

## Brazilian Militia's Boss Executed with Over 60 Shots in Rio

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Friday, 23 February 2007

A Brazilian police officer believed to be one of the bosses of Rio de Janeiro's militias - groups of vigilantes formed by policemen and former policemen who are taking over control of Rio's favelas (shantytowns) from the hands of drug lords - is dead.

He was executed, yesterday, February 22, with over 60 shots from large caliber weapons. Civilian police inspector Félix dos Santos Tostes, 49, seemed to be the head of the militias headquartered in Rio das Pedras, Jacarepaguá, in Rio's west side.

He was in his Toyota Hilux pickup truck in Recreio dos Bandeirantes, also in the west side, getting out of a building in reverse, when three men in a black Chevrolet Astra, according to witnesses, surrounded his car and started shooting giving him no chance of escaping or shooting back.

A fourth men kept the car running ready to get away. Tostes was leaving the apartment of a unidentified girlfriend. A woman who was passing by was hit in the leg by a bullet and had to be taken to a nearby hospital.

Another woman, apparently a relative of the policeman, came to the car soon after the shooting and started screaming that she knew who was behind the murder, that the culprit was Rio's council member Josinaldo Francisco da Cruz, better known as Nadinho:

"It was Nadinho," she shouted. "Everybody knows that. He wants to be the boss in Rio das Pedras." She then fainted. The son of the inspector also appeared and cried a lot next to the bullet-riddled car. While the crime happened at about 5 pm, the dead body was only taken away around 9 pm.

Police chief Carlos Augusto Nogueira, of the 16th Police District, says that he will be summoning Nadinho to testify even though the woman might have said that "in the heat of emotion" without having any evidence. Nadinho and Tostes used to be good friends and allies, but their relationship had suffered some setbacks, according to those who knew both.

Dozens of military police came to the scene of the crime. They called the dead man Rio das Pedras Félix or Rio das Pedras' boss. They all seemed surprised by the number of bullets used. 47 empty capsules were found just around the pickup truck. Despite witnesses account that 4 men were in the car, the Police believe that at least six gunmen took part in the execution.

Authorities will be investigating reports that the Felix militia was having a territorial dispute with another group headed by

a policeman known as Robocop and his partner Girão, who is a fireman. Tostes was apparently bothered by the high profits the Robocop vigilantes were getting.

The duo also used to be good friends of Tostes. Now they are known to be planning an invasion of the Cidade de Deus favela, after having taken over five other slums in the surrounding area.