


WHAT WE DO activities 2015



letter from the directors

national action

international action

building networks

institutional departments and communication

support conectas

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTORS

Letter from the directors

Dear friends, partners and donors,

We are delighted to present the 2015 annual report of Conectas Human Rights, which describes the organization's main challenges and breakthroughs over the course of the year.

The year 2015 was marked by major achievements for Conectas, but also by an extremely challenging national and international backdrop. In Brazil, the political and economic crisis gave rise to a series of setbacks in human rights. On the international level, the immigration crisis in Europe and other humanitarian crises around the world presented new challenges for the organization. To confront these situations, Conectas adapted its strategies and established new partnerships with individuals, organizations and social movements.

The appointment of its new executive director, Jessica Morris, was another milestone for Conectas in 2015. With her extensive experience and profound commitment to human rights, Jessica has brought a fresh perspective to the organization, raising it to a new level of professionalism and impact.

Besides the challenges, 2015 was a year of accomplishments for Conectas. Prominent events were the staging of the 14th edition of the International Human Rights Colloquium, the launch of the new website of *Sur Journal* and the visit to Brazil by the UN special rapporteur on torture following complaints submitted to the expert by Conectas and partners.

None of this would have been possible, however, without the backing of an enormous network of volunteers, partners and contributors who support us in all our endeavors. We take this opportunity to thank our donors: *Channel Foundation*; *Ford Foundation*; *International Development Research Center* (IDRC); Instituto Betty e Jacob Lafer; *Oak Foundation*; *Open Society Foundations*; *Sigrid Rausing Trust*; *Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency* (SIDA) and the *European Union* for believing in and investing in our work.

Finally, as directors we could not fail to recognize the work and dedication of the incredible staff at Conectas, thanks to whom our work truly brings about change and advances rights in the Global South.

We are aware that the challenges in the field of human rights are many, but we feel prepared to confront them. Our values and determination to contribute to a fairer world, our ability to connect different people, to innovate and to constantly reinvent ourselves will continue to guide our actions to promote human rights in Brazil and the world.

Our sincerest regards,

Jessica Morris, Juana Kweitel and Marcos Fuchs



NATIONAL ACTION

Defense of people affected by environmental and human rights violations

CATASTROPHE IN MARIANA

In 2015, Conectas employed a number of strategies to expose the many human rights violations caused by the rupture of the Fundão waste dam in Mariana, in the state of Minas Gerais. The dam was operated by the mining company Samarco, controlled Vale and BHP Billiton, and its rupture caused some 50 million tons of iron ore waste, containing heavy metals, to spill into the Doce River.

In addition to providing support for the region's organizations in the process to denounce the disaster, by coordinating events in Geneva, the work of Conectas prompted two UN rapporteurs (Rapporteurs on Human Rights and the Environment, and on Hazardous Substances and Waste) to issue a statement condemning the catastrophic collapse of the waste dam in Mariana. More information on the statement [here](#).

In partnership with other organizations, Conectas asked the UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights – which visited Brazil in December 2015 – to give priority attention to the disaster in Mariana. Emphasizing that the bursting of the dam represents one of the worst social and environmental tragedies in Brazilian history, the organizations warned of the growing threat to the populations living around major mining projects on account of more lenient environmental licensing rules.



Rogério Alves/TV Senado

“The human rights violations resulting from the rupture of the dam are incalculable, in particular the violations of the right to housing, health and access to water and information. This catastrophe could have been prevented or minimized with strict licensing rules, proper oversight and a contingency plan”,

said Juana Kweitel, program director at Conectas.

More information [here](#).

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE VISIT TO BRAZIL BY THE UN WORKING GROUP ON BUSINESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Conectas was present at the meetings of the Working Group with civil society in São Paulo, Belo Horizonte and Mariana. The Working Group also visited Brasília, Rio de Janeiro, Belém and Altamira. According to the Group, the Brazilian State has been remiss in advising companies about the actions they should take to comply with the *UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights* and it has failed to create a legal framework and policies to guarantee that companies are held accountable for conduct that violates human rights. Click [here](#) to read the statement by the Working Group at the end of its visit.





The mission to Brazil included on-site visits to projects with records of serious human rights violations by companies, such as the Belo Monte hydroelectric plant, the Olympic Village in Rio de Janeiro, as well as the town of Mariana. Visits to these sites of human rights violations was one of the main demands of 21 civil society organizations, including Conectas. Click [here](#) for more information.

THE PORT OF SUAPE AND HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN THE REGION

In 2015, Conectas supported the Suape Forum and local communities in the identification of mechanisms to redress human rights violations resulting from the construction of the Suape Port and Industrial Complex, in the state of Pernambuco. In the same year, Conectas and partner organizations filed a joint complaint to the Brazilian NCP (National Contact Point for the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises) and the NCP in the Netherlands – the location of the head office of one of the service companies of the Complex and the export credit agency that guaranteed part of the investments – on the human rights violations that occurred in the region. In 2016, Conectas will continue working for a resolution of the case and redress for the victims.

CONECTAS DENOUNCES ELIMINATION OF BLACKLIST

In March 2015, the suspension of the so-called slave labor blacklist by the Supreme Court was denounced in the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva. The decree establishing the blacklist that was eliminated by the Supreme Court enabled public banks and private companies to suspend or block the granting of credit, and to ban public subsidies and tax incentives for companies found using labor in conditions akin to slavery.

In an *oral statement* at the 28th session of the Council, the organizations Conectas and *Repórter Brasil* argued that the suspension of the list has created a regulatory vacuum allowing nearly 600 companies and individuals to continue exploiting workers with public funds. Click [here](#) for more information.



Repórter Brasil/2013



For an End to Abusive Searches

Considered both humiliating and ineffective, abusive searches affect millions of prisoners' family members, who when visiting their relatives in prison are forced to undress, squat repeatedly over a mirror and submit to an anal and vaginal inspection.

“

I HAD TEARS IN MY EYES WHEN I SAW MY DAUGHTER ENDURE THIS SITUATION. SHE'S ACCOMPANIED ME IN THIS STRUGGLE SINCE SHE WAS SIX MONTHS OLD.

In Brazil, mothers and daughters of prisoners have to undress and open their genital orifices during searches on visitation days. In São Paulo, only 3 mobile phones or drugs are seized from every 10,000 of these searches. Sign the petition to end abusive searches.

www.fimdarevistavexatoria.org.br

The UN rapporteur on torture, **Juán Mendez**, has said that these abusive searches constitute a “humiliating and degrading” practice, or even “torture, when conducted with the use of violence”.

To take part in the campaign **“For an End to Abusive Searches”**, run by the Criminal Justice Network – of which Conectas is part, go to www.fimdarevistavexatoria.org.br.

LAW BANNING ABUSIVE SEARCHES IN BRAZIL

The legislative bill to end abusive searches in prisons across the country progressed quickly after its *unanimous approval in the Senate*. However, it has been stalled for more than a year with Congressman João Campos, who drafted the report on the bill to be voted in the Lower House of Congress. In November, Campos told a hearing in the Public Security Commission of the Lower House that he supported the bill and that he would put it to the vote before the end-of-year legislative recess. This promise, however, was not kept. In 2016, Conectas will keep up the pressure for the swift passage of the bill.



