

Artists in Brazil protest U.S. rights record

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SAO PAULO, Brazil (Reuters) - Dozens of performance artists dressed in orange prison jumpsuits stopped traffic in front of the U.S. Consulate in Sao Paulo on Friday to protest what they called a Bush administration clampdown on civil liberties.

Dressed in military fatigues and armed with a megaphone, U.S. artist Coco Fusco, who organized the event, ordered some 50 "prisoners" to march together and scrub the ground in front of the consulate with toothbrushes.

Fusco, a professor at Columbia University, was criticizing abuse at U.S. prison camps in Guantanamo Bay and elsewhere where detainees considered terrorists are being held without trial, and measures that have limited domestic freedoms since the September 11, 2001, attacks on the United States.

"This state of emergency, which we thought would be temporary, has become the normal paradigm for the government and increasingly is determining foreign and domestic policy," she said in a statement.

Fusco studied interrogation techniques with retired military officers to prepare for the piece, called "Bare Life Study #1," the first in a series to be staged in different places around the world.