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## Shooting Attack on Brazilian Newspaper Follows Reports on Corruption

Contributed by Newsroom  
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Paris-based organization RSF (Reporters Without Borders), which is dedicated to defend freedom of the press worldwide, says that it is very concerned about the safety of the staff of Brazil's daily newspaper *Diário do Amazonas* after shots were fired on its headquarters on June 21.

The police seem to think the culprits were disgruntled former employees of the Manaus-based publication, but RSF notes that the newspaper had just covered several corruption cases allegedly implicating the government of Coari, a city 360 kilometers west of Manaus, the capital of Brazil's northern state of Amazonas.

"We are relieved to learn that no one was hurt in the shooting attack on *Diário do Amazonas*," RSF wrote in a statement, adding: "But, as the Brazilian press pointed out, the attack came barely 24 hours after the arrests of several of the mayor of Coari's alleged close associates who had been linked by the newspaper to serious crimes."

The press organization went on to say: "It is vital that the police investigate the possibility that these reports were the motive for the attack. The newspaper's open opposition to the government of Amazonas state must not affect the investigation, and its staff must be given proper police protection."

Eleven shots were fired at the *Diário* building in central Manaus at about 4:30 a.m. on June 21st by two individuals on a motorcycle armed with PT-380 type pistols. The national press quoted police sources as saying six bullets damaged the main entrance and five others shattered windows on the first story, where the newspaper's president and vice-president have their offices.

Surveillance cameras installed outside the building should have recorded the incident but little has been revealed about the investigation launched by the Amazonas state public security department. The *O Estado de S. Paulo* newspaper said the police were working on the theory that the shooting was an act of revenge by former employees.

*Diário do Amazonas* is known for its hard-hitting investigative reporting on the local political scene. It revealed on January 15 that the state government had paid a private company 18 million Brazilian reais (US\$ 11.31 million) for work that was never done.

This shooting attack came a day after a federal police operation code-named "Vorax", in which 23 people linked professionally or personally to Coari mayor Adail Pinheiro were arrested.

A week earlier, *Diário do Amazonas* published transcripts of phone taps pointing to the existence of shady deals

between the Coari municipal government and the Amazonas state court.

A week before that, Diário linked the Coari municipal government to alleged corruption, embezzlement and, according to Rio's daily O Globo, even child prostitution.

RSF - [www.rsf.org](http://www.rsf.org)