

Brazil Sees Another Uprising at Prison Where 26 Killed Over Weekend



Brasilia, January 17 (RHC)-- A new uprising has broken out at a prison in northeastern Brazil, where a recent riot claimed the lives of more than two dozen inmates over the weekend.

Eduardo Franco, head of communications for police in the state of Rio Grande do Norte, said on Monday that a group of Brazilian Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) forces had been dispatched to Alcacuz Penitentiary Center, which is located about 25 kilometers south of the state capital, Natal.

It was not immediately clear what sparked the latest riot at the prison. The Alcacuz prison facility holds 1,083 inmates, almost two times more than its capacity of 620. It was in the same prison that members of a powerful drug gang slaughtered 26 other inmates in an earlier uprising that began late Saturday. On Sunday, police managed to quell the deadly riot.

A string of violent incidents started in Brazilian prisons on January 1, when 56 inmates were killed in gang fights in the northern state of Amazonas. Many of those killed were beheaded and dismembered.

On January 6, 33 prisoners were gruesomely killed by prison gangs in the neighboring state of Roraima. The hearts and intestines of many of the victims were removed. A series of other prison uprisings across Brazil have killed dozens of inmates in recent weeks.

Figures show at least 140 inmates have died in Brazil's prisons in just over two weeks. Many of those killed had their heads cut off and were badly mutilated or burned.

Experts say Brazil's most powerful criminal gang, the so-called First Command, also known by the Portuguese acronym PCC, is exploiting overcrowded and squalid conditions in the prisons to expand its reach across the national prison system.

The gang runs drug-trafficking operations both inside and outside prisons even though many of its leaders are in maximum-security facilities in Sao Paulo state.

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