MAP OF ABUSIVE SEARCHES

On the one-year anniversary of the campaign “For an End to Abusive Searches”, Conectas released a map showing the progress and setbacks in banning this practice in the country's states and municipalities. See below:



For a new drug policy



As things stand, possession of narcotics is a crime, even though users are not punished with imprisonment. However, the decision whether someone is a user or a dealer is made by the police, which often operate under such subjective and discriminatory criteria as skin color and social class. The truth is that the current drug law serves as a mechanism for the criminalization of poverty, with serious impacts on the prison system.

CASE IN THE SUPREME COURT

In 2015, the Supreme Court started its judgment of *special appeal 635,659* that challenges the constitutionality of the criminalization of the personal consumption of unauthorized narcotics. Filed in the Court by the São Paulo Public Defender's Office, the case has the potential to bring about the decriminalization of the use of illegal substances.

The first and perhaps the main impact of decriminalization would be a reduction in the imprisonment of black youth from the poor urban outskirts. Read more [here](#).



Representing Conectas, ITTC (Land, Employment and Citizenship Institute), Pastoral Carcerária, (the Catholic Church's prisoner outreach service) and the Sou da Paz Institute, Rafael Custódio (coordinator of the Justice program at Conectas) made an oral statement during the judgment of the case in the Supreme Court. The organizations are the authors of an *amicus curiae* brief on the case, submitted in 2012, which endorses the arguments of the São Paulo Public Defender's Office on the unconstitutionality of article 28 of the drug law (on possession for personal consumption). Watch the full oral statement by Rafael Custódio:



The judgement of the case in the Supreme Court was interrupted on August 20 after Justice Edson Fachin requested an adjournment. Before being interrupted, the *special appeal* received a favorable vote from Gilmar Mendes, the reporting justice in the case. Mendes cited several studies on the topic, including those mentioned and analyzed in the *amicus curiae* brief submitted by Conectas. Click [here](#) to read the vote by Gilmar Mendes and [here](#) for more information.

The judgement resumed in September, when the justices Luiz Edson Fachin and Luís Roberto Barroso both voted in favor of decriminalizing possession of marijuana exclusively for personal consumption. It was then interrupted again, this time by an adjournment requested by Justice Gilmar Mendes. No date has yet been set for the case to resume. There are still eight more justices who need to cast their votes.

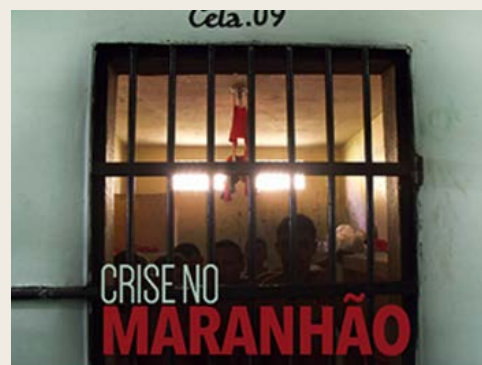


Prison system

PEDRINHAS PRISON COMPLEX

Following the serious human rights violations committed at the Pedrinhas prison complex, Conectas and the Maranhão Society of Human Rights became co-petitioners in a complaint submitted to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights of the Organization of American States (OAS).

In 2015, in response to a request from the Court, the Brazilian government presented two separate reports telling its version of the situation facing inmates at the prison complex. On both occasions, Conectas and other organizations involved in the case denounced the information gaps and the assessment errors in the reports that concealed the worsening of the violations in the prison. Click [here](#) for more information.

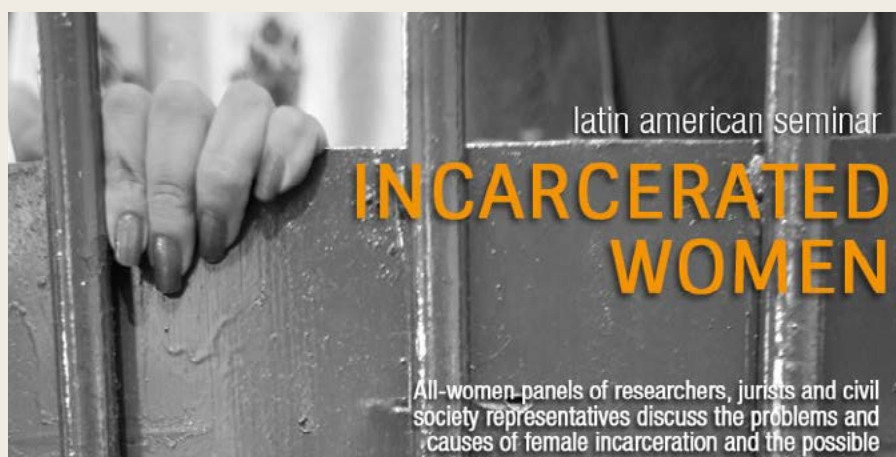


Over the course of the year, Conectas carried out two visits to Pedrinhas. What it encountered there revealed an enormous number of human rights violations. Problems providing basic sanitation, health, nutrition and infrastructure conditions were just some of them. Men are kept in overcrowded cells with no light, bathroom or beds. The clashes between rival gangs, which was responsible for 63 deaths in 2013, is partially controlled. However, the extremely unhealthy conditions endured by the prisoners warrant a much better response from the State.

IMPRISONED WOMEN

The incarceration of women was the topic of a seminar organized by Conectas in partnership with ITTC (Land, Employment and Citizenship Institute), Pastoral Carcerária (the Catholic Church's prisoner outreach service) and the Study and Research Group on Imprisoned Women.

The "*Latin American Seminar on Incarcerated Women*" addressed the specific problems encountered by female prisoners, such as health and maternity, in addition to proposals to reduce the number of women in the country's prisons and the impact of drug policy on the growth of the female prison population. Leading Latin American specialists on the topic, such as researchers and jurists, as well as civil society representatives – all women – took part in the panels and the debates.



CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT PROPOSAL REDUCING THE AGE OF CRIMINAL RESPONSIBILITY FROM 18 TO 16 (AMENDMENT 171/1993).

In August, the amendment reducing the age of criminal responsibility from 18 to 16 was approved in two rounds of voting in the Lower House of Congress and proceeded to the Senate, where it has still not been voted. For many months, Conectas worked on initiatives with partners in an attempt to influence Congress and used all its communication strategies to rally people against the approval of the amendment.

Read about some of these efforts below:

- Conectas mapped the positions of all members of Congress with respect to the amendment and engaged in strong advocacy to inform them of the harmful consequences of its approval.
- To clarify why reducing the age of criminal responsibility does not work, Conectas published an article on its website refuting *5 myths* and providing data on the topic.
- In April, Conectas and partners organized an event against the reduction of the age of criminal responsibility, at the University of São Paulo Law School. More than a thousand people gathered to see and hear statements by former ministers, social leaders, academics, jurists and human rights defenders against the proposed amendment. Click [here](#) for more information.

Watch below a video report on the event:



- In an *oral statement* at the 29th session of the UN Human Rights Council, the Criminal Justice Network, of which Conectas is part, condemned the reduction of the age of criminal responsibility. Click [here](#) to watch the statement in the UN. Click [here](#) for more information.
- In June 2015, Conectas and Amnesty International USA published a joint statement criticizing the amendment. Click [here](#) for more information and [here](#) to read the full statement.

In 2016, Conectas will continue working to prevent the amendment from being approved in the Senate.



