

## Brazilian Congressmen in Japan Probing Charges of Dekasseguis' Mistreatment

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According to Brazilian psychologist and psychoanalyst, Taeco Toma Carignato, the members of Brazil's Joint Parliamentary Investigatory Commission (CPMI) on Illegal Emigration will discover many problems among Brazilians who reside in Japan ("dekasseguis"), especially when it comes to discrimination in school, their insertion in the Japanese community, and the area of health care.

She is used to treating Brazilians who return from Japan with "serious psychiatric disorders." Her advice to the members of the CPMI who left for Japan on Monday, February 27 is "to listen to the Brazilians, hear their complaints and grievances, and visit the Brazilian communities and the schools to observe the way the children are treated, as well as conversing with Japanese government officials about improving the dekasseguis' living conditions."

Carignato says that Brazilians suffer discrimination in Japan because they are foreigners. "The Japanese are xenophobic, and they regard Brazilians of Japanese descent as foreigners," she commented.

She also informed that Brazilians live in communities where there is little Japanese participation. And the children are often mistreated by their classmates, to the point of physical abuse, for being different and not mastering the language.

The psychoanalyst observes that problems in dealing with cultural differences have been traumatic for Brazilians, because they also face problems resulting from isolation and overwork. "This causes serious crises, which are frequently temporary but require treatment and attention."

While acknowledging that Brazilians who live in Japan are victims of some degree of discrimination at school, the president of the ISEC (Institute of Educational and Cultural Solidarity), Reimei Yoshioka, said that most of them are doing well and have no plans to return to Brazil.

"There are some problems related to difficulties in introducing Brazilians into the Japanese social security system and difficulties in inserting children into the schools because of their difficulties with the language," he said.

According to Yoshioka, although there are more than 300,000 Brazilians of Japanese descent or with dual citizenship living in Japan, there are very few prison inmates among them - a little over two hundred, he estimated. And these were arrested for minor misdemeanors, committed by individuals unable to adapt at work or school, he added.

Yoshioka informed that nearly all the Brazilians work in the automobile, electro-electronic components, and food industries. They earn around US\$ 10 an hour and work around 10 hours per day, he said.

The members of the CPMI on Illegal Emigration will spend a week in Japan, where they will maintain contacts with government officials and dekassegui communities in the cities of Tokyo and Nagoya.

The legislators' schedule also includes contacts with the Brazilian Embassy and with representatives of the Japanese parliament, the ministries of Foreign Affairs and Education, and the National Police Agency, as well as visits to prisons.

The Brazilian group is led by senator Marcelo Crivela (PMR party from Rio de Janeiro state), who is president of the CPMI, and the commission's rapporteur, deputy João Magno (PT, Minas Gerais state).

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