

Brazilian president says criminals must die like cockroaches



Brasilia, August 7 (RHC)-- The President of Brazil, Jair Bolsonaro, said in an interview he is pushing for legislation that would protect police officers and citizens who shoot to kill suspects, adding that criminals should die like "cockroaches." "These guys are going to die in the streets like cockroaches, and that's how it should be," he said of any alleged criminals.

In the interview, Bolsonaro announced that he sent a bill to Congress that, if passed, will provide "legal cover" to police officers so that they can use firearms without running any risk of being prosecuted. The president claimed that violence rates would fall drastically if the police could shoot to kill, knowing that they will not be brought to justice. He added that security forces should be decorated for using their guns instead of being taken to court.

The "anti-crime package" is currently under study by Congress. The plan aims, among other things, to broaden the so-called "exclusion of illegality" (exclusão de ilicitude), an article in Brazil's criminal code that authorizes some normally illegal acts.

The far-right president also claimed the drop in murder rates during the first quarter of the year, which coincides with Bolsonaro's tenure, is because of his presidency and his appointing former judge Sergio Moro as Minister of Justice.

Bolsonaro's comments triggered outrage among the opposition and human rights movements. "These are abhorrent comments," said Ariel de Castro Alves, a human rights activist and lawyer in Sao Paulo, who added that Bolsonaro's discourse has caused a rise in deadly police brutality, and whose victims are overwhelmingly poor, young Black men.

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