

## Brazil still in shock after nightclub inferno

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Brazilians are still in shock at the devastating loss of life after the nightclub fire in the city of Santa Maria in southern Rio Grande do Sul state. The blaze at the Kiss club has so far

claimed the lives of 236 partygoers. The death toll could rise as another 87 people are fighting for their life on respirators in intensive care units. Investigators have been quick to ascertain the cause of such a high number of fatalities. They blame a highly flammable and toxic foam that was used to soundproof the club. Santa Maria police chief Marcelo Arigony told reporters: "If it weren't for this material, no one would have died." The police also blamed faulty fire extinguishers and alarms, and a single obstructed emergency exit.

The co-owner of the nightclub is blaming "the whole country" for the disaster. Elissandro Spohr, 28, has been arrested by police for operating a nightclub without a valid license after his club's safety certificate expired last year. He is currently in a hospital after trying to commit suicide. He reportedly told police officers he no longer has the will to live and regrets he was ever born. His lawyer says Mr Spohr blames all the inspectors who approved the plans for the nightclub, saying: "My client's responsibility is having trusted too much in the inspectors and in those responsible for the construction." He denies police reports of overcrowding – that 1,200 people were in a place with a capacity of 700.

Sources: Sky News / Huffington Post / Reuters

### Writing

*There is no excuse for tragedies like the Santa Maria fire happening in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.... Discuss.*

### Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

*in shock / loss of life / partygoer / intensive care unit (ICU) / flammable / toxic / blame / disaster / suicide / the will to live / responsibility / construction / overcrowding*

### True / False

- a) The correct English term is "in shock" and not "in shocked". T / F
- b) Over 80 people are still in critical condition in hospital. T / F
- c) A police chief said the soundproofing foam was the cause of all deaths. T / F
- d) Police said a total lack of fire extinguishers made the situation worse. T / F
- e) A co-owner of the nightclub said he blamed only himself for the fire. T / F
- f) The safety certificate for the club ran out several years ago. T / F
- g) The club's co-owner tried to take his own life. T / F
- h) The club's owner admitted that there were too many people in the club. T / F

### Synonym Match

- |                |                 |
|----------------|-----------------|
| 1. devastating | a. poisonous    |
| 2. blaze       | b. OK'd         |
| 3. fatalities  | c. catastrophe  |
| 4. toxic       | d. inferno      |
| 5. obstructed  | e. desire       |
| 6. disaster    | f. catastrophic |
| 7. valid       | g. space        |
| 8. will        | h. blocked      |
| 9. approved    | i. deaths       |
| 10. capacity   | j. legal        |

### Discussion – Student A

- a) Have you ever been somewhere you thought was unsafe?
- b) What lessons can other nightclubs and public spaces learn from Santa Maria?
- c) Is it disrespectful to the victims that everyone is blaming other people?
- d) How can Elissandro Spohr blame the whole country?
- e) How has Elissandro Spohr's life changed?
- f) Should someone be prosecuted if there were too many people in the club?
- g) Will corners always be cut regarding safety to save money?
- h) What questions would you like to ask Elissandro Spohr?

## Phrase Match

1. in
2. devastating loss
3. claimed the lives
4. intensive
5. faulty
6. The co-owner
7. without a valid
8. trying to commit
9. He denies police reports of
10. a capacity

- a. fire extinguishers
- b. care units
- c. suicide
- d. of life
- e. license
- f. of 700
- g. of 236 partygoers
- h. overcrowding
- i. shock
- j. of the nightclub

## Discussion – Student B

- a) Where were you when you heard the news of the Santa Maria fire?
- b) How can tragedies like this happen in the 21st century?
- c) What can governments do to prevent future tragedies?
- d) What's the best way to remember the victims of the fire?
- e) What questions should the investigators ask?
- f) Why do you think such hazardous materials were used in the nightclub?
- g) Should the person responsible for faulty fire extinguishers and alarms be prosecuted?
- h) Do you ever worry about the safety of crowded places you go to?

## Spelling

1. the agedavnttsi loss of life
2. fighting for their life on soraitrepsr
3. in innivetse care units
4. nieaatcsr the cause
5. highly lmbifaema
6. a single dttsbuoecr emergency exit
7. a valid lecensi
8. his club's safety criceftieta
9. commit uicdsie
10. pedopvar the plans
11. trusted too much in the torncpises
12. a caaitcyp of 700

### Answers – Synonym Match

1. f	2. d	3. i	4. a	5. h
6. c	7. j	8. e	9. b	10. g

## Comprehension Questions

1. What adjective was used to describe the loss of life?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What word was used instead of "fire"?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Where are another 87 people?  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Why was the foam so dangerous?  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What was wrong with the emergency exit?  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Who does the co-owner of Kiss blame for the fire?  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Why didn't the club have an up-to-date safety certificate?  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. Why is the co-owner in hospital?  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. Who did the lawyer say Mr Spohr trusted too much?  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. What did Mr Spohr deny?  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Speaking - Memorial

What's the best thing to do to remember the victims of the Santa Maria fire? Rank these and share your rankings with your partner. Put the best at the top.

- plaque
- annual church service
- an ever-burning candle
- tighter safety standards
- annual national holiday
- book of condolences
- charity for burns victims
- tighter safety standards

### Answers – True False

a	T	b	T	c	T	d	F	e	F	f	F	g	T	h	F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.