

Brazil Recognizes Torture Is Common Practice in the Country

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The Integrated Actions Plan for the Prevention and Control of Torture in Brazil is already being elaborated in seven states by the Brazilian Special Secretariat of Human Rights' (SEDH) Permanent Commission to Combat Torture and Institutional Violence.

This information comes from Pedro Montenegro, coordinator of the SEDH. Montenegro informed that implementation of the plan began in December, 2004, and will soon be extended to the other states.

The document is being submitted to wide public consultation "to reaffirm President Lula's commitment and determination that government policies be open to democratic debate and suggestions."

Doubts, criticisms, and suggestions may be directed to the electronic address: consultatortura@sedh.gov.br. The text of the plan is available at the website: www.sedh.gov.br.

"Torture is systematic in Brazil and is practiced with enormous cruelty," Montenegro observed.

He explained that the main types of torture that exist in the country occur under conditions of deprivation of freedom, in order to obtain confessions or to punish.

"The purpose of the plan is to control, prevent, and, when its execution has been completed, to be able to eliminate the pox of torture from our society," he added.

The plan is based on recommendations made by the United Nations to put an end to torture.

"These recommendations are the fruit of a theory that posits torture as an opportunistic crime and envisions effective control to combat it," the coordinator remarked.

According to Montenegro, four actions ensure the efficacy of the method: "making it more difficult to practice torture, increasing the risk of punishment for those who practice it, reducing the rewards for practicing it, and eliminating the excuses used to justify it."

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