

Fire Destroys 600 Favela Houses in Sao Paulo



Sao Paulo, September 9 (Xinhua-RHC) -- An extensive fire in Brazil's largest city, Sao Paulo, destroyed some 600 slum houses, leaving nearly 2,500 residents homeless, the fire department said Monday.

According to a press release from the department, a fire that broke out Sunday night claimed no lives, but destroyed nearly 80 percent of the Buraco Quente favela, a 1,000-square-meter neighborhood in the city's southern Campo Belo region.

The fire started around 9 p.m. local time (00:00 GMT Monday) and burned through the night until firefighters were able to bring it under control by daybreak Monday.

Residents of the poor district, which lacks proper public services, complained there wasn't enough water to fight the blaze, Brazil's G1 news website reported.

The nearly 100 firefighters battling the blaze saw their efforts "interrupted by a lack of water" some three hours after arriving at the scene, according to the G1 news reports.

The claim was denied by Col. Sergio Moretti, head of the fire department, who accused drug traffickers living in the area of impeding the efforts of the firefighters and even setting fire on the fire trucks.

Those who lost their homes were taken to a nearby church, where Civil Defense workers registered their names on a list of people to receive social welfare benefits.

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