

Olympic Site Built on the Graves of African Slaves



Rio de Janeiro, July 23 (RHC)-- In an Olympics season mired in myriad controversies, add one more to the mix: the games' media village is built on the mass graves of African slaves.

A community of descendants of runaway slaves – known reverentially in Brazil as quilombos – say that Barra Media Village 3, located near the Olympic Park in Rio de Janeiro, was built atop a burial ground where their ancestors are buried.

Adilson Batista Almeida, the leader of Camorim Quilombo, has accused developers of erasing the country's cultural identity, both by destroying archaeological remains at the site, and depriving the community from having a space to celebrate their Afro-Brazilian heritage.

The media village is a condominium that will be sold to private buyers after the Olympics. Acquired in 2013 by the real estate developer Cyrela, the company in their construction of the building destroyed hundreds of trees, a community football pitch, the remains of the old slave owner's house and a slavery-era sugar mill.

Under Brazil's modern constitution, quilombos are entitled to claim the lands they historically occupied. The Camorim Quilombos did claim the site of the media village, but the process was never finalized. The Rio de Janeiro city government denies any such claim.

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