

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

## Public Statement

AI Index: AMR 19/023/2006 (Public)  
News Service No: 123  
15 May 2006

### **Brazil: Killers of law-enforcement officers must be brought to justice**

Amnesty International condemns unreservedly the killing of up to 70 people in São Paulo over the last few days, following attacks by the Primeiro Comando da Capital (PCC) criminal gang.

On Friday 12 June several police stations, police cars and off duty police officers were attacked. The attacks were reportedly orchestrated by the PCC in retaliation for the transfer of their leaders to a high security prison, and have lasted for several days.

Nothing can justify the use of extreme criminal violence and Amnesty International calls on the state to ensure that those responsible be brought to justice.

Amnesty International said the attacks and killings of law-enforcement officials are a threat to the equitable and just provision of public security to all Brazilians. Without guaranteeing the security and human rights of law-enforcement officials their ability to perform their duty to protect and guarantee the human rights of all Brazilians is undermined.

In the wake of these killings it is time for the governments of São Paulo and of Brazil to ask how many law enforcement officials, how many poor young black or mixed race men and how many innocent bystanders must be killed before they address the profound and systemic problems in the criminal justice system which sustain the consistently shocking numbers of violent deaths.

Amnesty International said that reactive and electorally motivated responses to public security issues have not reduced criminal violence.

The long-term failure to implement necessary and effective reforms to the public security system, the judiciary and the prison system have resulted in a criminal justice system which, in the words of the minister of justice, is a "production line for crime".

Under prepared and overstretched public security forces will never fill the vacuum left by the lack of long-term, socially targeted, public security policies needed to stem the extremely high levels of criminal violence.

Amnesty International recognises that it is the duty of the state authorities to establish the rule of law. However, the organization urges the authorities to ensure that all measures taken respect international human rights standards so as to prevent any loss of life.

### **Background Information**

According to reports over 60 people have been killed, including: military and civil police officers, municipal

guards, prison officers, civilians as well as several criminal suspects involved in the attacks.

At the same time, riots broke out in over 70 prisons, detention centres, and juvenile detention centres in São Paulo and other states. Several hundred people are believed to be still held hostage.

So far the authorities have arrested 80 people believed to have been involved in the attacks.

The PCC is a criminal gang that was born within São Paulo's prison system and is reported to have dominated it for some time. In February 2001 the PCC was reported to have orchestrated a mega-rebellion when 29 prisons and detention centres in São Paulo rioted simultaneously.

Its power now stretches beyond the confines of the prison system, dominating the lives of many in the poorest communities in São Paulo.

Methods adopted by the state authorities to break the PCC have had mixed effects. In 2002 the state authorities created Regime Disciplinar Diferenciado (RDD), differentiated disciplinary regime, an internal punishment system for those found guilty of committing crimes within the prison system. The RDD has been challenged as being a contravention of international human rights standards.