

Public Security in Rio de Janeiro



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Rio de Janeiro is often burdened with the rather unfair reputation or blemish of being a violent city; the result of years and decades of negligence and abandonment of a city that is, in effect, marvellous. Therefore, there is no way that the projects that we are developing at the security office can be discussed without first putting them into the context of what they are the result of. First of all, it is necessary to analyse Rio de Janeiro's socio-economic history. We understand that a lot of what we are experiencing today started a long time ago. Firstly, the transfer of the Republic's capital to Brasilia meant a step back for Rio de Janeiro: I would like you to imagine what would happen to Brasilia, for example, if the capital was transferred from there to São Paulo? It is well known that there are ex-European capitals that currently receive sums of money from federal governments as a type of compensation because they are no longer capital of their country. This was not the case in Rio de Janeiro. The entire political-administrative entourage left suddenly; only the buildings were left here, and today they are in ruins.

Later, during the 70s, the State of Guanabara was abolished. Another great disaster - yet again the State was broken into pieces. Furthermore, considering the stagnation of the world economy in the 80s

and 90s, we are faced with the serious question of what is, or was, the "great economical driving force" in Rio de Janeiro: oil royalties, which also suffered a sharp decline during the 1970s. Obviously, after the capital of the Republic left Rio de Janeiro, the city never again had a link, or close understanding with the Federal Capital. The fact that a state does not have close relations with the Federal Government is very serious. Nowadays, on the other hand, we have a very distinct, clear and harmonic relationship with the Federal Government which, without a shadow of a doubt, gives great benefits to society in Rio de Janeiro.

It is obvious that this financial crisis, this abandonment of Rio de Janeiro, gave rise to the issue of disorderly occupation of the city. As we travel around the city, we can all see how the favelas (Rocinha, Vidigal, Dona Marta) are growing. And what has been done about it? The legal framework is in place, and the Public Prosecutor's Office acts within its area of competence. However, a chain of logic was followed that goes against the treatment of these disorderly occupations, they went in and installed electricity, they went in and installed water, they went in and installed basic sanitation, they went in and, in a certain way, they ratified the disorderly occupation that was becoming, in theory at least, orderly. Evidently, the geographical layout of Rio de Janeiro - the fundamental difference between sea, forests and mountains - presents the opportunity to allow these agglomerations of people to form. If I were in the shoes of the person working in the centre of Rio de Janeiro, I can imagine that I would want to live in a favela, as they are central and I would not need to take a bus because I could get to

wherever I wanted to go on foot. To cite an example, 85% of the domestic staff who work in Barra da Tijuca¹ live in Rocinha². Why would they want to live in the Northern Zone?

There are 19 hills in the district of Tijuca; each one with its own neighbourhood. This scenario made it easy for centres of crime to set themselves up in these places. It is important to point out that 99.9% of people who live in these communities are good, hard-working people but, unfortunately, there are individuals who operate in these areas selling narcotic substances. And it is not only a question of narcotics. There is also a large presence of arms and, obviously, arms do not exist without ammunition. So, we have centres of crime that are installed in the city centre in Rio de Janeiro. This is a characteristic of Rio de Janeiro. This is not found in São Paulo, because the crime centres are installed on the outskirts of this city. There are towns like Ceilândia in Brasilia that have absurdly high crime figures, but they are located 30 kilometres away from the city centre.

The people who say that the State takes violence into these areas through the use of police institutions, are mistaken. Violence is when a person buys a car and cannot park it in front of their house because there are mounds of rubbish, tires and tree trunks forming a barricade to stop the police from gaining access to the community. A barricade erected by traffickers that does not allow a good citizen to drive to their house in their car. Violence is forcing people who live in these communities to sleep with their doors open so that traffickers can move

¹ Barra da Tijuca – A Wealthy suburb of Rio de Janeiro

² Rocinha – A favela located on the south zone of Rio de Janeiro

through their houses without the police being able to follow, because the police can only move in public areas. And everything that is private becomes public for the trafficker. Is that not violence?

Mothers cannot go to the police station to report the death of their sons, because they would be threatened and troubled by the traffickers. The traffickers account for their dead. The traffickers burn the bodies of these people and their mothers and fathers cannot claim these bodies from the police station because they would be the next to get burned. Another example of violence: someone who lives in a community goes to a department store to order a home delivery for a household electrical appliance: they live in a favela. After spending two hours in a degrading queue to arrange the instalment plan, the salesperson refuses to make the delivery and says: "No, I do not deliver there". That certainly is violence. I ask all of you: "What sort of society is that?"

