



## WHAT DO RECENT EVENTS MEAN FOR SECURITY IN RIO DE JANEIRO?

The recent successful purges of drug traffickers in *Vila Cruzeiro* and *Complexo do Alemão* promise much for the security of the city of Rio de Janeiro and may ultimately serve as a model for the country as a whole. However, there will inevitably be events in the short and medium term that will further define the direction that the city takes. Given the significant disruption to the activities of the *Comando Vermelho*, attempts by members of this group to seek revenge and retribution are likely. Also, the two largest *favelas* in the south zone of the city and closest to the major tourist areas, *Vidigal* and *Rocinha* remain under the control of the *Amigos dos Amigos* criminal gang.

At this point it is worth noting that the purpose of the UPP program as whole and the recent occupation of *Vila Cruzeiro* and *Complexo do Alemão* in particular is to reduce the influence of organized criminal gangs and the presence of weapons and drugs in the city. A reduction in street crime is an obvious long-term goal, but not a short-term objective.

Crime levels in the city remain unacceptable and there is subjective evidence that the criminals who have fled from the *favelas* occupied by the *Unidade de Policiamento Pacificadora* (UPP) have simply relocated and continued their activities in other locations. For example, crime levels in the many Rio suburbs, including *Niterói*, *Duque de Caxias* and *Nova Iguaçu* have increased significantly over the last 12 months.

In addition, crime within the city limits is by no means confined to the *favelas*. Street crime levels, (robberies and assaults of pedestrians and those traveling in cars or by public transport) are particularly high in the areas where rich and poor neighborhoods meet. Over the last couple of years, thanks to a more effective law enforcement presence, overall crime levels (excluding violent crime) in the city have decreased. However, street crime levels have actually increased.

Assaults on vehicles and pedestrians are among the most common violent crimes in Rio. Most are street crimes of opportunity committed while traffic crawls on the overcrowded roads of the city or by criminals on the sidewalks attacking those on foot. Statistics show that in 2009 in the city of Rio de Janeiro there were 14,834 vehicle robberies, 42,209 robberies of pedestrians and 5,678 people were robbed while traveling on public transport.

Violent crime figures are equally alarming. Statistics provided by the Rio de Janeiro state security office suggest that the incidence of the most heinous crimes (murder, attempted murder, rape, assault causing serious injuries, etc) increased from 32,156 incidences in 2008 to 34,893 incidences in 2009.

Recent analysis performed by Socrates Ltd indicates that in 2010 assaults and other violent crimes have again increased when compared to the same period in 2009.

In the week before the occupation of the *Complexo do Alemão* although there were more than ninety vehicles burned, the overall incidence of criminal acts actually

diminished. Police roadblocks have been set-up across the city to interdict criminals in transit and most have kept a low profile. Law enforcement contacts report that the significantly increased police presence is only sustainable into mid-December. After that Socrates Ltd expects there to be a spike in incidents as criminals regain their confidence and because many who have relied upon the drug trade in the two newly occupied *favelas*, will seek alternative sources of illicit income.

### **Recommendations for visitors**

The security situation in Rio de Janeiro remains volatile, but not significantly more or less than before recent events. Members of the Socrates Ltd team have spent much of the last week traveling around the city, where life for the vast majority of residents continues as normal. It is too soon to say what effect the occupation of *Vila Cruzeiro* and *Complexo do Alemão* will have on security for visitors. However, it is certain that there will not be a dramatic improvement in conditions in the immediate future. Indeed, it is possible that in the next couple of months, for the reasons described earlier; security for visitors will become more problematic. Of course, each visit is unique and should be considered independently. However, the following general recommendations apply:

1. Because the uncertainty about the compound effect of recent events, visitors should consider postponing non-time critical travel, particularly to the north zone and the suburbs (excluding *Barra da Tijuca*).
2. Use the services of a pre-arranged car service or pre-paid taxi to travel to and from the international airport.
3. Transit times to and from the international airport in Rio de Janeiro may be dramatically impacted by the presence of police roadblocks and road closures. Ensure that you allow plenty of time to ensure you make your flight home.
4. Do not contemplate any travel from the center to the outskirts of the city, except in the company of a reliable local contact who is very familiar with the security environment.
5. Plan all travel within the city with the support of a reliable local contact who can help to estimate transit times, routes and to avoid potentially dangerous locations and neighborhoods.
6. Avoid public transport except licensed yellow or pre-paid taxis.
7. Do not travel alone or on foot at night.
8. If you use a security agency to help with the planning of any trip to Rio de Janeiro, ensure that the agency can demonstrate that its personnel have significant local knowledge and local representation.
9. If you are planning to utilize an armored vehicle, ensure that a trained driver drives and ensure that an appropriate program is in place for the effective use of such a vehicle.
10. Do not, under any circumstances, accept offers to tour any of Rio de Janeiro's *favelas*.
11. Utilize a reliable local guide to help facilitate any sightseeing and limit that sightseeing to the center and south zone of the city.
12. Visit the statue of Christ the Redeemer only during daylight hours and either by taxi or in the company of a reliable local guide.