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## **Gang violence increases in Sao Paolo**

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## **Contents**

The Article	2
Warm-ups	3
Before Reading / Listening	4
While Reading / Listening	5
Listening Gap Fill	6
After Reading	7
Discussion	8
Speaking	9
Homework	10
Answers	11

**15 July, 2006**

## **THE ARTICLE**

### **Gang violence increases in Sao Paolo**

Panic and fear arrived this week in Brazil's largest city Sao Paolo. Criminal gangs are searching the streets for targets. Their hit list includes police officers and prison guards. Six policemen were murdered on the streets on Thursday. The local people are very worried about the sudden increase in violence. Most of the city's bus companies stopped operating out of concern for the safety of drivers and passengers. Almost seventy buses have been torched in the last few days. Plainclothes police officers have been riding the buses to try and stop the criminals. The attacks are the work of the First Command of the Capital gang, also known as the PCC. The group runs many Sao Paolo prisons and has a large control of the city's drug trafficking.

The violence has been a part of city life for most of this year. The PCC were responsible for five days of chaos in June when they killed over 200 people. Leaders of the group are organizing events on the streets from their prison cells. The current killing is in protest at the possible transfer of leaders to tougher prisons. They also want revenge after the police killed dozens of gang members in a crackdown in May. City officials said the police force would protect people. The officials also warned the gang it would lose its battle. The secretary for public security stated: "There will be no white flag....There will be more clashes and they are going to come off worst; under no circumstances can they win. We will not be held hostage."

## **WARM-UPS**

**1. CITY SAFETY:** Walk around the class and talk to as many students as you can. Find out their opinions on the safety of the city in which they live. Share your findings with new partners.

**2. CHAT:** In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words from the article are most interesting and which are most boring.

*Panic / city streets / policemen / violence / buses / criminals / prisons / drugs / chaos / protests / revenge / gang members / white flags / hostages*

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

**3. CRIMINAL GROUPS:** What do you know about crime groups in these countries? Conduct a survey of your class members to find out. Share your findings with new partners

Italy

USA

Japan

Colombia

Honk Kong

Iraq

Russia

Other \_\_\_\_\_

**4. CRIMES:** Write down (or brainstorm) three recent crimes you have read about in your town. Talk about them with your partner(s). Is your town becoming more dangerous? What kinds of crimes are there in your town?

**5. PENALTIES:** With your partner(s), decide on the penalties for these crimes. Change partners and compare penalties. Discuss how these crimes can be prevented.

- a. Killing police officers
- b. Drug trafficking
- c. Organizing prostitution
- d. Human trafficking
- e. Money laundering
- f. Selling endangered animals
- g. Selling nuclear secrets
- h. Kidnapping and holding people for ransom

**6. GANGS:** Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with gangs. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

## **BEFORE READING / LISTENING**

**1. TRUE / FALSE:** Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- |   |       |
|---|-------|
| a. A gang is hunting for police officers and prison guards.               | T / F |
| b. Gang violence has closed many subway lines in Sao Paolo.               | T / F |
| c. Soldiers are riding buses to try and stop the criminals.               | T / F |
| d. The gang has done many things to fight drug traffickers.               | T / F |
| e. There has been violence in the city for most of the year.              | T / F |
| f. Gang leaders are organizing the violence from their prison cells.      | T / F |
| g. Sao Paolo's security secretary is ready to get out the white flag      | T / F |
| h. Sao Paolo's security secretary is worried the gang will take hostages. | T / F |

**2. SYNONYM MATCH:** Match the following synonyms from the article:

- |                  |            |
|------------------|------------|
| a. panic         | burnt      |
| b. murdered      | conditions |
| c. concern       | present    |
| d. torched       | worry      |
| e. runs          | attack     |
| f. chaos         | fear       |
| g. current       | surrender  |
| h. crackdown     | controls   |
| i. white flag    | killed     |
| j. circumstances | disorder   |

