

Police violence in Brazil

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By María Josefina Arce

Police violence has taken hold in Brazil. Every year thousands of people, mostly Black and poor, die at the hands of law enforcement officers, without justice in a large part of the cases. It is also evidence the prevailing racism in Brazilian society that has been gaining ground with the arrival to the presidency of Jair Bolsonaro.

In 2019 law enforcement killed more than six THOUSAND people, one of the highest numbers in the world. Almost 80% of the victims were Black. Already in the first half of 2020 these deaths increased 6%.

In Rio de Janeiro, ranked as one of the deadliest states in Brazil in terms of police brutality, 75% of all those killed in 2020 were of African origin.

In fact, in the middle of last year, thousands of citizens took to the streets in the main cities in protest against a police operation that left 28 people dead in a favela in Rio de Janeiro, where it is common for security agents to violently enter poor communities with a majority Black population.

The event that shocked Brazilian society took place even though in June 2020 the Federal Supreme Court prohibited police operations in low-income neighborhoods in Rio de Janeiro during the COVID 19 pandemic.

In recent days again the judicial body has ruled on the brutal police behavior. The Federal Supreme Court gave a 90-day deadline for the governor's office of Rio de Janeiro to adopt measures against the violence of its security agents.

The UN, together with several civil society organizations, had already warned about this situation, which has been aggravated by the hate speech of the Brazilian president, a former military man who criminalizes vulnerable groups and raises the slogan "good bandit is a dead bandit".

Analysts affirm that the president has focused on invisibilizing and exterminating vulnerable groups, such as the Black and indigenous population.

Social movements qualify as genocide against the black population the policy of Bolsonaro, whom they accuse of having turned his back on them during the health emergency due to COVID 19.

Data from last July showed that deaths from respiratory diseases during the pandemic increased 71% among Afro-Brazilians and 24.5% among whites, while the former had received only 23% of the vaccines administered in Brazil up to that time.

The increase in police violence against the poor and Blacks is a reality in Brazil today, whose president has pardoned members of the security forces convicted of homicides in the exercise of their duties or even while on vacation.

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