



Investigative Journalists From Brazil And Colombia Win Prize For Investigative Journalism In Latin America

Transparency International

June 24, 2007





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INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISTS FROM BRAZIL AND COLOMBIA WIN PRIZE FOR INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM IN LATIN AMERICA

ARTICLES EXPOSE CORRUPTION IN PUBLIC SECTOR AND TRAFFIC OF INFLUENCE

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Posted 24 June 2007 by [Transparency International Secretariat](#)

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Two series of investigative articles that expose political corruption and traffic of influence in Brazil and Colombia won the Prize for Best Investigative Journalism Report on Corruption 2006, the yearly award programme of Transparency International for Latin America and the Caribbean (TILAC) and the [Instituto Prensa y Sociedad](#) (IPYS). The award, US \$25,000, will be shared by journalists from the Brazilian daily *Correio Braziliense* and Colombian newsmagazine *Semana*. Both obtained first prize among 175 entries from 18 countries.

Lúcio Vaz from *Correio Braziliense* exposed one of the largest parliamentary corruption cases in the history of Brazil. The case involved the diversion of millions in state funds for the fraudulent purchase of ambulances in a region of Brazil with no health services, where the vehicles are the only way to treat patients. As official investigations later showed, the process was led by a criminal organisation with the complicity of parliamentarians and public officials.

The first prize also went to a series by a group of eleven journalists from *Semana* about the penetration of paramilitaries in national politics, which caused upheaval and had multiple consequences for the country's institutions. The phenomenon, called "parapolitics," showed how the alliance between politicians and paramilitaries resulted in electoral strategies to guarantee victory for the paramilitaries' political allies. The *Semana* team is made up of: Ricardo Calderón, Alfonso Cuellar, Adriana Echeverry, Elber Gutiérrez, Carlos Eduardo Huertas, Tadeo Martínez, Armando Neira, Marta Ruiz, Alejandro Santos, Cristina Vélez and Maria Alejandra Villamizar.

The second prize of US \$5,000 was awarded to an investigation by Miguel Ramírez of *El Comercio* (Perú), who spent 12 years investigating the drug-trafficking network led by Fernando Zevallos, currently imprisoned due largely to Ramírez's work. Jennifer Paredes and Martín Rodríguez, from the daily *Prensa Libre* (Guatemala), received third prize, also US \$5,000, for revealing the sale of ballots in exchange for public works worth millions carried out between the government and a majority of the representatives in Congress.

Special mentions went to twelve other stories published in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Paraguay and Peru.

The yearly IPYS/TILAC prize honours the best investigative journalism stories dealing with corruption published in Latin America and the Caribbean and is sponsored by the [Open Society Institute](#). The recognition goes to journalists who, through their investigations, show the effects of corruption and raise awareness. The permanent jury is made up of: Tina Rosenberg (*The New York Times*), Mike Reid (*The Economist*), Marcelo Beraba (*Folha de S. Paulo*), Gustavo Gorriti (*Caretas*) and Gerardo Reyes (*El Nuevo Herald*).

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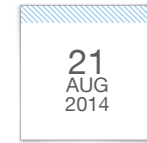
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Country / Territory - [Brazil](#) | [Colombia](#)

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Language(s) - [English](#)

Topic - [Media](#) | [Politics and government](#)

Tags - [Investigative journalism](#) | [Marcelo Beraba](#) | [Gustavo Gorriti](#) | [Gerardo Reyes](#) | [Tina Rosenberg](#) | [Semana](#) | [Open Society Institute](#) | [Latin American Investigative Journalism Award](#) | [Michael Reid](#) | [Miguel Ramírez](#) | [El Comercio](#) | [Correio Braziliense](#) | [Lúcio Vaz](#) | [2006 Latin American Investigative Journalism Award](#)

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