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[from] entering any specific territory of Mexico City.”²

Local mafias are emerging as the principal purveyors of their own employment, policing and security services, in ways that lead to a deteriorating rule of law and more urban violence. The recent massacres of citizens in São Paulo in July 2006, perpetrated by local drug-linked mafias and organizations of delinquents — a mere two months after an earlier police-gang skirmish that left almost 200 police, gang members and civilians dead — is just one example of

the threats that are becoming characteristic of some urban spaces.³

In cities that are experiencing conflict, violence is generally more acute than in cities that are not at war but experiencing failed public security. Nonetheless, far more people live in cities of the latter category. The problems that are endemic to these cities where conflict is seen as normal are worldwide problems of enormous proportions that must be addressed if political, economic and social sustainability for all the peoples of our urbanizing globe is to be achieved. ●

Police officers stand in front of a fire they say was caused as a result of an attack by a powerful gang in São Paulo, Brazil. (August 2006)

1 United States, Department of State, “Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2005 — Brazil,” 8 March 2006, 10 August 2006, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2005/61718.htm>

2 “Riot in popular Mexican neighborhood of Tepito,” 29 August 2005, 8 August 2006, <http://www.cenobita.com/html/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=39>.

3 Marcelo Soares and Patrick J. McDonnell, “Death Toll in Sao Paulo Rises to 133,” *Los Angeles Times*, 17 May 2006, A16. See also “Lula says government willing to help Sao Paulo fight gangsters,” *EFE News Service*, 12 July 2006.