

Police in Latin America are turning activists' phones against them | Rest of World

By Leo Schwartz

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In late April, a wave of protests swept across Colombia, sparked by a proposed tax reform measure that many people worried would have disproportionately affected the country's already struggling working class. Police soon began rounding up a number of the demonstrators, including one woman in the southwestern city of Cali. Authorities handcuffed her, took her cellphone, and then left her with a group of other detainees.

At some point, a police officer returned and offered to loosen the woman's handcuffs. As they did so, the protestor realized the officer was pressing her fingertips to her phone in order to open it, she later told Fundación Karisma, a Colombian digital rights organization. When the authorities eventually gave the protester back their device, she noticed it was unlocked.

[...]

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