

# Rio under high security for G20 summit

AFP – With leaders from the world's biggest economies converging on Rio de Janeiro for a two-day G20 summit starting Monday, the usually relaxed seaside city is under a tight security blanket.

Police and soldiers have been patrolling the streets, thousands of security cameras are set up, and officials declared two days of public holiday so locals can dodge the disruption to their lives.

US President Joe Biden and Chinese President Xi Jinping are attending, along with the leaders of Australia, Britain, Egypt, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Japan and other countries, some with sizable delegations.

The epicenter of this swirl of activity is the summit venue: Rio's Museum of Modern Art, located on a bay with a view of the city's impressive Sugarloaf Mountain.

The domestic Santos Dumont Airport, next door to the museum, will be closed during the summit, with tens of thousands of passengers shifted from there to flights at the more distant Galeao International Airport.

Navy ships are patrolling nearby waters, including along the famed Copacabana and Ipanema beaches, surprising foreign tourists.

"I know what I want to see," said 53-year-old Dutchman Marco Prudon, on his first Rio visit, "and we'll see if I can go."

Many locals were planning to leave the city of six million during the summit.

"I'm going to make the most of the public holidays and spend them away from Rio," said Leandro Cariello, a 75-year-old

retired Brazilian walking alongside Copacabana Beach.

The enhanced police presence is expected to temporarily curb violence in the city's poorer neighborhoods, or favelas. Rio recorded 1,790 murders in the first half of this year.

The head of Rio's municipal G20 organizing committee, Lucas Padilha, said it was "a real challenge" to ensure a trouble-free summit.

President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva has signed a security decree authorizing the military to step in to maintain public order if exceptional circumstances occurred.

Some 25,000 soldiers and police have been deployed around the city, including in the airports and ports, and armored vehicles have been stationed around the museum venue.

Five thousand street cameras will be keeping electronic eyes open, while drones and helicopters monitor things from the sky.

Hotels being used by the official delegations have seen a flurry of preparations. At least 25 accredited vehicles were seen parked outside the hotel being used by China's Xi and his delegation.

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