

Brazilian Police Ramp up Massive Raids in Rio Ahead of Olympics



Brasilia, August 4 (RHC)-- The Brazilian government has deployed 82,000 police, military, and private security for the Rio Olympics, which get underway on Friday. And according to local news reports, Brazilian police have deepened their crackdown on Rio de Janeiro's slums before the opening of the Olympic Games when 450 officers stormed a bloc of favelas known as Complexo do Alemao.

The so-called mega-operation was made up of 300 civil police, 150 military police, and an armored helicopter, in an effort to serve 47 warrants, and "identify criminals" in neighborhoods near the city's international airport, the Brazilian daily O Globo reported. The raid reportedly resulted in "intense" shootouts.

At least one police officer was injured in the exchange of gunfire, according to O Globo. The local newspaper Voz da Comunidade reported at least two people were killed. The operation continued an investigation that began last year to root out criminal networks, O Globo reported.

The Complexo do Alemao collection of favelas, located near Rio's international airport, is home to some 100,000 people and one of the sites where violence — including frequent gun battles — is concentrated in

the city alongside a handful of other favelas where warring drug gangs fiercely battle over turf.

The 450-strong police operation in Alemao comes just days after police raided areas of the Complexo da Mare, another group of favelas in Rio's North Zone and one of the most violent parts of the city, for at least three consecutive days. Local community journalist Gizele Martins wrote that Mare residents are living "under siege" and terror in the name of the "invented" war on drugs that allows massacres in poor, communities of color to protect foreign tourists attending the Olympics.

A total of 82,000 police, military, and private security have been deployed for the Rio Olympics. According to O Globo, all suspended police officers have been recalled to the Rio force to support the massive effort.

Heavy policing of the favelas may be in overdrive ahead of the Olympics, but the phenomenon is nothing new. Military police occupied Alemao in 2010 in the name of cracking down on gangs. Two years later, a community policing project known as Pacification Police Units, or UPP, took over the zone.

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