Agência Câmara



Combating and Preventing Torture

THE STATE OF PAIN

In 2015, Conectas, *IBCCrim* (Brazilian Criminal Sciences Institute), *NEV* (Center for the Study of Violence of the University of São Paulo), *Pastoral Carcerária* (the Catholic Church's prisoner outreach service) and Acat-Brasil (Action by Christians for the Abolition of Torture) published the report "Judging Torture: Analysis of jurisprudence in Brazil's State Courts of Appeals (2005-2010)". The report concludes that public officials involved in torture cases are more likely to be acquitted by appeals courts than private individuals. The state employees who were convicted by trial courts were acquitted in 19% of cases. For private individuals, the rate was 10%. The full report is available [here](#).



UN RAPPORTEUR ON TORTURE, IN BRAZIL

The UN special rapporteur on torture, Juan Méndez, visited Brazil in August 2015 to look into the occurrence of torture and mistreatment in the country's prison facilities. The visit came in response to a *complaint* made by *Conectas*, *Justiça Global* and the *Maranhão Society of Human Rights* in the Human Rights Council concerning the violations at *Pedrinhas prison*, in the state of Maranhão.

DETENTION HEARINGS IN SÃO PAULO

In January, São Paulo saw the introduction of detention hearings. This guarantees the right of offenders arrested in flagrante to a hearing with a judge within the first 24 hours of their detention.

Over the course of the year, Conectas monitored hundreds of detention hearings in São Paulo. This monitoring process found that signs of torture were identified in no less than 420 of the hearings. It also discovered various flaws in the services provided by the Public Defender's Office and in the work of the Public Prosecutor's Office, which are not properly fulfilling their role in the external oversight of the police.



Gil Ferreira/Agência CNJ





Daniel Cima/CIDH

In October, Conectas participated in a thematic hearing of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) on the topic. Click [here](#) for more information and [here](#) to watch the full statement by Conectas in the IACHR.

NATIONAL TRUTH COMMISSION

In March 2015, Conectas and partner organizations urged the Brazilian State, in a hearing with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) of the Organization of American States (OAS), to ensure that the recommendations contained in the final report of the National Truth Commission (NTC) are implemented consistently. The report of the NTC is the most important *document* ever produced in Brazil on the human rights abuses that occurred in the country between 1946 and 1988, a period that includes the military dictatorship. Click [here](#) for more information.

Overall, the recommendations made by the NTC attempt to pave the way for institutional changes that can strengthen respect for human rights. They include the *suggestions made by Conectas* to the Commission through the open mechanism for citizen participation during the preparation of the recommendations. Click [here](#) for more information.

Click [here](#) to read an article on the role of civil society and the IACHR in the monitoring and implementation of the recommendations of the NTC.



More transparent and democratic institutions of the justice system

RACIAL INEQUALITY IN THE INSTITUTIONS OF THE BRAZILIAN JUSTICE SYSTEM

In 2015, Conectas released an *article* exposing the underlying racial inequality in the composition of the main institutions of the justice system in Brazil. The document compiles data on the racial make-up of these bodies and is based on the *Judicial Branch Census*, published by the National Justice Council in June 2014. The census reveals that only 1.4% of judges describe themselves as black and 14.2% as dark-skinned. It also shows that 64.1% of Brazilian judges are men.

Click [here](#) to read an article on affirmative action in institutions of the Brazilian justice system.



CREATION OF THE WORKING GROUP OF THE SÃO PAULO STATE PUBLIC DEFENDER'S OFFICE



In the second half of 2015, the working group of the São Paulo Public Defender's Office was created to monitor agreements signed between this institution, the São Paulo State Bar Association (OAB-SP) and the Professor Manoel Pedro Pimentel Foundation (FUNAP). The establishment of the group was an important victory for Conectas and partners, which had long been calling for this group to be created. In the first half of 2016, the group plans to draw up a timetable for its monitoring activities. Conectas will continue to keep close watch on the workings of this new mechanism.

UNDUE CONTROL OF JUDGES – ROBERTO CORCIOLI CASE DENOUNCED

In September 2014, Judge Roberto Corcioli was arbitrarily removed from the 14th Criminal Court for handing down alternative sentences to imprisonment – which displeased the Public Prosecutor's Office and senior officials at the São Paulo State Judiciary. According to prosecutors, the "guaranteeist" profile of the judge – more concerned with the procedural and constitutional guarantees of the defendants whose cases he was hearing – should be grounds for dismissal. The judge took his case to the National Justice Council, which sided with him, but the State Court appealed to the Supreme Court and an injunction issued by Justice Rosa Weber suspended the effects of the Council's decision. The case is now awaiting a definitive judgment in the Supreme Court.



This episode prompted Conectas to present an *amicus curiae* brief to the Supreme Court in May 2015 contesting the State Court's arguments. In June, Corcioli's dismissal was denounced by Conectas at the *29th session of the UN Human Rights Council*, in Geneva. Click [here](#) and [here](#) for more information.

Click [here](#) to read an article on how the ideological control of judges undermines the independence of the Judiciary.



SOCIAL PARTICIPATION IN THE CONSTITUTIONAL DEBATE

Ever since its creation, Conectas has worked to diminish the distance between civil society and the decisions of Brazil's Supreme Court on the subject of human rights. In this respect, *amicus curiae* briefs are important legal instruments that present the views and opinions of civil society on human rights topics to the Supreme Court justices. Conectas is currently the organization that most influences the court using this important tool of social participation. In all, the organization has filed more than 50 *amicus curiae* briefs in the court.

SUPREME COURT IN FOCUS

ADI (Direct Action of Unconstitutionality) 4966 – Same-Sex Marriage

This case, filed by the Social Christian Party, sought to declare the unconstitutionality of Resolution 175, issued by the National Justice Council, that permits the conversion of same-sex civil union into marriage. Conectas and SBDP (Brazilian Public Law Association) submitted an *amicus curiae* brief against the case, arguing in favor of guaranteeing the fundamental rights of homosexual couples and emphasizing the key role of the Judiciary in enforcing the rights of the LGBT population. More information [here](#).

ADI (Direct Action of Unconstitutionality) 5070 – “Super VECs”

This case, filed by the Brazilian Attorney General, intended to declare the unconstitutionality of Law 1208/2013 and Resolution 617/2013, which do away with the state's Prison Sentence Enforcement Courts and replace them with centralized departments for these judges in just 10 units in the state of São Paulo – the so-called “Super VECs”. Conectas and Pastoral Carcerária (the Catholic Church's prisoner outreach service) submitted an *amicus curiae* brief against the new arrangement, defending the proximity between judges and prisons as a way of avoiding the occurrence of human rights violations. Click [here](#) for more information.



Supreme Court to judge 'Binding Precedent' on prison sentence progression

Binding Precedent 57 (PSV57) proposes that, in the absence of an appropriate prison place, offenders may serve a more beneficial sentence. More information [here](#).

Watch the oral statement given by Marcos Fuchs, associate director of Conectas, in the Supreme Court on the subject:



BRAZILIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK (BNDES)



In November 2015, Conectas and other organizations released the report *"Environmental and Social Policy of the BNDES: Present and Future"*, which contains articles analyzing the practical application of the bank's Environmental and Social Policy in projects such as the Belo Monte dam and recommendations for improvements. Moreover, at the 4th Annual Forum on Business and Human Rights, held in November at the UN regional headquarters in Geneva, Conectas presented a panel on development financing and human rights where it emphasized the need for more transparency in the information produced by the BNDES on the prior assessment of environmental and social impacts, with a focus on international investments

TIPNIS: BNDES was remiss in checking highway project illegalities

In 2015, Conectas and another two organizations – Global Witness (UK) and CEDLA (Bolivia) – filed a *complaint with the Ombuds Office of the BNDES* to expose the illegalities and the violations of the bank's own Environmental and Social Policy and of both Brazilian and Bolivian laws in the decision of the BNDES to finance two stretches of a highway in Bolivia.

