

HUMAN
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WATCH

Statement
UPR outcome report of the Brazil
20 September 2012

Thank you Madame President,

Human Rights Watch welcomes the Universal Periodic Review report on Brazil. We urge Brazil to take concrete steps to address the serious concerns raised during the UPR, including impunity for police officers who break the law and chronic torture and overcrowding in detention centers across the country.

During the previous UPR in 2008 Brazil had already accepted recommendations 2 and 3 regarding police officers' excessive use of force and extrajudicial executions. Unfortunately, violence by criminal gangs and unlawful killings by police has remained a very serious problem. While some police killings may result from legitimate use of force by police officers, others do not, a fact documented by Human Rights Watch and recognized by Brazilian criminal justice officials. In addition, as National Security Secretary Regina Mikki acknowledged during the UPR in May, death squads are an enduring problem in some states.

The most effective way to curb police abuse—and to ensure the full success of the important initiatives that Brazil has undertaken—is to make certain that police officers who break the law are brought to justice. Toward that end, a central recommendation in Human Rights Watch's submission to the UPR last November was that prosecutors should conduct a thorough review of police killing cases from recent years and that any misconduct should be appropriately sanctioned. Brazil's Second National Report on the Universal Periodic Review Mechanism noted that preventing abusive police practices is a multifaceted challenge that requires coordination among state and federal agents and a significant investment in capacity-building. However, in the absence of a concerted and comprehensive effort to ensure full accountability for police abuses, we fear that the impact of these initiatives may be limited.

We were encouraged by Minister Maria do Rosário Nunes' statement at the UPR in May that torture would not be tolerated under any circumstances and that all efforts would be made to prosecute and punish this practice. Human Rights Watch welcomes that Brazil accepted UPR recommendations 63-78 on torture and detention conditions. Brazil should swiftly approve the legislation that President Dilma Rousseff sent to congress in September 2011 creating a National System to Prevent and Combat Torture to monitor detention centers throughout the country and investigate allegations of torture.