So, the people who say that the State brings violence are mistaken. There is no doubt that confrontational situations exist. But we have to make a choice. We have to choose what side we are on and what we want. These people must be convinced that the Government exists, that a State exists, that the Security office exists, that the police exists, that delegates exists, that authority exists, and that the State must go in there in order to carry out its functions.

This is a real state of affairs, but it is not one that has come about recently; it has been established for decades. And, obviously, we are not going to solve this problem in 12 months or four years. Be sure that it will not be resolved by police operations. What we are not going to allow is the spread of

violence. The aim is to give dignity to the population through a process of creating work, income and employment in order to end violence. As we value human life, we are working at reducing crime figures. After this, we will need fewer police officers, we will not need to carry out so many operations and we will spend less. What we are not allowing today is the spreading of this situation of violence.

Data from one year ago reveal that there are around 750 registered favelas, plus a number of clandestine favelas in Rio de Janeiro's geographical area. Of all of these, 328 are located in the capital and around 80% of them are directly influenced by trafficking. On top of this, we still have the recent phenomenon of the militias, which are normally known as the blue command. These militias are made up of police officers, DEGASE workers (General Department of Social-Educational Operations) and workers from prison institutions who, in theory, sell security to these communities. From my point of view, this is a crime that is far worse than any other that is committed in these places. Firstly, the way I see it is that any police officer or public employee who is in this sort of situation is a double criminal, as they use the training given to them by the State (whether it is good or not), they use the salary paid to them by the State (whether it is good or not) and they even exploit citizens to demand payment for all this.

Sometimes, we hear people saying that there are good militias and bad militias. All militias are terrible. The problem of crime in Rio de Janeiro will double or triple when these militias realise that participating in the drugs and arms markets is much more advantageous to them than simply working



as a militia that provides security to communities and exploits clandestine services. Therefore, this phenomenon must be fought. And, of course, we are fighting this as part of our mandate. We carried out an operation at the end of last year (2007), and dismantled a militia group in Rio's Western Zone, which I believe was the best organised of all the militias. Today, we have 115 ongoing investigations in these areas. We work in different ways to investigate and repress the trafficking of drugs, arms and ammunition as well as fighting the militias. I know that it is still not very much, but I can say that our intelligence sector is working at its maximum capacity.

In the State of Rio de Janeiro we have a scenario that is unique in Brazil: a clash between the State and three criminal factions who fight amongst themselves. Furthermore, the State is fighting against its own people; the civil and military police, fire-fighters and prison officers who are acting as militias. In São Paulo, with reference to drug trafficking, the police operate against the PCC (First Capital Command). In the city of Rio de Janeiro we are fighting against the ADA (Friends of Friends), the TCP (Third Pure Command), and the CV (Red Command). Over and above this we have the problem of criminal and serious misconduct in the militias. This

is not seen in Brasília, Belo Horizonte, Porto Alegre or Santa Catarina. Residents feel a great sense of insecurity when these groups fight amongst themselves. This phenomenon means that people are not only fighting against issues of poverty and lack of culture, but they also have to deal with the differences between these groups, which is far more difficult. These groups have infiltrated all of the 750 or 800 favelas that exist today.

The serious problem that we have with public security in Rio de Janeiro is - to use a more pedagogical term - the sale of drugs, which is a more difficult problem than the fights that are motivated by the control of drugs sales points and which take place between the groups. A drugs sales point in the Rocinha territory is worth a lot of money, as it supplies the Southern Zone and the people who come up from Barra da Tijuca and pay cash up front. Traffickers who work in this area are different from the ones who work in the drugs market in Acari in the Northern Zone. Cash is paid in Rocinha, cash is paid in Vidigal and cash is paid in Pavão-Pavãozinho.

