

Brazilian Police Used Infiltrators to Detain Peaceful Protesters



Brasilia, September 10 (RHC)-- Students who were arbitrarily detained by police in Sao Paulo, Brazil, ahead of a massive anti-coup demonstration denied police accusations that they intended to engage in vandalism and alleged a police infiltrator was responsible for their arrests.

The arrest of 26 young people before they could even participate in the 100,000-strong rally against the coup regime drew widespread condemnation. The day after the demonstration, police claimed that the arrest of 18 youth at the Sao Paulo Cultural Center was unexpected and that police stopped the group for allegedly "looking suspicious."

Police falsely claimed that members of the group confessed that they intended to engage in vandalism during the protest. These "confessions" were never produced nor presented before a judge. One student affirmed that police used violence during their arrest and tried to suggest that an iron bar found across the street was theirs.

The victims told reporters that a large contingent of police, including a dozen vehicles and a helicopter, took part in the arrests. Additionally, the students said they were apprehended while inside the cultural center and there was no way the police could have seen them from the street, as the police had alleged. "There's no way it was by chance," said one student, who asked not to be identified.

Instead, many of those arrested believe that police infiltrated their group and it was a person by the name of Baltazar Mendes, otherwise known as Balta, who told police to arrest the group.

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