In 2011, the BNDES signed a US\$332 million contract for the construction of a highway that was planned through the heart of a national park and protected indigenous reserve known as TIPNIS in the Bolivian Amazon.



Documents obtained by Conectas through the Freedom of Information Law show that between 2009 and 2011, the BNDES failed to take action to address a series of human rights violations committed as a result of the construction of the highway.

After major protests calling on the Bolivian government to stop the construction of the highway through the reserve, in 2012 the BNDES cancelled the financing contract for the highway project. The bank responded to the criticisms of its participation by saying that all the legal environmental requirements had been observed and that it has respected the "legal framework established by the Bolivian authorities". But the documents obtained by Conectas and partner organizations showed that all the information on the illegalities and human rights violations had been available to the bank long before it signed the financing contract. However, these illegalities were not duly considered by the bank in its environmental and social risk analysis.



Since the TIPNIS case, the BNDES has reformed its Environmental and Social Policy, which now has clearer requirements on the information that the bank needs before it can make an international investment, especially for engineering works abroad that use the services of Brazilian companies. However, as far as Conectas and the other organizations involved in the case are concerned, this policy is still insufficient to guarantee that local communities are protected against human rights violations. In 2016, Conectas will continue working to pressure the BNDES to adopt an environmental and social policy that is more protective of human rights.

LEGISLATIVE BILL ON STATE-OWNED COMPANIES IN CONGRESS

Senate Bill 555/15 is a new law planned for state-owned companies that is currently being discussed in the Brazilian Congress. The bill is part of a response to the corruption scandals and mismanagement of state-owned companies in Brazil. State-owned companies often finance, plan or execute key infrastructure projects that have severe impacts on the environment and human rights in Brazil.

In July and August 2015, when the joint commission of Congress was set up to prepare the draft bill that resulted in Senate Bill 555/15, Conectas and other organizations proposed five amendments to the lawmakers in the Senate, encompassing issues such as the need for a report on human rights and a human rights impact assessment. In 2016, Conectas will continue to monitor the passage of Senate Bill 555/15 in Congress and it will spare no effort to ensure the incorporation of measures that protect human rights.

BRAZIL TAKES ALARMING POSITION ON THE WORLD BANK'S ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL POLICIES



Since 2012, the World Bank is been engaged in a process of *reviewing its environmental and social policies*. In July 2014, the bank presented a draft version of the document, which makes progress on some issues, such as the circumstances in which it is necessary to obtain Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) from indigenous peoples on decisions that can affect their lives and their lands.

After consultations conducted by the bank in Brazil with different sectors (public, private and civil society), the federal government took a restrictive position on the scope of the FPIC. In the *document* submitted to the World Bank, the

Brazilian government opposed the broader requirements suggested by the bank, arguing that the FPIC is only necessary in limited circumstances. This argument, however, is not supported by the main international treaties to which Brazil is signatory.

In a *joint letter* sent to the International Affairs Department of the Ministry of Finance, Conectas and partner organizations pointed out that "the language proposed by the World Bank establishes minimum human rights protections for indigenous and traditional peoples in the context of development projects, which is why it must not be weakened". Click [here](#) for more information.



INTERNATIONAL ACTION

Human Rights and Brazilian Foreign Policy

Conectas understands that, despite its specific characteristics, Brazilian foreign policy is a public policy and, as such, it should answer to the imperatives of democratic and social control typical of a State governed by the rule of law. This is why, in 2015, Conectas stepped up its efforts to make foreign policy more transparent and participatory.



POSITIONS OF BRAZIL IN THE UN

Working within the sphere of the Brazilian Human Rights and Foreign Policy Committee (*CBDHPE*), Conectas helped establish a constructive practice that increases the transparency of the decisions taken by the Brazilian delegation in the UN Human Rights Council. The initiative consists of holding meetings between *members* of the CBDHPE and the Ministry of Foreign Relations before and after each session of the UN Human Rights Council. These meetings have proven to be an important accountability mechanism, where the agenda of Brazil for the next session of the council is discussed and the actions and decisions of the country from the previous session are assessed. The use of videoconferencing has made participation easier for civil society actors from across Brazil.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION LAW & FOREIGN POLICY

Conectas uses the Freedom of Information Law both for the purpose of strengthening the democratic functioning of government institutions in Brazil, and also to obtain strategic information on cases of human rights violations.

Iran Case

In 2015, the organization used the Freedom of Information Law to gain access to the telegrams that instructed Brazil to abstain in the vote on a resolution on human rights violations in Iran, which was approved in the UN Human Rights Council.

Prior to this vote, Brazil had been supporting the Council's resolutions condemning human rights violations in Iran since 2011. This abstention, therefore, signaled a change of position that needed to be clarified. Conectas requested access to the telegrams exchanged between the Brazilian embassy in Tehran, the Ministry of Foreign Relations and the Brazilian mission to the UN in the days preceding the vote. The documents revealed that Brazil had agreed to a request made by Mohammad-Javad Larijani, head of Iran's Human Rights Council, for the country to abstain in the vote. The content of the resolution in 2015 was very similar to the one approved in 2014, when Brazil voted in favor.



UN Photo



This case had major repercussions in the national media. Click [here](#) to read one of the articles published on the topic



Immigration Policy in Brazil

In 2015, Conectas worked to ensure that Brazil, as an international player, has a responsible policy for taking in immigrants. Over the course of the year, the organization worked towards reforming the country's immigration legislation, which dates back to the military dictatorship.

NEW IMMIGRATION LAW

The arrival of immigrants has increased in recent years but the laws that govern immigration are outdated. The *Foreigner Act*, a relic of the military dictatorship, does not reflect democratic values and needs to be modified.

Over the course of the year, Conectas conducted a strong campaign to influence the Brazilian Legislature, by working to raise awareness among senators and members of Congress about the importance of approving a new immigration law that abandons the national security perspective and creates guarantees for the equal treatment of immigrants that enter the country.



In February 2015, Conectas staged another edition of the Conectas Culture Dialogues on the topic "What's it like to be an immigrant in Brazil?". Watch a summary of the event that was attended by more than 120 people in the auditorium of the Livraria Cultura bookstore, in São Paulo:



In June, Conectas and partners made an *oral statement* in the *UN Human Rights Council* denouncing the Foreigner Act and the role of the Federal Police in immigration control.

In July, Senate Bill *288/2013*, to replace the Foreigner Act, was approved by the Foreign Relations Commission of the house, after which it proceeded to the Lower House of Congress. Conectas worked to ensure that some necessary changes to the text of the bill were included.



In August, Felipe González, rapporteur on the rights of migrants of the OAS (Organization of American States), came to Brazil following an invitation by Conectas. The rapporteur took part in meetings with civil society organizations and spoke at a *seminar* organized by Conectas on the need for a new immigration law in Brazil.

In 2016, Conectas will continue its work to get the bill approved by Congress and to incorporate changes that are still needed to ensure respect for the rights of immigrants who live in the country.



SYRIAN REFUGEES

In 2015, the world witnessed in astonishment the inhumane treatment of immigrants in Europe who are fleeing the war in Syria and the tragic consequences of the region's closed border policies. Brazil has adopted a different position, opening the country to Syrian refugees and issuing humanitarian visas.

