AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL
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Brazil: "Pancadaria não educa"- will Brazil finally end torture?

Amnesty International welcomes President Lula's recognition that the extensive beatings and torture which have characterised Brazil's detention system have failed to address the country's profound public security problems.

The statement was made during a visit to Rio de Janeiro, where the President addressed the initial plans for the implementation of the new PRONASCI public security plan, which envisages targeted policing and social investment into vulnerable communities.

The President's recognition that torture is rife in the detention system follows the federal government's acceptance that the state had tortured political prisoners during the military dictatorship in a report launched last year.

Today it is widely recognised that torture under any circumstances has insidious and detrimental effects on the society that uses it. In Brazil it's persistant practice has served to increase levels of violence inside and outside the prison system, strengthen the power of criminal gangs, further weaken and corrupt law enforcement agencies and undermine the moral authority of the criminal justice system.

Amnesty International now hopes that the combined efforts of the Brazilian government to combat the practice of torture, following the ratification of the Optional Protocol of the United Nations Convention Against Torture and the promised reforms under PRONASCI will herald a new era of genuine efforts to combat the persistant and malignant blight which torture has been on Brazil.

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