

## Brazilian Journalist Hit by Home-Made Bomb. Political Motive Suspected

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France-based international NGO dedicated to defend freedom of the press Reporters Without Borders (RSF) has voiced concern and called for security to be stepped up for the Brazilian press ahead of local elections this coming October after a political journalist and editorialist in Mato Grosso do Sul state in Brazil's Midwest was injured in a bomb blast.

Neiva Pinheiro Veiga, aged 46, director of the bi-weekly "O Liberal", was hurt by shards from a home-made bomb thrown into a crowd as she was leaving a meeting on August 30, called by the mayor of Japorã, Rubens Freire Marinho (Rubão), who is running for reelection for Brazil's ruling party, the PT (Partido dos Trabalhadores - Workers Party). She was covering the meeting for her paper.

She also suffered first and second degree burns to her legs and a child in the crowd suffered slight injuries. Witnesses said they saw a young man throw the bomb and police quickly arrested Júnior Rodrigues da Silva, aged 27, living in Itaquiraí. He denied all involvement in the bombing.

The attack on Neiva Veiga could be down to political motives, given that on the day it happened she had just been named as the head of the center-left Democratic Labor Party (PDT) for Mundo Novo, where she lives. Neiva Veiga is also highly critical in her editorials of politicians in the region.

According to Celso Maciel Veiga, the journalist's husband, who had also gone to the rally, the damages could have been much worse: "The bomb fell on the ground and exploded," he said. "She fell and fainted and remained unconscious for ten minutes. She was lucky because she was wearing pants and boots, which prevented her from being burned even more."

In the run-up to municipal elections on October 5, the worldwide press freedom organization called on state governments and federal authorities to ensure better security for journalists covering them.

"Fortunately, Neiva Veiga's life is not in danger. We express our support for her newspaper and in particular its editor, Celso Maciel Veiga, who is her husband. We welcome the fact that a suspect was quickly arrested. However, we would like to point out that as the country enters the local election campaign, we fear that in some regions the press, particularly local, is exposed to threats and intimidation," Reporters Without Borders said.

"We therefore recommend the greatest vigilance to the state governments and federal authorities. We also hope, that in the very near future, the motive will be uncovered for the attack on Neiva Veiga", it added.