particularly interested in economics, history, politics and human rights articles.