

Brazil's military police kill 434 in Rio de Janeiro so far this year



Rio de Janeiro, May 22 (RHC)-- According to the Rio de Janeiro State Institute of Public Security (IPS), 434 military police killings took place in Rio de Janeiro in the first quarter of 2019 -- averaging seven deaths per day.

According to media reports, this has become the most violent 90 days period in recorded history. The data did not include killings by the Rio de Janeiro Civil Police. The killing spree by the military police comes less than six months into the presidency of far-right President Jair Bolsonaro.

Last year during the same period, 386 deaths were reported. Another important data was the number of rifles seized i.e., 145, the highest since 2007 and 25 more than at the beginning of 2018. More than 100 incomplete rifles were seized at the home of Ronnie Lessa who was arrested for the murder of councilwoman Marielle Franco on March 2018. His guns were not counted in the data.

Governor Wilson Witzel, a right-wing ally of President Bolsonaro, is a supporter of the right of police to kill with impunity. He had ordered the police to use snipers and murder anyone who they think is carrying a weapon. Due to this order, 90 percent of the victims of police killings are young Black males from favelas.

Bolsonaro's Justice Minister Sergio Moro has announced an anti-crime bill, which if passed, would let the police shoot anyone who makes them "feel afraid." Bolsonaro has publically been pro-weapons and a supporter of police brutality. He signed a decree in early May, relaxing rules of carrying weapons for collectors, hunters and sports shooters, known by the acronym CAC.

The CACs can carry loaded weapons on the streets which were not allowed previously. The President of Brazilian Forum for Public Security, Renato Sergio de Lima said the presidential decree would be a step towards the legalization of the possession of weapons in the country.

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