
Another Killer of Brazilian TV Reporter Out of Jail With Still 20 Years to Serve

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Brazilian authorities have announced this past December 30 that Cláudio Orlando "O Ratinho" (The Little Rat) do Nascimento, like Claudino "Xuxa" dos Santos Coelho before him has been granted a partial release for "good behavior."

The two men, known members of a Rio de Janeiro gang, were sentenced in 2005 to 23 years and six months in prison for the June 2002 murder of TV Globo reporter Tim Lopes.

Lopes was investigating corruption of minors by drug traffickers in the Rio de Janeiro favela of Vila del Cruzeiro when he was kidnapped and tortured to death. Seven gang members were given sentences ranging from 23 to 28 years in prison for his murder.

International press freedom organization Reporter Without Borders said that they were shocked with the news: "We accept that, after completing a sixth of their sentence, convicts can request partial release, but we think it is utterly inappropriate to grant in this case because of the cruelty of the crime for which "O Ratinho" and "Xuxa" were convicted."

Last November, judicial authorities from Rio decided to put convicted murderer Xuxa on a "semi-release" program for "good behavior."

Xuxa, an alleged drug trafficker, was sentenced in 2005 to 23 years and six months in prison for the June 2002 murder of TV Globo reporter Tim Lopes. As he was arrested in August 2002, he has already completed one third of his sentence.

Under the program, he would be allowed out of prison by day as long as he returns at night. But according to Rio's daily newspaper "Extra", he has already violated this requirement.

"We expressed our satisfaction in 2005 when seven suspects were convicted of Lopes' murder, but now we share his family's incomprehension at this concession, which seems completely unjustified given the cruelty of the crime of which this prisoner was convicted," Reporters Without Borders said.

Lopes was investigating sexual exploitation of minors by drug traffickers in the Rio de Janeiro favela of Vila del Cruzeiro in June 2002 when he was kidnapped, tortured and finally hacked to death by members the "Crazy Elias" gang, who burned his body.