

Vast majority of those killed by police in Rio de Janeiro are Black



Rio de Janeiro, February 10 (RHC)-- In Brazil, 80 percent of those killed by police in Rio de Janeiro were Black, a figure that only in the first half of 2019 is similar to that of the country as a whole in 2018, according to data published by the Institute of Public Security (ISP).

On February 8, 2019, during a police operation in the Fallet favela, it was the day with the most deaths due to legal intervention in the first half of 2019, 18 in total. Nine of them were inside the same house in Fallet.

State data indicates that 80.3 percent of those killed in police operations in the first half of 2019, were Black or Brown. That is, of the 885 deaths, 711 responded to this racial category, according to ISP.

According to the Brazilian lawyer of the human rights organization Conectas Gabriel Sampaio, the racial component of deaths in the state cannot be denied. "(The deaths) require a level of clarification and reflection on public security policy, which cannot be based on death. The high figures on deaths already show an error in public safety. And the racial component is extremely serious," the expert told Brazilian news outlet G1.

"Above all, it is a portrait of deaths that reveals how structural racism is in Brazil and how much it is institutional, understanding that (police) institutions must provide security to citizens," he added.

The mother of two of the dead in the Fallet favela is struggling to prove that their children were not criminals. According to the police, all were linked to "drug trafficking," a narrative commonly used in an attempt to criminalize the peripheries, where there is a high percentage of the Black population.

A retired officer of the Brazilian Military Police and a researcher at the Violence Analysis Laboratory of the State University of Rio de Janeiro Robson Rodrigues said that the number of deaths by state agents broke a historical record, while the number of homicides reached a lower level since 1991.

"The direction of these public policies continues in the same sectors, against the same segments, in the same places where there is the perception that the problem is located there," the former military police criticized.

Meanwhile, Brazilian far-right President, Jair Bolsonaro has been involved in a series of scandals due to his position that emboldens the police forces. In November, he sent to Congress a bill to prevent the opening of trials by "easy trigger" or state violence against military and police.

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