

Brazilian Missing and Presumed Kidnapped in Iraq

Contributed by Érica Santana
Saturday, 22 January 2005

In an official note released yesterday January 20, the Brazilian construction firm, Norberto Odebrecht, characterized as a "probable kidnapping" the disappearance of a Brazilian employee who works in Iraq.

It is believed that the Brazilian was in a car that was the target of an attack in the morning of January 19, near the city of Baiji, where the firm is working on the refurbishment of a thermoelectric plant.

In the note, the Odebrecht board of directors announce that "it is making every effort necessary for the prompt and favorable denouement of the probable kidnapping of one of its members."

According to the firm's press advisor, Marco Antônio Antunes Pereira, the employee has already been identified, but for security reasons the name cannot be revealed.

"The Brazilian government does not have an official version of the fact yet," said the Ministry of Foreign Relations' press adviser, Paulo Gustavo Iansen.

According to Iansen, there is no estimate on how many Brazilians are in Iraq working for Odebrecht, because neither the company nor the Brazilians are required to identify themselves beforehand in the embassies.

"The majority of Brazilians who go to Iraq don't identify themselves in advance at the embassy in Amman, therefore we have no estimate," the adviser explained.

Translation: David Silberstein
Agência Brasil