In September, the decree that guaranteed humanitarian visas for Syrians was poised to expire. Conectas pressured the government to extend this policy, calling for the decree to be renewed. In the same month, the Ministry of Justice approved the extension of humanitarian visas for Syrians. Watch below the interview on the topic with Camila Asano, coordinator of the Foreign Policy program at Conectas.



New Development Bank: BRICS

On the eve of the launch of the NDB (New Development Bank), during the *7th Summit of the BRICS* (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), Conectas, partner organizations and social movements urged the new bank to commit to four basic principles of sustainable development and human rights. In a *letter* sent to the authorities of the five countries, the organizations emphasized that the NDB should promote development for all. This includes financial support for accessible, inclusive and participatory projects that respect local cultures and the environment. Furthermore, the organizations called on the institution to be democratic and transparent, guaranteeing the communities impacted by the bank-financed projects access to information and the ability to influence investments and decisions. Click [here](#) for more information.



Conectas and Rebrip (Brazil Network for the Integration of Peoples) submitted requests for the NDB to be the subject of public debates in congressional commissions, since the agreement establishing the multilateral institution still needed to be ratified in the Legislature. The organizations sent *letters to the sponsor of the bill and the president of the Foreign Relations Commission of the Senate* requesting transparency in the process to ratify the agreement.

Principles that the institution should	NEW BRICS DEVELOPMENT BANK	
	PROMOTE DEVELOPMENT FOR ALL Support inclusive and participatory development, combat poverty and inequalities, and respect human rights, local cultures and the environment. Focus on social infrastructure, providing access to public services, housing and education, and the flourishing of local economies.	1
	BE TRANSPARENT AND DEMOCRATIC Guarantee that internal policies and their implementation are transparent, accessible and participatory, so that the impacted communities have access to information and the possibility to influence investment decisions.	2
	SET AND RESPECT STRONG RULES Follow the highest standards of human rights and of respect for the environment, and be consistent with international law. Offer the highest level of environmental and community protection, and establish mechanisms to improve accountability and liability.	3
	PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT Respect the rights of communities over their territories and to a clean environment, breaking with the current model of predatory, polluting and intensive extraction of natural resources.	4
		



Strengthening the Regional and International Human Rights Protection Mechanisms

In 2015, Conectas continued to use international forums, such as the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), to denounce and expose violations committed in Brazil and in other emerging countries. Some of the topics denounced by Conectas in international forums in 2015 were: (i) the use of torture by the Brazilian police forces and the lack of accountability of public employees; (ii) the misguided public management of water that led to shortages in São Paulo; and (iii) the injunction issued by the Supreme Court that suspended the *slave labor blacklist*.



Click on the links below for more information on the participation of Conectas in these international forums:

28TH SESSION OF THE UNHRC

[More information here](#)

29TH SESSION OF THE UNHRC

[More information here](#)

156TH SESSION OF THE IACHR

Click [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#) for information.

MORE EFFECTIVE UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW

In 2015, Conectas established partnerships with organizations from around the world to pressure Brazil to make good recommendations in the *Universal Periodic Review* (UPR) hearings of the countries where these partners are located. The UPR is a unique process that involves a review of the human rights records of all 193 UN member states once every four and a half years.

Pressuring the delegation of Brazil to make relevant recommendations in the UPRs of other countries is an extremely important action. As such, Conectas works in partnership with organizations from other countries to propose recommendations for the delegation of Brazil in the UN to present to the countries under review. This collaboration and sharing of knowledge between human rights organizations from different countries allows the preparation of more assertive proposals that are more compatible with the situation in each country under review.

Over the course of 2015, always in partnership with local organizations, Conectas proposed recommendations for the UPRs of three countries: United States and Croatia (22nd session) and *Myanmar/Burma* (23rd session).

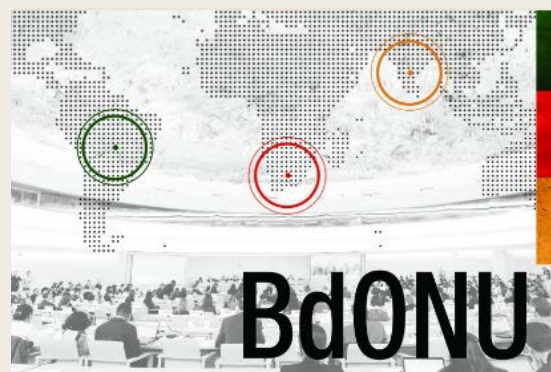


For the session to review the United States, in May 2015, Conectas and **ACLU** (American Civil Liberties Union) submitted a document to the Ministry of Foreign Relations of Brazil with four recommendations for Brazil to address to the country. Two of these recommendations were accepted in full by the Brazilian delegation. According to these recommendations, the United States should: (i) adopt alternative policies to the detention of immigrants and (ii) combat the excessive use of force by the police and eliminate racial discrimination. Click [here](#) to learn more.



VOTES IN THE UN – LAUNCH OF BdONU

There is a lot of talk these days about the positions of emerging countries when it comes to international crises and human rights issues. Little is known, however, about how these countries behave in practice. In order to fill this information gap, Conectas launched **BdONU**, a database containing the votes of India, Brazil and South Africa in the UN's two main human rights bodies – the Third Committee of the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council – since 2006. The purpose of the database is to systematize and expose the international conduct of these countries, thereby contributing to the analysis of their role in the protection of rights in the world.



Click [here](#) to access the database.

Watch the tutorial below to learn how to use BdONU:



ELECTIONS IN THE UN WORKING GROUP ON BUSINESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Early in 2015, Conectas, CELS (Center for Legal and Social Studies, Argentina) and Dejusticia (Colombia) presented a letter recommending criteria for the choice of the new Latin American member of the United Nations Working Group on Business and Human Rights. The organizations stressed the need to assure the independence, impartiality and legitimacy of the group and presented it with some recommendations. Read more [here](#). Conectas also submitted questions to the three shortlisted candidates, in order to understand their positions on the topic.

STRENGTHENING THE INTER-AMERICAN HUMAN RIGHTS SYSTEM

The Inter-American Human Rights System (IAHRS) is experiencing one of the worst financial crises of its history. Conectas spared no effort in 2015 to denounce this situation and pressure the Brazilian government to resume its financial contributions to the Inter-American Commission and the Inter-American Court, the two human rights protection bodies of the OAS (Organization of American States).

Conectas informed the mainstream media on the topic and was cited, for example, by the Folha de São Paulo newspaper, in the article *"Brazil has not contributed to the OAS commission for five years"*.



In May 2015, during his confirmation hearing for the position of Brazilian Ambassador to the OAS, in the Foreign Relations and National Defense Commission of the Senate, Guilherme Patriota was asked about the country's debt to the body. The question on the payment of the debt was submitted by Conectas through the *Ambassador, #IWantToKnow* campaign, in which internet users could vote on the questions they wanted posed to the ambassador.

Additionally, experts from Conectas published an [article](#) in 2015 on the commitment of OAS Member States to the funding of the IAHRS, which analyzed primarily the Brazilian case and the difference between the official discourse and what is done in practice. The article is a chapter in a book with contributions by experts from eight Latin American organizations that was launched in Washington DC during the 156th session of the IACHR.



International Arms Trade

Brazil, the world's fourth largest exporter of light weapons, according to the *Small Arms Survey*, has been a signatory of the *Arms Trade Treaty* (ATT) since June 2013. By being *one of the first countries to sign it*, Brazil signaled to the world that it planned to contribute to the responsible regulation of the international arms trade. However, three years have passed and it has still not joined the agreement due to delays in the ratification process.



