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## **Ending Police Impunity and Promoting Indigenous Peoples' Rights Must Be Brazil's Priorities**

“Despite all the economic progress made in Brazil over the last decade, violence is endemic and the current response is not only failing to reduce the violence, it is actually exacerbating the situation,” said Amnesty International’s Secretary General Salil Shetty as he completed an official visit to the country.

The visit highlighted issues of public security in the favelas of Rio, and the plight of Indigenous Peoples. It reviewed Brazil’s human rights progress as it prepares to host the next World Cup and Olympics and was timed to coincide with the International Day of Indigenous Peoples.

In the favelas the Secretary General met members of the community who told him how they felt imprisoned in their own homes.

“The people we met who live in Maré fear both the criminals who attack them and the police who are supposed to protect them,” said Salil Shetty.

Amnesty International has documented a pattern of police abuse, unlawful searches of homes, extrajudicial executions and enforced disappearances in the favelas. Salil Shetty, later voiced his concerns with José Eduardo Cardoso, the minister of justice in Brasília, and a number of other ministers, pressing for urgent reforms in the country.

Atila Roque, Director of Amnesty International in Brazil, accompanied the Secretary General throughout his visit.

“The insecurity and frustrations of people living in favelas is spreading. The people who identify themselves as middle class and have taken to the streets over the last two months – many of them for the first time - are seeing the ugly side of policing that is not subject to civilian oversight,” said Atila Roque

Amnesty International believes that it is critical that policing undergoes fundamental reform in Brazil. A first step is to establish independent civilian oversight of the police with investigative powers to create accountability.

The Amnesty International delegation also visited Mato Grosso do Sul and met with Indigenous Peoples living in the Guarani-Kaiowá village of Jaguapiru and the settlement of Apikay, near the city of Dourados.

“The repeated delays in demarcating their lands is leading to violence, forced evictions and other human rights abuses,” said Salil Shetty.

The Secretary General urged the Brazilian national authorities to take a leading role in protecting the rights of Indigenous Peoples.

“It is important that the government reject the false dichotomy between development and human rights. Brazil has the legal framework and the financial resources to ensure the rights of the Indigenous Peoples. Now the government must demonstrate that it also has the political will,” said Salil Shetty.

Amnesty International has a long history of work in Brazil. This is the first High Level Mission of the Secretary General since Amnesty International opened its national office in Rio.

“The government is entitled to feel proud of many accomplishments, particularly with regard to reducing poverty and income inequality. But it needs to address the very serious problems of violence and insecurity. Favelas and indigenous communities cannot be `human rights` free zones,” said Salil Shetty.

The Secretary General was accompanied by Amnesty International’s director in Brazil, Atilla Roque, Amnesty International’s UK director Kate Allen, Senior Director for Law and Policy Widney Brown and AI Brazil Communication officer Thais Herdy. Amnesty International has recently started recruiting individuals as members in Brazil to join the human rights movement which has more than 3 million members globally.