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1. Volkswagen: Embattled car maker's employees were 'victims of torture and illegal detention' in Brazil under military dictatorship; The civil lawsuit has reportedly been filed against the company as its share price plummeted due to the current emissions scandal

Volkswagen: Embattled car maker's employees were 'victims of torture and illegal detention' in Brazil under military dictatorship; The civil lawsuit has reportedly been filed against the company as its share price plummeted due to the current emissions scandal

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The  **INDEPENDENT**

Section: FRONTPAGE

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Byline: Loulla-Mae Eleftheriou-Smith

Body

Volkswagen has been accused of allegedly failing to prevent the torture and detention of its employees who were against the military dictatorship in Brazil, according to a civil lawsuit filed in Sao Paolo this week.

This is the second problem to hit the car maker this week, after it was revealed Volkswagen had used computer software to cheat clean air laws. The United States government ordered the company to recall 500,000 cars as a result, causing shares to plummet and wiping (EURO)15bn off its market value.

Read more: VW shares dive (EURO)15bn after revelations of faked emissions data in US VW ordered to recall 500,000 cars after software masks emissionsVW 'totally screwed up' over diesel emissions tests, US boss says

The civil lawsuit filed this week relates to the events in Sao Paolo between 1964 and 1985 during the country's military dictatorship, and follows the findings of the government appointed National Truth Commission that was created in 2012 by President Dilma Rousseff to investigate abuses during this period.

In light of this investigation Volkswagen employees have brought a civil case against the company accusing it of allowing the torture and detention of employees by the then regime, AFP reports, though the Worker's Forum for Truth, Justice and Activism told the news agency that it was "not the only company involved".

The VW cars under investigation emit up to 40x the national standard for nitrogen oxide, which is linked to asthma & lung illnesses.- U.S. EPA (@EPA) September 18, 2015

Rosa Cardoso, who is representing some of the alleged victims and who is involved in the National Truth Commission, said: "Volkswagen employees were victims of torture and illegal detention, and others were laid off and placed on blacklists".

Documents reportedly seen by Reuters news agency last year alleged that Volkswagen was among a number of automakers who helped the military to identify union activists and suspected "subversives" on the company payroll during this period.

A spokesperson for Volkswagen said in a statement: "Volkswagen very much regrets that the parties concerned

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had to suffer or experience economic disadvantages during the military dictatorship in which employees of Volkswagen do Brasil may have been involved. Volkswagen will approach the parties concerned to ask for their viewpoint on the matter, like we have done in spring 2015 in Sao Paulo with other witnesses of the Truth Commission.

"The announced civil action have not yet been submitted to us, so it is not possible to give a statement on the contents at this moment. Detailed and candid investigations to determine who was responsible for these human rights violations continue to be conducted. A comprehensive analysis into the correlation between economic and socio-political development under the conditions of the Brazilian military dictatorship will also be carried out."

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Person: DILMA ROUSSEFF (69%)

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