According to some data that gives information about arms seizures, around 22 thousand weapons have been confiscated between 1993 and 2003. The criminal factions acquire heavier weapons for their arsenals so that the world of drug trafficking can defend its sales points and conquer new ones. Nowadays in Rio de Janeiro, revolvers are for solving fights between married couples. The traffickers introduced rifles, the 556 rifle. Not satisfied by this, they introduced the 762 rifle. It could be the case that Security offices in other States have a lot fewer rifles in their operational areas, or that they do not use rifles because they do

not need to, as the "client-bandits" in these States do not confront the police with this weapon. Police officers face a high risk of death in Rio de Janeiro when they go into certain places to execute an arrest warrant only carrying a revolver. Buying an armoured helicopter is also a problem, because after each flight over, for example, a Red Line patrol, the aircraft has to be sent for repairs, which implies a cost of R\$ 70,130³ to replace a part. We have been using helicopters for a long time. The Esquilo helicopters have been operating in the city for around 12 years. The problem is that they are no longer able to fulfil the role that we need them for. The same thing happens with the well-known armoured cars. This is the reality. We confiscated four weapons that were on the Dona Marta hill in Botafogo. What is a .30 machine gun doing on top of Dona Marta hill? What can it do from there? If the person with the weapon looks in one direction, they see Santos Dumont airport, and in the other direction they can see the Rodrigo de Freitas Lagoon. If they look straight ahead, they see Copacabana. So what? Should we confiscate the machine guns or leave them where they are? Intelligence works to find out exactly where the weapons are: The address, the house, the person's name; it is just extremely difficult to get to them. Therefore, I cannot agree with the people who say that we do not work with police intelligence. It is not possible to avoid police intelligence. Nowadays, as far as I can see, we do not work anywhere in Rio de Janeiro without police intelligence. Why? Because we do not have enough people, we do not have vehicles, we do not have money, we do not have the equipment and we do not have the logistics. The truth is we can only do what

Ofelia did in that famous story: go in when we are certain. This is because it is necessary to save the lives of the police officers and of the people who live on Dona Marta hill.

Now, if our intelligence identifies where the criminals are, which is what happens, we go in to look for them. If we did not do this, we would be going against our mandate. Unfortunately, it is a fairly complex operation. I cannot just take a tow truck and a rope to the top of Dona Marta hill and drag the house down here, and these people - the drug traffickers - do not go down to the beaches with their weapons because we would be waiting for them down here to arrest them.

The same thing happens with grenades. They stopped using grenades for a while, because they now have people who make them in the favelas. There is a place that exists in the city, in the Maré favela, that manufactures grenades. We must get to it. Therefore, they no longer need to buy this weapon; the criminals have developed a technology, they have outsourced it as if it were a business.

It is said that Rio de Janeiro is made up of two different cities. From my perspective, they are not two different cities: they are two different realities - I think that this is a more correct expression: the Southern Zone and the Northern Zone. The crime figures in some places in the Southern Zone are at European levels, but the figures paint a whole different picture as soon as you cross Corte Cantagalo to go from Ipanema to Copacabana.

Up until this point I have been trying to contextualise the situations that we are experiencing in Rio. This is because when

³ Around US\$43,000

we first arrived at the Security office, it was necessary to effectively find out what defined Rio de Janeiro, so that we could start to work with it. Based on this, I can ask the same question that Noel Rosa asked in his famous song: "What clothes should I wear for the samba that you are taking me to?"

I am convinced that, from this point of view, a lot of factors should be taken into consideration before we discuss any sort of measures to be taken or before we attack or even praise Rio de Janeiro; so that we can at least have something to talk about and act on. We do not fight crime here like it is fought in São Paulo, 500 km away. That is a totally different reality.

Some crime figures (among others, murder rates and stolen vehicles) clearly show the difference between the Southern Zone and the Northern Zone. It makes quite a bit of difference when we look at these areas. We receive a lot of criticism whenever these figures are publicised. Even so, we are making advances. In 2007, we reduced the murder rate by almost a thousand cases. We have had similar success with vehicle robberies by giving greater capabilities to the Military Police, precisely because we are not able to put a police officer on each corner in Rio de Janeiro. No police force in the world has the ability to do this. Therefore, we put motorbikes and police barricades in strategic points that depend on criminal concentrations. The secret is that we do not put up fixed barricades: they are portable. We put more policing in places with higher robbery and murder rates, but it is itinerant policing. The police officers are at point X from 7 p.m. until 9 p.m., and they move to point Y between 9 p.m. and 11 p.m. It is for this reason, obviously, that they are not able to solve all the problems. These

actions have had positive results, but there is still a lot to be done.

Rio de Janeiro has around 6 thousand police officers for 30 million people. It is complicated and it is a management challenge. We can demonstrate criminal concentrations in Rio de Janeiro by citing an example: it is a Sunday match day at the Maracanã Stadium. Imagine a big game, Flamengo vs. Vasco, a decider. So that you can have an idea, the Military Police mobilises a contingent of 10,500 men on match days, possibly the entire Military Police force in other [Brazilian] States or in other countries.

