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Brazil: Police must avoid excessive use of force

Brazilian police must avoid excessive use of force, Amnesty International said after scores of people have been injured and detained during several demonstrations in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo over a transportation fare hike.

Protests began on Monday night, after the price of a single bus ticket in São Paulo was raised on 2 June from 3 reais (US\$1.40) to 3.20 reais (US\$1.50) and in Rio de Janeiro from 2,75 reais to 2,95 reais

Since then, some protesters and police have both reportedly engaged in violence – on Thursday alone, 55 people were injured and 250 detained in São Paulo. Riot police have made wide use of tear gas and rubber bullets against demonstrators, some of whom have attacked public property.

“The increasing level of violence amid these protests is deeply troubling”, said Atila Roque, director of the organization’s Brazil Office.

The police reaction against protests has resulted in widespread reports of indiscriminate use of force against protesters.

“The Brazilian authorities must ensure a prompt, full and impartial investigation into any possible excessive use of force by police,” said Roque.

Under Brazil’s international obligations, police have a duty to maintain order and protect the civilian population from violence. Any use of force must be proportional to the threat to public safety, as established by the UN in its *Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials*.

“Any excessive use of force beyond that permitted by law must be dealt with decisively by bringing those responsible to justice,” said Roque.