

# Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/mexico-call-for-release-of-two-04-12-2012,43756.html>

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Americas - Mexico

Eight days

## Two photographers arrested during inaugural clashes freed after eight days

10 December 2012

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Press photographers **Mircea Topoleanu** and **Brandon Daniel Bazán** were finally released yesterday after being held since their arrests while covering major clashes between police and demonstrators in Mexico City during President Enrique Peña Nieto's swearing-in on 1 December.

They were freed along with 54 of the other 69 people arrested during the inauguration-day clashes. The authorities have dropped the public disorder charges on which they were all being held, which carried a possible sentence of five to 30 years in prison.

"We obviously welcome the decision to abandon proceedings against most of those arrested on 1 December," Reporters Without Borders said. "But the release of the photographers must not eclipse the fact that the president's inauguration was marred by the use of heavy-handed police methods to suppress the right to demonstrate and, in some cases, the right to report the news.

"A full investigation must be carried out into these events, in particular, the cases of torture reported by the Federal District Human Right Commission."

A 32-year-old Romanian citizen employed by the magazine *Voices Mexico*, Topoleanu was watching the heavy-handed arrest of a young protester when the police suddenly turned on him, hit him, threw him to the ground and took his equipment. He was then taken to police station No. 50, where he was denied any contact with a lawyer or his embassy and was transferred to Reclusorio Norte prison two days later.

Bazán, a 19-year-old photographer with the magazine *Café MX*, was arrested while taking photos of a group of young people marching peacefully, who were also arrested. Like Topoleanu, he was held in the Reclusorio Norte.

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### 04.12.12 - Call for release of two journalists arrested during inauguration protests

Journalists were among the many victims when police and protesters clashed violently during President Enrique Peña Nieto's inauguration in Mexico City on 1 December, resulting in more than 80 arrests and leaving around 20 people seriously injured.

Those arrested including two photographers – **Mircea Topoleanu**, a 32-year-old Romanian freelancer, and **Brandon Daniel Bazán**, a freelancer working for the magazine *Café MX*. They are still being held in the city's Reclusorio Norte prison.

Topoleanu's sister Ana, who also lives in Mexico, told Reporters Without Borders: "My brother was transferred to prison yesterday. He still has not had access to an individual lawyer. We hope the situation evolves today." Bazán has already been charged with disturbing the peace, which could mean a prison sentence.

"We call for the immediate release of Topoleanu and Bazán, whose only crime was to have done their job amid considerable political tension directly linked to the [controversy](#) about the 1 July presidential election," Reporters Without Borders said.

"Denying access to an individual lawyer is a violation of their constitutional rights and is in itself sufficient grounds for dismissing these proceedings, which are in any case quite absurd.

"We condemn the violence against journalists regardless of who was responsible. What took place on 1 December should also be a warning for the federal government, which is already being contested although only just installed. The question now is what guarantees will fundamental freedoms be given during the next six years in a country with such an appalling human rights record?"

The demonstrations began at about 5 a.m. near the Chamber of Deputies in San Lázaro Palace, where Nieto was sworn in for a six-year term. The protests then spread to the old city around the Zócalo Square, where there many clashes between police and demonstrators.

"I was taking photos near the Chamber of Deputies when I heard someone fire a teargas grenade behind me, from where the police were," *Excelsior* photographer **Quetzallí González** told Reporters Without Borders. "I turned to look and was hit by a fragment in my left cheek, near my eye. Activists looked after me until the ambulance arrived. Then I went back to work."

A photographer with the magazine *Milenio*, **Ana Cecilia Méndez**, was injured on the head by a teargas grenade while two other *Milenio* photographers, **Alejandro González** and **Martin Salas**, were beaten. Protesters took *Reuters* photographer **Bernardo Montoya's** motorcycle and immediately set fire to it in the street.

The victims of violence, in many cases blamed on the police, included **Christopher Rogel** of the newspaper *El Universal*, **Oscar Balderas** of the magazine *ADN Político*, **Paris Martinez** of the magazine *Animal Político*, community radio reporter **Alejandro Pacheco**, **Pedro Anza** of *Agencia Cuartoscuro* and *Efekto TV* cameraman **Osvaldo Muller**.

Some media buildings were also the targets of vandalism. The entrances to the *Excelsior* and *Universal* buildings were covered with graffiti while a group of demonstrators ransacked the entrance to *Efekto TV*.

Read also the blog post on [Huffington Post](#)

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#### Other images



JPEG - 70.6 kb  
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