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## **Amnesty International Says Human Rights Abuses By Police Common In Brazil**

*by Barbara Khol*

*Category/Department: General*

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On June 18, Amnesty International released a 17-page report titled, "Torture and Extrajudicial Execution in Urban Brazil," stating that Brazilian police routinely torture and kill criminal suspects and prisoners. The report was released during a press conference at the Sao Paulo branch of the Brazilian Bar Association. Political prisoners were routinely tortured during the 1964-1985 period military rule. Abuses diminished but did not end with the return of civilian rule, Amnesty International said. Torture is "endemic in Brazil and can happen at any time and anywhere in police stations and vehicles, in prisons and in secret," said the report. "There is evidence that the police have responded to increasing social violence by taking the law into their own hands, torturing and killing ordinary criminal suspects and prisoners," said AI. Human rights violations are not official policy, the report added, "but to tolerate these abuses is to condone them. The alarming incidence of unlawful killing, torture and cruel and inhuman treatment of citizens in official custody indicates that the authorities are not taking effective steps to eradicate these practices." Bacre Waly Ndiaye, vice chairperson of AI's International Executive Committee, said that Brazilian policemen, "knowing their crimes will go unpunished because of the prevailing climate of impunity, form death squads whose victims are those least able to defend themselves the poor and children." He added that death squads kill at least one child a day. (Basic data from AP, 06/18/90)

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