

With poverty rising, many Brazilians spend Christmas hungry

 cctvplus.com/news/20171223/8069351.shtml

Shotlist

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil - Recent

1. Various of Agatha Lorane, holding baby, selling candles on street
2. Homeless man sleeping on street
3. SOUNDBITE (Portuguese) Agatha Lorane, homeless woman:
"It all started after I was fired from a job at the shopping mall."
4. Various of homeless people, pedestrians
5. Various of Christmas Without Hunger campaign volunteers delivering food
6. SOUNDBITE (English) Rodrigo Afonso, executive director, Christmas Without Hunger campaign (starting with shot 5):
"We have something that we look each day on the communities that we attend in all of Brazil and what they say is that they don't want more culture. They don't want more education as they would have like two, three years ago. They want food. That's what they want now."
7. Various of homeless people
8. **Marcelo Neri, director of Getulio Vargas Foundation**, speaking to reporter
9. Cutaway of reporter
10. SOUNDBITE (English) Marcelo Neri, director, Getulio Vargas Foundation:
"After a long period of a sharp poverty fall it continues, for example in 2004, poverty reached 25 percent of the Brazilian population. It went down to 8 percent, and in the last two years, it went back to 11.2 percent. So around 5.5 million people re-entered poverty."
11. Traffic
12. Various of Lorane selling candles on street

Storyline

Brazil, Latin America's most populous country, is in danger of being reinstated by the United Nations World Food Program (WFP) as one of the countries listed on the World Hunger Map.

Brazil was dropped from the list ten years after the map was first published in 2004, however, millions in Brazil are returning to poverty.

Agatha Lorane, her nine-month-old baby, Perola, and cousins have been sleeping on a sidewalk in Copacabana, Rio de Janeiro, for the last two months. They don't have enough money to buy food.

"It all started after I was fired from a job at the shopping mall," said Lorane, adding that she is now selling candles for Christmas until she can find another job that will help her get off the streets.

She is not alone. Despite a recent drop in unemployment, there are still about 13 million unemployed Brazilians, and many more are sliding below the poverty line.

After a dramatic decline in poverty under the Workers' Party, Brazil was removed from the UN hunger map in 2014, but there are concerns now that it could be reinstated.

The NGO is now trying to collect more than 500 tons of food by the end of December in an initiative called Christmas Without Hunger.

"We have something that we look each day on the communities that we attend in all of Brazil and what they say is that they don't want more culture. They don't want more education as they would have like two, three years ago. They want food. That's what they want now," said Rodrigo Afonso, executive director of the Christmas Without Hunger campaign.

It is, say the campaign organizers, an effort to raise consciousness among Brazilians before the problem gets worse.

Homeless people living in the streets is just one of the signs of Brazil's return to poverty. Economists say the country's deep recession is to blame, which has resulted in high unemployment and cuts in social programs.

According to a study released in June by Brazil's prestigious Getulio Vargas Foundation, poverty is on the rise again.

"After a long period of a sharp poverty fall it continues, for example in 2004, poverty reached 25 percent of the Brazilian population. It went down to 8 percent, and in the last two years, it went back to 11.2 percent. So around 5.5 million people re-entered poverty," explained Marcelo Neri, director of the foundation.

Agatha is one of 45.5 million Brazilians living on less than 5.5 U.S. dollars a day. Currently 22 percent of Brazilians live under the poverty line.

In the meantime, the government insists on implementing unpopular austerity measures in order, it says, to put the economy back on track.