I would like to demonstrate what the main things are that we are focusing on and how we are structuring our operation. When it comes to police integration, we have done some excellent work with the Federal Police - because, as I have already said, we are definitely not going to solve this problem by ourselves. The Federal Police have helped us a lot since I took charge of the Security office. We were able to arrest Tuchinha by working together with the Federal Police. In this case, two teams went to the location. They did not just share information, but they both participated in carrying out the operation. We used police intelligence and Magistrate's offices, which are still not quite doing what I would like them to do. I believe that a Magistrate's office should not be a purely administrative body that just analyses proceedings. The Magistrate's office has to be dynamic, like a police station. When given a fact, it is necessary to examine and check the information and not just simply analyse the process. The words Magistrate's Office have to be written with capitals, so that we can have increasingly more answers to give

when it comes to the credibility of public actions.

Regarding management, we are currently facing a very large delay. I have always stated, without any sort of apprehension, that the Military Police battalions do not communicate (or "talk") by computer, as they are disconnected. Their work does not exist. If I want to know today how many men are available in Battalion A, I have to phone a certain place and talk to someone, who then phones the chief so that he can give the order for a fax to be sent to me with the number on it.

Therefore, I think that the police works very hard nowadays. A police officer who works in Rio de Janeiro could also work in the Gaza Strip, or anywhere else, due to the fact that their work is very difficult. There is no doubt that we have problems, but our police officers are creative, our police officers are courageous and they are very often able to do things that a lot of other police forces, who work under better conditions in other places in the world, are not able to do.

But we have a long way to go when it comes to issues of management and control of weapons and ammunition. If this was all computerised - we have been able to computerise a battalion here in Rio de Janeiro - our personnel would be able to go to the magazine to collect their arms and cartridges... and it would all be recorded in the system. Today, this is still controlled by books, notebooks, and I can say this because it is not the security office's problem. This is a management problem that shows the intention of the people who worked in this office a long time ago. I reiterate that we are not going to end violence in Rio de Janeiro, but we are going to fight so as to prevent its spread.

I believe that participating and agreeing with the fact that "intelligence is an exchange of information" is the solution for our problems. Having said this, there is an old saying that goes as follows: "anyone who works in intelligence, and is sure that they have information, does not share it". But this is just another challenge that we have to overcome.

Back to the subject, it is not possible to talk about drugs in Rio de Janeiro without knowing a bit about this problem's context. We need to come up with a solution urgently; a perspective for young people that has nothing to do with consuming or selling drugs. Young people are currently a very easy target or prey. This can be seen in Rio de Janeiro, because the trafficker is an example for a young person who is going to a school that is not very good, which is not stimulating and does not occupy their time. The trafficker is seen to be strong, hard, with a gold chain, someone who has a big car, and who very often has a young girl, a prostitute, a woman from the favela because he pays her or forces himself on her. This is the example. There are young people, who are just 13 or 14 years old, who earn more than their father or mother just by flying kites from the pavement with a radio in their pockets so they can give a warning when the police come. They earn R\$ 20 or R\$ 30 per day⁴ and, at the end of the week, they have more money than their father or mother who work full days. How are their parents going to exercise their capacity for persuasion? There is, therefore, a relationship that involves drugs. It is easy because they are on sale, they are on the street corners in these areas, ready to make young people not go to school, ready so that young people will do anything to support their idol, and

⁴ \$12 - \$18 per day



of trafficking when they walk on the beaches. But the problem is a lot deeper, a lot more complex and we all need to work together on this process.

the society that lives inside the favela has to keep quiet. We are only going to put an end to this process when this state, when this country, when America begins the process of inclusion, when it begins a process of generating employment, income and opportunities for these people. We are committed to improving police institutions, committed to ethics, to society and, obviously, to the Governor.

However, in order to end violence, we have to take the important step of the work carried out by the PAC (Growth Acceleration Program). The PAC works towards giving water, sewage, health and education services to these communities. We are faced with the situation in these areas of the city that when a corpse is found in a certain favela, it is taken out in a supermarket trolley. What sort of citizenship are we talking about? What sort of citizenship is this? Without a shadow of a doubt, I believe that violence depends a lot more on public actions and public policies than on police operations; purely because it is an action carried out by the State. But if there is not a "big change" made to social actions and public policies, we are going to stay in exactly the same place. We are committed to fighting violence and making sure that it does not spread, making sure that people are no longer confronted with signs