Conectas has been closely following the process to ratify the ATT and has held several meetings with members of Congress and senators in order to raise awareness about the importance of the treaty. In September, the organization published an article on its website presenting *3 reasons for Brazil to ratify* the agreement. The first sign of progress came in December in the Lower House of Congress, where the Foreign Relations and National Defense Commission approved a report by Congressman Eduardo Barbosa in favor of ratification.

Watch a video of Camila Asano, coordinator of the Foreign Policy program at Conectas, recorded in August after the 1st Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty, in Mexico.



Closure of Guantanamo

United States President Barack Obama took office in 2009 with the promise to end one of the worst cases of human rights violations in the Americas: the arbitrary and indefinite detention of men in Guantanamo prison. Years since his inauguration, the closure of the complex has still not materialized.

Dozens of people are still detained in the prison, which was opened in 2002 in the wake of the war on terror. Many of them have already undergone an extensive and careful review process by US agencies (including the FBI and the CIA) and, by unanimous decision, have been cleared for release. This is where the Brazilian government can make a difference, since due to restrictions approved by the US Congress these people cannot enter the United States, nor can they return to their countries of origin given the insecurity and high risk of persecution and torture in places such as Yemen. As a result, the freedom of these people depends on the willingness of other countries to accept them, like Uruguay did in 2014.

Since 2014, Conectas has been denouncing the human rights violations at Guantanamo and calling for Brazil to accept detainees who have now been cleared for transfer.



Witness Against Torture

VISIT BY DILMA ROUSSEFF TO THE UNITED STATES



Roberto Stuckert/Presidência da República

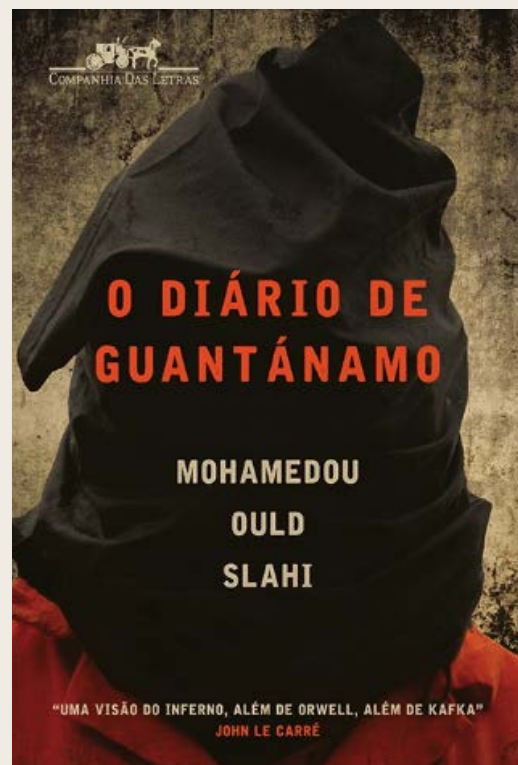
In June, ahead of *President Dilma Rousseff's visit* to Barack Obama, Conectas and partners submitted a complaint in the UN Human Rights Council against the existence of Guantanamo prison and against the torture program run by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). At the time, the organizations drew attention to the urgency to resettle detainees from Guantanamo who have already been cleared for release. They also called for an independent investigation into the torture program run by the CIA, which was uncovered in 2014 by the US Senate.

The day before the visit, Conectas published an article in the Folha de São Paulo newspaper entitled "Why Brazil should help close Guantanamo prison", available [here](#).



"GUANTANAMO DIARY"

Conectas contributed to the launch of the Portuguese translation of the book "Guantanamo Diary", in partnership with the publisher Cia. das Letras. The book was written by Mohamedou Ould Slahi, one of the detainees held at Guantanamo while he was still a prisoner. It details his experience, from daily life in the prison complex to interrogations and torture.



BUILDING NETWORKS

International Human Rights Colloquium

The **INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS COLLOQUIUM** has been held annually since 2001. Over the course of the years, the event has been attended by more than 1,500 activists from 80 different countries, making it one of the world's most traditional human rights conferences.

14TH INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS COLLOQUIUM



Between May 24-29, 2015, the 14th International Human Rights Colloquium was held in São Paulo. The central theme of the event was the relationship between **human rights and the streets**. For the first time, the Colloquium was organized by Conectas in conjunction with three other organizations: *CELS* (Center for Legal and Social Studies) of Argentina, *LRC* (Legal Resources Centre) of South Africa, and *KontraS* of Indonesia. Click [here](#) to learn more.

In preparation for the conference, Conectas prepared a careful process for the selection of participants and volunteer monitors, in addition to remaining in constant contact with the three partner organizers in order to create an agenda with impact for the debate on the topic.

“This is a relevant and contemporary issue in the North and the South, in democratic and authoritarian regimes, and in developed and developing countries”,

explained Ana Cernov, coordinator of the South-South program at Conectas, referring to the decision to organize the Colloquium around a narrower topic than in previous years and one that could draw into the discussion activists from all parts of the world.

“We want to debate how causes are transformed into mobilizations, how to deal with repression and how to guarantee rights and freedoms on the streets. We also want to discuss how and why organizations engage in demonstrations and how they combine this participation with the work of research and advocacy. These are decisive issues for the future of the human rights movement”,

she added.



Among the many participants and speakers at the 14th Colloquium, one prominent contributor was Phillip Agnew, of the Black Lives Matter movement, who presented to the Colloquium the stark reality faced by young black Americans, victims of police violence, and the extraordinary experience of the demonstrations in the streets of Ferguson in defense of the young black population.

Another remarkable story that left an indelible mark of hope on all the participants was told by the Argentine activist Vera Jarach, of *Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo – Founding Line*. Jarach defended memory as an act of resistance and concluded by saying that "the streets are the best place in the world to stage our struggles".

Click [here](#) to read more about the debates during the 14th International Human Rights Colloquium.



Published for the first time 11 years ago with the aim of deepening and strengthening the bonds between academics and activists from the Global South and increasing their involvement in the international debate on human rights, Sur Journal has been evolving ever since.

After its commemorative 20th issue published in December 2014 – with contributions from some of the world's key figures in the human rights movement – Sur Journal started to adopt a more accessible format, discussing primarily contemporary human rights issues.

Currently, each issue of the journal features a section with articles on a specific human rights issue, as well as case studies, institutional outlooks by civil society organizations on topics such as management, funding and sustainability, and also other new sections containing artistic works and other forms of expression.

Starting in 2016, the journal will publish two issues per year in three languages (English, Portuguese and Spanish).

NEW WEBSITE

In order to make Sur more relevant and accessible, the journal is now published mainly online, on a *new website*.

From August to December 2015, the online journal was accessed more than 23,000 times. Every week, Conectas sends emails and posts information on the social networks about the Sur articles, segmenting the mailing in accordance with the varying interests of different groups. In addition, a new editorial policy that addresses current and relevant topics has resulted in an increasing presence of prominent human rights voices among the journal's authors. All these changes have helped attract more readers and improve the quality of the debates of the human rights movement.



