

Brazilian security intervention in Rio passes vote in congress



Brasilia, Feb 21 (RHC)-- Brazil's congress has approved a decree authorizing the federal government to dispatch military forces to intervene in security matters in the state of Rio de Janeiro. The bill allows Brazil's army to take over command of police forces in the state and authorizes search warrants for entire communities. The legislation passed the lower house with 340 lawmakers voting in favor, 72 against and one abstention. It later passed in the Brazilian senate.

The legislation has garnered sharp criticism from civil society. Vagner Freitas, president of the Unified Workers' Central, or CUT, said the people of Rio de Janeiro, and elsewhere in Brazil, do not need a "military intervention," but a "social intervention," one that expands and improves public education, legal employment and "first jobs for youth."

Former Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff posted a message on her official Facebook page stating that Brazilian President Michel Temer's "regime is closing its claws against the most vulnerable Brazilians who are in most need of justice." She noted that the "coup government initiative to promote collective search, seizure and arrest warrants is one of the worst violations of civil rights that Brazil confronts since the end of the dictatorship" and that it represents "yet another step in the deepening of the state of emergency in Brazil."

Also, Brazil's Association of Judges for Democracy released a statement saying that the military

intervention in Rio de Janeiro state represents a direct violation of the country's constitution. Last Friday, Brazil's federal government summoned the army to take control of police forces in the state of Rio de Janeiro. Temer claimed that the move was in response to increased violence and drug gangs who have "virtually taken over."

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