**3. PHRASE MATCH:** Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| a. Panic and fear arrived this week          | most of this year                        |
| b. murdered                                  | police officers                          |
| c. Plainclothes                              | off worst                                |
| d. The attacks are the work                  | a crackdown in May                       |
| e. drug                                      | in Brazil's largest city                 |
| f. violence has been a part of city life for | can they win                             |
| g. protest at the possible transfer of       | of the First Command of the Capital gang |
| h. police killed dozens of gang members in   | leaders to tougher prisons               |
| i. they are going to come                    | trafficking                              |
| j. under no circumstances                    | on the streets                           |

## **WHILE READING / LISTENING**

**GAP FILL:** Put the words in the column on the right into the gaps in the text.

### **Gang violence increases in Sao Paolo**

\_\_\_\_\_ and fear arrived this week in Brazil's largest city Sao Paolo. Criminal gangs are searching the streets for \_\_\_\_\_. Their hit \_\_\_\_\_ includes police officers and prison guards. Six policemen were murdered on the streets on Thursday. The local people are very worried about the \_\_\_\_\_ increase in violence. Most of the city's bus companies stopped operating out of \_\_\_\_\_ for the safety of drivers and passengers. Almost seventy buses have been \_\_\_\_\_ in the last few days. Plainclothes police officers have been riding the buses to try and stop the criminals. The attacks are the work of the First Command of the Capital gang, also \_\_\_\_\_ as the PCC. The group runs many Sao Paolo prisons and has a large control of the city's drug \_\_\_\_\_.

*concern  
targets  
trafficking  
sudden  
known  
panic  
torched  
list*

The violence has been a \_\_\_\_\_ of city life for most of this year. The PCC were responsible for five days of \_\_\_\_\_ in June when they killed over 200 people. Leaders of the group are organizing events on the streets from their prison \_\_\_\_\_. The current killing is in protest at the possible transfer of leaders to \_\_\_\_\_ prisons. They also want \_\_\_\_\_ after the police killed dozens of gang members in a crackdown in May. City officials said the police force would \_\_\_\_\_ people. The officials also warned the gang it would lose its battle. The secretary for public security stated: "There will be no white flag....There will be more \_\_\_\_\_ and they are going to come off worst; under no circumstances can they win. We will not be \_\_\_\_\_ hostage."

*clashes  
tougher  
chaos  
held  
protect  
part  
revenge  
cells*

## **LISTENING**

Listen and fill in the spaces.

### **Gang violence increases in Sao Paolo**

Panic and \_\_\_\_\_ this week in Brazil's largest city Sao Paolo. Criminal gangs are searching the streets for targets. Their hit list includes police officers and prison guards. Six policemen were murdered \_\_\_\_\_ on Thursday. The local people are very worried about the sudden increase in violence. Most of the city's bus companies stopped operating out \_\_\_\_\_ the safety of drivers and passengers. Almost seventy buses have been torched in the last few days. Plainclothes police officers have been riding the buses \_\_\_\_\_ stop the criminals. The attacks are the work of the First Command of the Capital gang, also known as the PCC. The group \_\_\_\_\_ Sao Paolo prisons and has a large \_\_\_\_\_ the city's drug trafficking.

The violence has been \_\_\_\_\_ city life for most of this year. The PCC were responsible for \_\_\_\_\_ chaos in June when they killed over 200 people. Leaders of the group are organizing events on the streets from their prison cells. The current killing is \_\_\_\_\_ the possible transfer of leaders to tougher prisons. They also want revenge after the police killed dozens of gang members in a crackdown in May. City officials said the police force would protect people. The officials also warned the gang \_\_\_\_\_ its battle. The secretary for public security stated: "There will be no white flag....There will be more clashes and they are going to come \_\_\_\_\_; under no circumstances can they win. We will \_\_\_\_\_ hostage."

## **AFTER READING / LISTENING**

**1. WORD SEARCH:** Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words '**criminal**' and '**gang**'.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS:** Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**3. GAP FILL:** In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

**4. VOCABULARY:** Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

**5. STUDENT "GANGS" SURVEY:** In pairs / groups, write down questions about gangs and organized crime.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

**6. TEST EACH OTHER:** Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- |           |           |
|-----------|-----------|
| • panic   | • life    |
| • streets | • cells   |
| • sudden  | • revenge |
| • torched | • protect |
| • riding  | • flag    |
| • control | • held    |

## **DISCUSSION**

### STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- b. What is your image of safety in large Brazilian cities?
- c. What would you do if criminals caused chaos in your town?
- d. Do you think the best way to reduce crime is to increase the number of police officers?
- e. Would you join the police force if crime was out of control?
- f. How can gang leaders organize their activities when they are in a prison cell?
- g. What would you do if there was a shootout in the street you were walking down?
- h. What activities keep the police busy in your town?
- i. Do you have a lot of respect for the police?
- j. If your town became very violent, would you move somewhere else?

### STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What do you think about what you read?
- c. Why do people join gangs?
- d. Which organized crime gang in the world today do you know most about?
- e. What punishment would you give to a gang leader?
- f. What kinds of organized crime are there in your country?
- g. Do you think women also join gangs and become leaders?
- h. What question would you ask the leader of a criminal gang?
- i. What do you think his/her answer would be?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

**AFTER DISCUSSION:** Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- b. Was there a question you didn't like?
- c. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- d. What did you like talking about?
- e. Which was the most difficult question?

## **SPEAKING**

**GANGSTER DAY:** With your partner(s), imagine what a gang boss does in the day described below. Fill in the table with as many details as you can. Choose a gang from any country:

Our gang boss operates in _____. His/Her name is _____.	
Breakfast	
Meeting with rest of gang	
Training	
Shopping	
Planning of next job	
Evening / night	

Change partners and share with each other your different images. Decide which day would make the best movie scenes.

## **HOMEWORK**

**1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION:** Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

**2. INTERNET:** Search the Internet and find information about one criminal gang. Talk about what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

**3. NEWS REPORT:** Write a newspaper report on crime and criminal activities in your town/country. Read your report to your classmates in the next lesson. Which report was best and why?

**4. LETTER:** Write a letter to a gang boss. Tell him what you think of his activities. Ask him three questions. Show your letter to your classmates in the next lesson. Your classmates will write a reply.

## ANSWERS

### TRUE / FALSE:

- a. T      b. F      c. F      d. F      e. T      f. T      g. F      h. F

### SYNONYM MATCH:

- |                  |            |
|------------------|------------|
| a. panic         | fear       |
| b. murdered      | killed     |
| c. concern       | worry      |
| d. torched       | burnt      |
| e. runs          | controls   |
| f. chaos         | disorder   |
| g. current       | present    |
| h. crackdown     | attack     |
| i. white flag    | surrender  |
| j. circumstances | conditions |

### PHRASE MATCH:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| a. Panic and fear arrived this week          | in Brazil's largest city                 |
| b. murdered                                  | on the streets                           |
| c. Plainclothes                              | police officers                          |
| d. The attacks are the work                  | of the First Command of the Capital gang |
| e. drug                                      | trafficking                              |
| f. violence has been a part of city life for | most of this year                        |
| g. protest at the possible transfer of       | leaders to tougher prisons               |
| h. police killed dozens of gang members in   | a crackdown in May                       |
| i. they are going to come                    | off worst                                |
| j. under no circumstances                    | can they win                             |

### GAP FILL:

#### Gang violence increases in Sao Paolo

**Panic** and fear arrived this week in Brazil's largest city Sao Paolo. Criminal gangs are searching the streets for **targets**. Their hit **list** includes police officers and prison guards. Six policemen were murdered on the streets on Thursday. The local people are very worried about the **sudden** increase in violence. Most of the city's bus companies stopped operating out of **concern** for the safety of drivers and passengers. Almost seventy buses have been **torched** in the last few days. Plainclothes police officers have been riding the buses to try and stop the criminals. The attacks are the work of the First Command of the Capital gang, also **known** as the PCC. The group runs many Sao Paolo prisons and has a large control of the city's drug **trafficking**.

The violence has been a **part** of city life for most of this year. The PCC were responsible for five days of **chaos** in June when they killed over 200 people. Leaders of the group are organizing events on the streets from their prison **cells**. The current killing is in protest at the possible transfer of leaders to **tougher** prisons. They also want **revenge** after the police killed dozens of gang members in a crackdown in May. City officials said the police force would **protect** people. The officials also warned the gang it would lose its battle. The secretary for public security stated: "There will be no white flag....There will be more **clashes** and they are going to come off worst; under no circumstances can they win. We will not be **held** hostage."