SUR 21: WAR ON DRUGS



The 21st issue of Sur Journal consists of a section with nine original articles on the "war on drugs" and its impact on human rights in the Global South. Julita Lemgruber, a researcher and expert on the topic, was the guest editor for this issue. Among the authors are the neuroscientist *Carl Hart*, a professor of psychology at Columbia University, and *Anand Grover*, former UN rapporteur on the right to health and a member of the Global Commission on Drug Policy. The articles address practical experiences and research conducted in *India, Thailand, Colombia, Argentina, Brazil, United States* and *Nigeria*.



This issue also has eight other texts in different sizes and formats. For the first time, Sur Journal featured a photo essay, curated by Leandro Viana, containing images and texts by five international photographers on protests in their countries.

Click [here](#) to access Sur 21 in full.



SUR 22: ARMS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

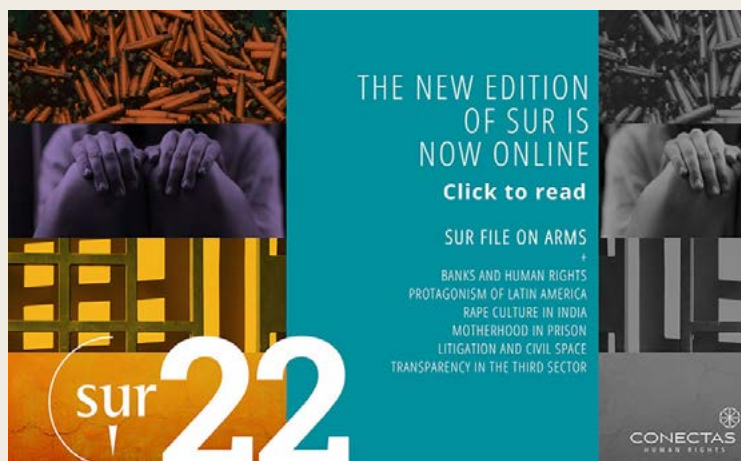
In the 22nd issue of Sur Journal, we present a complete section on Arms and Human Rights, approaching this debate from the viewpoints of a wide range of relevant voices. Some of the authors of this issue include Nobel Peace Prize winner *Jody Williams (United States)*, UN Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association *Maina Kiai (Kenya)* and one of the leading voices in human rights academia *Kathryn Sikkink (United States)*, among other important figures.

The guest editor for Sur 22 is Daniel Mack, who has a Masters in International Relations and a wealth of experience working with reduction of armed violence and international security issues.

Sur 22 also features a *photo essay* by Magnum Foundation Fellows and *infographics* that quickly explain to readers the topic of Arms and Human Rights.

In addition to the section on arms, this issue provides readers with important debates on a variety of topics, such as: banks and human rights, transparency in the third sector, maternity in prison and rape culture in India, among others.

Click [here](#) to access Sur 22 in full.



Connecting the Global South

One of the main goals of Conectas is to strengthen the individual and collective work of human rights advocates from the Global South – Latin America, Africa and Asia. To do so, Conectas makes an effort to guarantee the existence of a strong network of human rights advocates and to contribute to a coordinated and active global movement.

The organization maintains and develops this network in countries and regions throughout the Global South, reinforcing the impact of the work of each advocate through these partnerships.

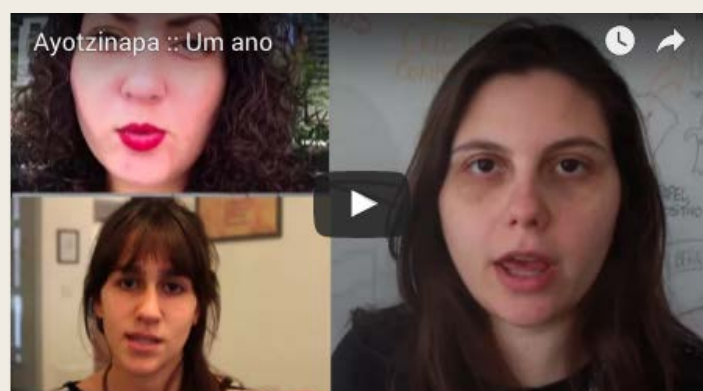
FORCED DISAPPEARANCES IN AYOTZINAPA, MEXICO

In September 2014, 43 students went missing from a rural college in Ayotzinapa, in the state of Guerrero, Mexico. Since then, Conectas has been involved in a number of actions to raise the visibility of the case, which has become known not only for the intensity of the violence, but for the evidence of involvement by agents of the State and organized crime in the forced disappearances. The case is set in a broad context of violence in the country, where more than 26,000 people disappeared between 2006 and 2014.



Conectas has contributed to a global campaign that is demanding explanations and the prosecution of those responsible. The organization has supported the friends and families of the missing students in taking the case to international human rights protection bodies and it also participated in the mobilization in Mexico City to mark one year since the disappearance. Click [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#) for more information.

Watch below a video of Brazilian students marking one year since the disappearance.



Click [here](#) to read the interview in Sur 21 with Mexican activists Gerardo Torres Pérez and María Luisa Aguilar on the issue of forced disappearances in the country and the case of the 43 students from Ayotzinapa.



Restrictions on the work of civil society

In 2015, Conectas embarked on a study of the various threats that have emerged around the world that could severely restrict the work of civil society. This initiative was launched following the debates that took place during the 14th International Human Rights Colloquium, which reinforced the belief that some trends are in place to restrict protest movements that have similarities between the North and the South, and also between the efforts being made by States to curb civil society.

Currently, Conectas is analyzing legal and institutional patterns that restrict the actions of NGOs, protest movements, activists, journalists and other civil society actors, and that criminalize their work in different ways. Actions are also being planned in partnership with local and international organizations in order to combat these threats. Recently, Conectas joined a platform formed by civil society organizations that has been monitoring the impacts of the FATF, the Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing.

ANTI-TERRORISM BILL (PL 2016/2015)



According to experts, besides being *unnecessary and unconstitutional*, the anti-terrorism bill (*Bill 2016/2015*) is full of subjective language that will enable the arbitrary application of its clauses on individuals, groups and, primarily, social movements. Activists believe that the law may serve as a tool to repress protest movements, violating the legitimate right to demonstrate.

Over the course of 2015, Conectas staged a number of actions on the topic, including:

- In order to promote the public debate on the topic, Conectas organized an event called **“Anti-terrorism law: An assault on democracy”**. The *debate* was broadcast online by *Estúdio Fluxo* and involved legal experts and representatives from civil society and social movements. Click [here](#) for more information.
- Following a campaign led by Conectas in November, four UN special rapporteurs publicly criticized the anti-terrorism bill. They said the bill has an overly broad definition of terrorism and could restrict fundamental freedoms.



“We fear that the definition of the crime established by the draft law may result in ambiguities and confusion as to what the State considers a terrorist offence, potentially undermining the exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms”

said the rapporteurs in a [public statement](#).

Read more [here](#).

RESTRICTION OF THE RIGHT TO PROTEST – POLICE VIOLENCE IN THE AMERICAS



The violence and intimidation employed by the police during popular demonstrations was addressed at a [hearing](#) held in March 2015 in the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) in Washington DC.

noticia-2016113172439133-43766218The topic of violence by security forces was proposed by Conectas and another 29 organizations from 11 countries on the continent. They argued that together with the growth in the number of demonstrations in the region there has also been an increase in the amount of repression,

both by the police and the Judiciary. The organizations asked the Inter-American Commission to prepare a document that sets rules of conduct, particularly for public security forces, at social protests. They also requested that regional standards be adopted for the use of non-lethal weapons. More information [here](#).

