

Unofficial translation by Business & Human Rights Resource Centre of article about the digital attack the Repórter Brasi website. Original article in Portuguese can be read [here](#):

14 October 2015

Repórter Brasil website attacked

21 September 2015

The website was hacked and reports have been erased. The origins of the attack are being investigated and authorities have been informed

The website of Repórter Brasil - an organization of journalists, educators and social scientists which fights against forced labour and promotes human rights – has been hacked. A series of investigative news articles which denounced important economic sectors has been changed or had parts of it deleted. The origins of the attack and its objectives are being investigated and relevant authorities have been informed.

The special project "Moendo Gente (*Grinding People*)", for example, which shows how products from slaughterhouses with labour rights violations are present in supermarkets around the world, was one of the targets of the attack - both the Portuguese and English versions of the project. According to the Labour Prosecutors Office (Ministério Público do Trabalho), this article contributed to changing regulations, thus increasing protection for workers. In addition to deleted content, redirects were installed so that, instead of the reader being directed to the investigations against economic sectors, they would be directed to other pages.

The digital attack is one more step in a campaign against the work of Repórter Brasil and its journalists. Lawsuits have also been pursued against the organization for publicizing operations to rescue workers from slave-like working conditions, as part of its mission to inform.

The campaign also involves defamation of the organization's work, which has been responsible for the last 14 years for highlighting labour and environmental issues between the media and society as a whole, and to denounce the government for its actions both nationally and internationally. These slanders aim to reduce the impact of the reports, investigations and documentaries made by Repórter Brasil.

Not to mention the threats to Leonardo Sakamoto, one of the coordinators of the organization. The threats have already been communicated to the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, the Brazilian government and the Brazilian Federal Prosecutors Office (Ministério Público Federal).

Unfortunately, the latest attack to the site is not something that occurs only against Repórter Brasil, but mirrors experiences of journalists that investigate and draw public attention to serious human rights violations.

Attacks like this are becoming more frequent, both on large media organisations and small independent groups. It is important to find out who the perpetrators are and punish them according to the law as well as educate readers to be able to judge what information may have been falsified. It is also important to defend free press as a fundamental pillar of democracy.

We, as journalists, need to make this a public discussion in order to continue working in the production and dissemination of qualified information and report those who try to silence journalism to the authorities.