

Brazilian State Can't Take the Mafia and Calls the Feds

Contributed by Luciana Vasconcelos
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Brazil's National Security Force is on its way to the state of Espírito Santo where it will operate under the command of the state Military Police.

"This is not a federal intervention. It is a collaboration," declared a spokesman for the force.

According to the governor of Espírito Santo, Paulo Hartung, "Under our command we will plan the use of the National Security Force in our state."

The governor went on to say he considers the presence of the new force important in the war on violence and organized crime in the state.

"The fact that we are working together, integrated and jointly, strengthens the concept of federative solidarity. This spiderweb of crime that runs from stealing cargo to drug traffic has just gone too far in our country's urban centers.

"The only way to win this war is with broad coordination and integration. That is the only way we will be able to destroy the criminal structure that exists in our country and that exists here in Espírito Santo, as well," he said.

The federal government decided to send the National Security Force at the request of the governor following a spate of violence that included the burning of buses in the capital, Vitória.

Since then, Army troops have been in the state. Those troops will now be substituted by the National Security Force.

According to a 2002 survey by Unesco, Espírito Santo is Brazil's third most violent state in number of homicides and second in assassinations of youths between the ages of 15 and 24.

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