

Shocks and Burning Part of Hazing in Brazilian Army

Contributed by I.L.
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The army in Brazil has launched an investigation after images of soldiers being beaten and tortured by their superiors were shown on television.

Globo TV broadcast a video and pictures of what it said were recently promoted sergeants apparently being subjected to initiation ceremonies.

They involved electric shocks, beatings and burning with electric irons. The army admitted the video was authentic and suspended the battalion commander while the inquiry takes place.

The images showed the men having their ears burned with an electric clothes iron, receiving electric shocks on their stomachs, as well as being beaten and kicked.

They were forced to ask superiors for help and say that they "loved" them. Battalion commander Ernani Lunardi Filho said that the incident happened without his knowledge and was strongly condemned by the institution.

"This is not part of the training. This is an isolated practice, involving only sergeants who played pranks on other sergeants," he told Brazilian media. The video footage and the pictures were shown on Sunday on Globo's program Fantástico.

The network said that the images had been obtained from the second company of the 20th armored infantry battalion in the southern city of Curitiba, and that they were taken by the men who carried out the torture session.

All the officers allegedly involved in the incident were expected to testify on Monday, Brazilian media reported.

Brazilian Vice-President and Defense Minister, José Alencar, called the hazing episode "in bad taste" and "unacceptable."

The battalion's commander, lieutenant-colonel Ernani Lunardi Filho has been removed from his post "due to the gravity of the charges," according to a Defense Ministry's note.

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