
Gunman Shoots Brazilian Journalist Who Denounced Gaming Mafia and Police

Contributed by Newsroom
Monday, 26 November 2007

France-based press-freedom organization Reporters Without Borders is condemning a murder attempt against Brazilian journalist João Carlos Alckmin, presenter of the program Showtime on Piratininga radio, who was hurt when an unknown assailant opened fire on him in São José dos Campos, in the interior of the southeastern Brazilian state of São Paulo.

His injuries are not life-threatening. Alckmin, aged 55, came under fire as he walked his dog downtown on November 22. His dog attacked the gunmen who fled on a motorbike, leaving the journalist with neck, arm and back injuries. Several witnesses had a clear view of the gunman's face.

The journalist, who was taken to a hospital to have a bullet extracted from his neck and who is under police protection, has for the past five years been investigating criminal control of gaming machines and collusion on the part of certain police officials. His daughter said that her father had received scores of anonymous threats both by phone and by mail.

"This murder attack could be linked to the many revelations made on air by Alckmin about the gangs controlling gaming machines in the region, made even more likely by the fact he was the intended target of a similar shooting in July this year," the international press freedom organization said.

"We urge the authorities to rapidly investigate and hunt those responsible for the attack. Despite progress in press freedom, Brazil is still plagued by violent physical attacks and murders of journalists, sometimes implicating the police," it added.

It is the second time Alckmin has been the intended target of a shooting since the start of the year. Lawyer Rodrigo Duenhas was mistaken for the journalist and shot in the neck, while travelling in a car with the wife of Alckmin, the lawyer Tânia Lis Tizzoni Nogueira on 5 July. He is still in convalescing.

João Alckmin is a cousin of Geraldo Alckmin, former governor of São Paulo state and unsuccessful candidate in the October 29, 2006, presidential election.