

For Amnesty International Torture and Impunity Are Still the Law of the Land, in Brazil

Contributed by Lílian de Macedo
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In Brazil torture is practiced by agents of the State in a generalized and systematic fashion, according to the non-governmental organization (NGO), Amnesty International (AI). The organization released a report, Tuesday, October 25, informing that attacks on human rights persist in Brazil. The document expresses the organization's concern over the "large number of homicides practiced by the police and the dissemination of torture and mistreatment in the country" and goes on to say that

"Amnesty International laments the failure of Brazilian authorities to ensure minimal human rights protection for the entire population since 1996."

The report emphasizes that the main victims are poor, black youth. The organization affirms that most of these cases remain "without investigation or any kind of punishment of the guilty parties."

The author of the report, Tim Cahill, underscores the existence of death squads in the country, "as in the case of the assassination of 29 poor people in the Lowland zone of Rio de Janeiro (Baixada Fluminense) in April, 2005."

Cahill also refers to the murder of the US-born missionary, Dorothy Stang. According to Cahill, this crime aroused international concern over the issue. Stang was shot to death by gunmen in the state of Pará in February of this year.

"The federal and state governments publicly condemned these deaths, promising to bring the guilty parties to justice. However, these cases occurred in areas with a long history of persistent impunity," he affirms.

The document was forwarded to the United Nations (UN). Last year Brazil presented the UN with its second report on policies developed to deal with this issue (the first was presented in 1994).

The report praises the Program for the Protection of Human Rights Advocates, launched by the federal government last year. According to the NGO, it represented "a notable contribution to promote the efforts of those who fight for rights in Brazil." But the country "remains without infrastructure for the effective implementation of this plan to become a reality," it amends.

Cahill also criticizes the National Public Safety Plan adopted by the federal government in 2003. "Two years later, the reforms planned for the sector have not been implemented in an efficient manner, and very little has been done to try to reverse the situation," he reports.

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