

# **Rio de Janeiro (Brazil): 900 Soldiers Descend on Neighborhood - Rights Activist Marielle Franco Assassinated**

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## **Brazilian Rights Activist Marielle Franco Assassinated in Rio**

**Part of a generation of young Black Brazilians who are becoming increasingly vocal inside and outside statehouses, Franco was elected to office in 2016. A resident of the Favela da Maré, an impoverished community in Rio, she was one of the main defenders of human rights in the country.**

Franco was shot dead in a car on Joaquim Palhares Street, in the Central Region of Rio, at about 9:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Globo.com reports. The driver of the vehicle, Anderson Pedro Gomes, was also fatally shot, and a passenger, Marielle's adviser, was struck by shrapnel.

Investigators at the Homicide Office told Globo.com that the main line of investigation is execution.

The day before she was murdered, Marielle complained about the violence in the city in a post on her personal Twitter. In the post, she questioned the action of the Military Police. "One more homicide of a young man who may be coming in for the PM's account... How many more will have to die for this war to end?"

Also two weeks earlier Franco was named a rapporteur in the special commission established by the city council to monitor the military intervention in the city of Rio de Janeiro. Three days ago she denounced the deaths of two youths during a military police operation in Acari community.

"We must speak loudly so that everybody knows what is happening in Acari right now. The 41<sup>st</sup> Military Police Battalion of Rio de Janeiro is terrorizing and violating Acari residents. This week two youths were killed and tossed in a ditch. Today, the police walked the streets threatening residents. This has always happened and with the military intervention things have gotten worse," she wrote on Twitter.

Franco was raised in Mare community complex, home to approximately 140,000 residents. Soldiers have occupied the community again, as they did for over a year between 2014 and 2015, as part of the Brazilian government's military intervention in the state of Rio de Janeiro on Feb. 16.

The move was in response to increased violence and drug gangs who have "virtually taken over," according to senate-imposed Brazilian President Michel Temer. Approximately 3,200 soldiers now

patrol public streets in predominantly poor, working class neighborhoods.

Former Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff characterized the intervention as being a means to create an enemy, which “in Brazil’s case, is poor Black people who live in periphery neighborhoods...It’s not white people who live in Ipanema nor in Leblon.”

Workers’ Party Congressman and former head of Rio de Janeiro’s Bar Association, Wadih Damous, wrote on his Twitter account that “Marielle was executed. The assassination was consummated today but it’s the result of a plot forged by the barbaric nature that has taken hold of Brazil. Under fascism, extermination groups act in complete freedom. Meanwhile, the military intervention (in Rio de Janeiro state) search booksacks of kids who live in favelas.”

Protests have been organized in the cities of Recife, Belem, Salvador, Natal, Sao Paulo, Brasilia among others to condemn Franco’s killing.

## **Telesur**

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<https://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/Brazilian-Activist-Marielle-Franco-Assassinated-in-Rio-20180314-0039.html>

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## **Brazil: 900 Soldiers Descend on Rio de Janeiro Neighborhood as Military Control Continues**

### **Rio de Janeiro’s Civil Police force is also participating in the operation.**

Around 900 soldiers from Brazil’s armed forces have descended on the working class neighborhood of Vila Kennedy in Rio de Janeiro. The operation, which began Wednesday, is coordinated by the Federal Intervention Cabinet and involves the Joint Command and the Department of Public Safety and incorporates helicopters, armored vehicles, and other heavy machinery and weapons.

Rio de Janeiro’s Civil Police force is also participating in the operation. Having cordoned off all access to the community, their primary objective is to carry out a series of arrest warrants, according to Agencia Brasil EBC.

A statement released by the East Military Command read: “Some streets and accesses in these areas can be inhibited and portions of the airspace can be brought under control in due time with dynamic restrictions for civil airplanes.”

On Feb. 16, Brazil’s federal government, led by Senate-imposed president Michel Temer, dispatched the army to assume full control of police forces in the state of Rio de Janeiro. The move was in response to increased violence and drug gangs who have “virtually taken over,” according to Temer.

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At the end of last month, Temer said he would not rule out military interventions in other states. He also named an army general, Joaquim Silva e Luna, to head the Ministry of Defense. It's the first time since Brazil's military dictatorship (1964 - 1984) that a civilian hasn't held this government post, according to the local Marco Press.

## **Telesur**

\* Published 7 March 2018:

<https://www.telesurty.net/english/news/Brazil-900-Soldiers-Descend-on-Rio-de-Janeiro-Neighbourhood-as-Military-Control-Continues-20180307-0013.html>

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