Click [here](#) to see images showing the brutality of the Military Police in Brazil, at a protest staged in São Paulo in January 2015.



Conectas Fellowship

The **Conectas Fellowship program** is a way of connecting human rights advocates from the Global South so they can share experiences and work together in new partnerships. The program consists of bringing human rights advocates from other parts of the Global South to spend a few weeks at Conectas, sharing experiences with the experts and partners of the organization and strengthening the network of advocates for future joint actions.

CONECTAS FELLOWSHIP – 2015 EDITION

Over the course of 2015, Conectas took on two groups of Fellows. The first consisted of two African activists, who shared experiences with our staff on topics of foreign policy and human rights. The second group was formed by three Latin American activists, who worked on the topic of business and human rights, discussing the environmental and social impacts of Chinese investments in the region.

Learn more about the Fellows received by Conectas in 2015:

Josua Loots, from South Africa, is a researcher from the *Human Rights Center of the University of Pretoria*. Josua develops projects on the following topics: human rights impact assessment, implementation of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, and the impact of extractive industries in Africa from a human rights perspective.

Ivy Fidelia Odia, from Nigeria, works at *Partnership for Justice* (PJ), an organization formed by professionals who share a commitment to the promotion of equality, justice and globalization of human rights standards. It provides support to victims and creates the conditions for the protection of human rights in Nigeria.

Silvia Molina, from Bolivia, is a researcher for the local organization *CEDLA* (Center for the Study of Labor and Agrarian Development). Through the production of knowledge, CEDLA helps strengthen the political action of rural and urban workers, with the aim of overcoming social relations of subordination and domination.

Paulina Garzón, from Ecuador, is a researcher with 25 years experience on the topic of the environment and financing of international institutions in Latin America. Paulina is director of *CLASII* (China-Latin America Sustainable Investment Initiative), which is based in Washington DC.

Gianfranco Ciccía, from Peru, is a political scientist who works at the local organization *DAR* (Law, Environment and Natural Resources). DAR is an NGO that is committed to good governance, sustainable development and the promotion of indigenous rights in the Amazon.

“All the meetings reinforced the need for us to mutually enrich ourselves from the work that we do and identified the need – and the willingness – to develop more collaborative work.”

Comment by Paulina Garzón on the Conectas Fellowship program.



INSTITUTIONAL DEPARTMENTS AND COMMUNICATION

Institutional Development

The institutional development department of Conectas is responsible for guaranteeing the sustainability of the organization. This sustainability is achieved by maintaining a broad base of supporters, by implementing internal assessment processes and planning, and by fundraising to ensure the financial health of the organization.

MOBILIZATION

In 2015, Conectas significantly expanded its presence in Brazilian universities. This initiative reached more than 4,000 students, through lectures given by staff from Conectas, Sur Journal events, the annual journalism and human rights course, and public debates staged by the organization etc.

On December 10, Conectas opened its doors to host an "Ideas Fair" in celebration of International Human Rights Day. Students, teachers, activists, groups, movements and organizations that work with human rights could exhibit their work to nearly 100 people who took part in the event. More information [here](#).

By building closer relations with the student community, Conectas has expanded the scope of its discussions and taken the struggle for human rights to the young university generation.



ASSESSMENT AND PLANNING

In 2015, the institutional development department supported the staff at Conectas in conducting an in-depth assessment process, which analyzed the strategies employed by the organization and the results achieved during the course of 2015. The insights from this process informed the operational planning for 2016.



DIVERSIFICATION OF FUNDRAISING

Last year, Conectas sought to diversify its sources of financing, with a particular focus on fundraising from individuals.



CONECTAS IN THE NEWS

In 2015, Conectas was mentioned in the press a similar number of times as the year before, with an average of 9.7 daily mentions. However, there was more regularity in the organization's exposure in the media over the course of last year (in 2014, there were clearly times of peak coverage, followed by quiet periods). Another difference that shows the strengthening of the publicity efforts with the mainstream media was the greater exposure of Conectas in Brazil's five leading newspapers (Folha de S. Paulo, O Estado de S. Paulo, O Globo, Correio Braziliense and Valor Econômico). There were 123 mentions in these newspapers, compared to 80 the year before. Some of the highlights include:

FOLHA DE SÃO PAULO:

ONG vai à ONU em caso de juiz impedido de julgar crimes (NGO takes case of judge prevented from judging crimes to the UN)

O ESTADO DE SÃO PAULO:

Decisão do STF é importante para mudar Pedrinhas' diz ONG ('Supreme Court decision is key to change Pedrinhas', says NGO)

O ESTADO DE SÃO PAULO:

Audiência de custódia revela indício de tortura em 277 casos de prisões (Detention hearing reveals signs of torture in 277 cases of arrests)

In 2015, the communication department also concentrated its efforts on the publication of op-eds, given the important role that this type of article can play in shaping a more critical public opinion and contributing to our advocacy strategies. Over the course of the year, Conectas published 30 op-eds. Some of these were:

FOLHA DE SÃO PAULO:

Por que o Brasil deve ajudar a fechar Guantánamo (Why Brazil should help close Guantanamo)

O GLOBO:

O Estado torturador e a falta de provas (The torture State and the lack of evidence)

EL PAÍS:

O medo: uma velha desculpa para novos retrocessos (Fear: an old excuse for new setbacks)

These data show that Conectas has consolidated its image as a source of reference and credibility among journalists, which is essential to convey its messages, agenda and analysis of human rights to the Brazilian public.

SOCIAL NETWORKS

Conectas' online channels have also been growing as an important means of disseminating messages, campaigns and stories that help shape an environment that is more conducive to the promotion of human rights in Brazil. Indeed, interest in Conectas' Facebook page grew sharply in 2015, increasing by nearly 60% with 8,900 new followers.



JOURNALISM AND HUMAN RIGHTS COURSE



In 2015, in partnership with the *Oboré* agency, *Abraji* (Brazilian Association of Investigative Journalism) and *Sinpro-SP* (São Paulo Teachers Union), Conectas held its second edition of the Course on Journalism and Human Rights. Overall, 436 university students applied for the course from 19 Brazilian states. The applicants represent more than 21 courses from nearly 100 universities across the country.

The 20 selected students attended lectures and press conferences with experts throughout the months of October and November

2015. The course combines the reflective practice of journalistic coverage with the theoretical knowledge of human rights.



Administrative & Financial

Conectas believes that the transparency of the organization is fundamental. In 2013, it established a more active role for the Audit Committee, a policy that remained in place in 2015. We also continued the external audit contracted in 2013 – PricewaterhouseCoopers. The planning and coordination of the administrative and financial operations of Conectas continue to ensure the fluidity and smooth execution of the programs and working areas. The department also continues to strengthen its action and interaction with the programs and the other institutional areas of the organization, thereby ensuring its financial and administrative health.

It also invested in an online financial system to control the organization's budget and in training in Personnel Department Management.

We ended 2015 with all our certificates and paperwork in order.



SUPPORT CONECTAS

Become a Human Rights defender

DONATE TO CONECTAS AND HELP US TO BUILD A FAIRER WORLD



Donate to Conectas and Support:

- Monitoring and denouncing human rights violations that take place worldwide.
- Strengthening human rights movement in Latin America, Africa, and Asia.
- Stopping abusive practices in Brazilian prisons, such as torture and intrusive searches on detainees' relatives.
- Making the Private Sector accountable for actions that violate human rights.
- Making Brazilian foreign policy more transparent and democratic.

[DONATE HERE](#)

