



Permanent Delegation of Brazil to UNESCO

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Mr. Janis Karklins
Assistant Director-General for Communication and Information
UNESCO

Paris, 3 May 2013

Mr Assistant Director-General,

With reference to your letter dated 4 February 2013 (CI/FEM/FOE/13/0302), regarding Resolution 33 of the 36th General Conference on the status of press freedom and the safety of journalists, I hereby convey updated information on the case of Mafaldo Bezerra Góes, which I would like to see published on UNESCO's website, as well as on measures recently adopted by the Government of Brazil to further improve the protection of media professionals and to prevent violence against them, for inclusion in the report to be sent to the 37th General Conference.

The National Ombudsman at the Presidency's Secretariat for Human Rights (SDH/PR), responsible for receiving, examining and forwarding complaints about human rights violations, in Brazil, has been following up on the killing of journalist Mafaldo Bezerra Góes.

The National Ombudsman has confirmed that Mafaldo Bezerra Góes, a sixty-two-year-old radio journalist, was killed on the morning of 22 February 2013 in the municipality of Jaguaribe, 291 km from the capital city of Fortaleza. Mafaldo was on his way to Radio Jaguaribe FM, located in downtown Jaguaribe, when two men shot him five times. The deceased journalist used to comment on local politics in a daily Radio Jaguaribe broadcast.

The National Ombudsman relayed the complaint to the Special Task Force Group against Organized Crime (GAECO-CE) and to the Operational Support Center for the Offices of the Prosecutors (CAOP) of the State of Ceará. I am awaiting additional information on the status of ongoing investigations, of which you shall be notified in due time.

Brazil is committed to discussing and adopting extensive measures for the protection of journalists threatened for reasons related to the free exercise of their profession. To this effect, the National Council for the Defence of Human Rights (CDDPH) has established, on 18 October 2012, a Working Group on Human Rights of Media Professionals. The Working Group comprises representatives from thirteen



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institutions, among which six from civil society, as follows: i) the National Council for the Defence of Human Rights - which presides on the Working Group; ii) SDH/PR; iii) the Secretariat for Social Communication of the Presidency of Brazil (SECOM/PR); iv) the General Secretariat of the Presidency of Brazil (SG/PR); v) the Ministry of Justice; vi) the Ministry of Communications; vii) the Office of the Federal Attorney General for the Protection of the Rights of Citizens (PFDC/PGR); viii) the Brazilian Press Association (ABI); ix) the National Federation of Journalists (FENAJ); x) the National Press Association (ANJ); xi) the Brazilian Association of media enterprises and entrepreneurs (ALTERCOM); xii) the Brazilian Association of investigative journalism (ABRAJI); and xiii) the Inter-State Federation of radio and television workers (FIFERT).

The mandate of the Working Group consists of: a) studying complaints related to acts of violence or threats against media professionals for reasons linked to the free exercise of their profession; b) reporting to competent authorities and following up on those complaints; and c) proposing: c.1) the creation of a complaints monitoring system; c.2) measures to improve public policies relating to the follow-up of complaints; and c.3) guidelines for the effective safety of media workers facing risk situations due to their professional activity. The Working Group will have 180 days, renewable for an equal period, to discharge its duties. Partial reports, followed by a final one, will be submitted to the Council for the Defence of Human Rights.

Furthermore, the Working Group follows a draft bill introduced by Representative Protógenes Querioz (PSOL) which is currently being debated in the Congressional Public Security and Fight against Organized Crime Commission (CSPCCO). If the bill passes the CSPCCO's scrutiny, it will be sent to the Congressional Constitution, Justice and Citizenship Commission (CCJC) for further consideration. If passed, the law would - in cases where state police fails to take action or is not expeditious - make it a criminal offence under federal law (as opposed to state law, as it is currently) to interfere with journalists' freedom to exercise their profession.

I avail myself of this opportunity, Mr. Assistant Director-General, to renew the assurances of my distinguished consideration.

MARIA LAURA DA ROCHA
Ambassador
Permanent Delegate of Brazil