

Black Lives Matter Protests in Rio de Janeiro Ahead of Olympics



Brasilia, July 27 (RHC)-- The U.S.-based movement "Black Lives Matter" held protests in Rio de Janeiro along with local activists in an effort to put Brazilian Black lives on the international map.

Activists from the U.S.-based "Black Lives Matter" movement marched with Brazilian partners through central Rio de Janeiro to protest police violence before the city hosts the first-ever Olympics in South America next month.

The activists, better known for campaigning against police brutality and racial profiling in the United States, traveled to Rio to highlight some of the similarities with their cause in Brazil. Organized by a group of six activists associated with Black Lives Matter, the march included about 200 Brazilian activists and a ceremony at Candelaria cathedral, the infamous site of a 1993 massacre in which a death squad, including off-duty policemen, killed eight children and adolescents who slept on the church steps.

Brazil, the biggest country in Latin America, is home to more than 200 million people, a majority of whom identify themselves as Black or mixed. Those with darker skin, nonetheless, face significant social and economic constraints compared with whites in addition to a dramatically higher rate of conflicts with

police.

The Black Lives Matter activists were hoping to bring much-needed international and media attention to the crisis of state-sanctioned fatal violence in Brazil, particularly in the context of the Olympics, in light of relative silence around the issue given the gravity of the situation.

According to a recent report by a Brazilian Senate committee, one Black youth is killed every 23 minutes in the country in a crisis that some have called an “undeclared civil war” and “genocide” against young Black people.

The report found that more than 23,000 Black youth are killed every year and that Black men are three times more likely to be killed than white men. The delegation to Brazil included representatives of Black Lives Matter Boston and other longtime anti-racist advocates, youth organizers and community activists.

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