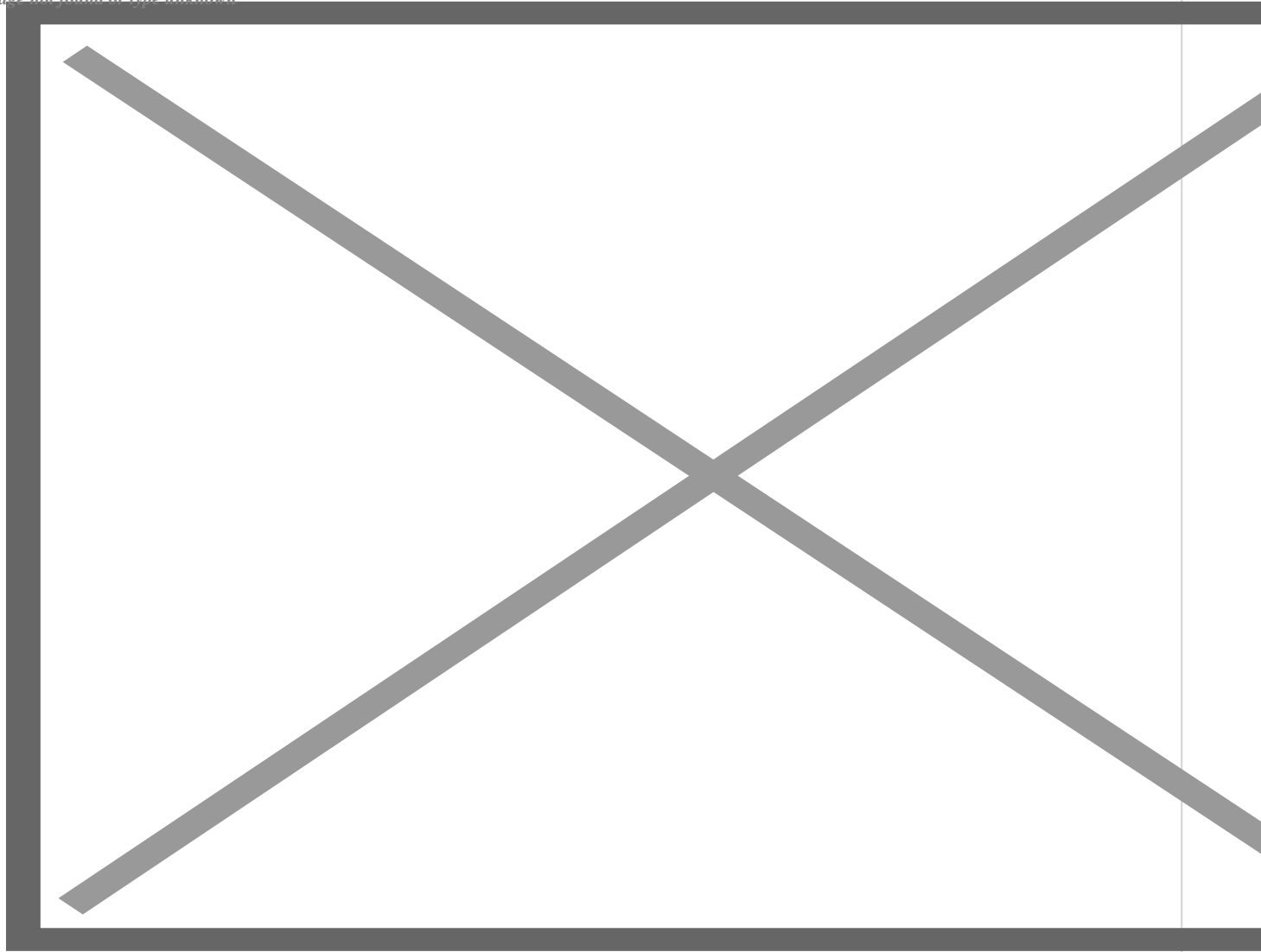


At least 25 killed in Rio de Janeiro's deadliest police raid

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?Brazilian police operation in the Jacarezinho favela of Rio de Janeiro on Thursday?

Rio de Janeiro, May 7 (RHC)-- At least 25 people have been killed after hundreds of heavily armed police stormed into one of Rio de Janeiro's largest slum areas, reportedly targeting drug traffickers. Local media showed live footage of seven armed young men hopping through the roofs of North Zone's Jacarezinho

favela in the early hours of Thursday morning, as bulletproof helicopters hovered over them.

The report said what it called “extremely suspicious criminals” were attempting to escape from the police. Two passengers on the metro were hit by a stray bullet and one police officer was also killed.

Videos and photos shared by residents on social media showed grenade explosions, as well as horrific scenes of corpses lying in corridors, multiple bullet holes on residents' doors, blood-stained mattresses and clothes and blood flowing down staircases in the favela's narrow alleys.

The Brazilian media widely applauded the operation -- they and Rio's Civil and Federal Police force have said was a justified crackdown on drug trafficking and other violent crimes in the community. But human rights activists, residents and public security specialists were horrified and said that the attack could have been motivated by other factors. "Never in my life have I seen a police operation as lethal as this," Bruno Soares, a researcher from Rio's Centre for Studies on Public Security and Citizenship told reporters.

Soares, who was born and raised in the Jacarezinho favela and in the area when the operation took place, said that it was unlikely that all the people killed in the operation were criminals. The police have yet to release information on who was killed but residents said that most of the killings were not from shoot-outs.

“One of the men asked to hide in my home. When the police came, I told them that there was someone here, as they would have come in anyway. They went to my daughter's room and shot him point-blank,” said one favela resident in a video shared with reporters. “How is my daughter going to sleep now?”

Monica, a human rights activist, who was also in the favela when the raids took place said the police invaded homes in what she describes as “true extermination.” And she added: “It was carnage.”

Media reports said the Public Ministry had approved of the operation. But Soares, of the Centre for Studies on Public Security and Citizenship, claimed that the ministry only received information of the operation three hours after it began.

According to a report by the Human Rights Watch, more than 1,200 people were killed by the Rio police force last year. The majority of the people killed are from poor, lower-class neighbourhoods and peripheries.

A separate report from Fogo Cruzado, a digital platform that monitors armed violence in Rio, said that more than 100 children have been killed by stray bullets in the past five years, and the majority go unpunished.

“Operations like today unfortunately are very common in Rio de Janeiro. The police treat raids as completely normal, which each time become more violent. When we have the most deadly police operation in our history, this says a lot,” Cecilia Oliveira, founder of Fogo Cruzado, told local media.

<https://www.radiohc.cu/index.php/en/noticias/internacionales/256516-at-least-25-killed-in-rio-de-janeiros-deadliest-police-raid>



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