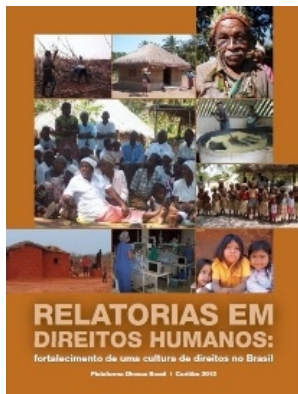


# Human Rights Rapporteurships: strengthening a culture of rights in Brazil

Executive Summary

October / 2012

## PRESENTATION



“Human Rights Rapporteurships: strengthening a culture of rights in Brazil” is a publication by the Plataforma Dhesca Brazil<sup>1</sup>, a Brazilian network of 34 human rights organizations, in which it presents a summary of the work done by the National Human Rights Rapporteurships between 2009 and 2011.

This is a very important moment in the history of the Rapporteurships, which – this October – will celebrate 10 years of acting for the strengthening of human rights in Brazil. It has indeed been a successful experience in monitoring such rights. It started out as a civil society initiative in 2002 and has given visibility to local emblematic cases of human rights violations and inserting them into the national agenda, through missions (on-site visits), advocacy and interaction with organizations, social movements, governmental agencies, communities and others.

This document will introduce a summary of the contents published in the most recent report of the Rapporteurships, which was divided into three parts: i) a brief presentation of Plataforma Dhesca Brazil, an interview with one of the first rapporteurs on environment, Jean Pierre Leroy, the constitution of the Rapporteurships on Human Rights for the 2009/2011 term and the map of missions that were carried out; ii) presentation and compilation of the work of each Rapporteurships, a political analysis of the issues, a summary of the missions and interviews with the activists Marcelo Braga Edmundo -who talks about the context of city rights in Brazil-; Antonio Bispo dos Santos -who addresses the challenges faced by the traditional communities, especially in the fight for land-; Antonia Melo -who talks about the threats faced by indigenous people and the popular mobilization that has gained strength in Brazil and abroad-; Beatriz Galli -who talks about how abortion is treated in Brazil-; Cléber Folgado - who talks about the Permanent Campaign against Pesticides and for Life-; and, finally, iii) an article that discusses the dimensions of gender and race in Brazilian society and the Rapporteurships.

At this moment, we greatly thank social movements and local, regional and national organizations, which have been present throughout the work of the Rapporteurships, whether by sending complaints and information concerning human rights violations, supporting the missions, monitoring public hearings or disseminating the final reports of the on-site visits.

We also want to thank Conectas Human Rights, which is affiliated to the Plataforma Dhesca Brazil, for providing the opportunity to present the work of the Human Rights Rapporteurships and publish the report during the XII International Human Rights Colloquium.

Finally, we would like to thank the support of the international agencies, that has enabled and assisted the work of the Plataforma Dhesca Brazil and the Rapporteurships; Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst (EED), Interchurch Organization of Cooperation for Development (ICCO), Ford Foundation and the Heinrich Böll Foundation (HBS).

**The online version of the report is available at:**

**[www.dhesca.org.br/attachments/584\\_relatorias\\_em\\_direitos\\_humanos.pdf](http://www.dhesca.org.br/attachments/584_relatorias_em_direitos_humanos.pdf)**

<sup>1</sup> The Brazilian Platform on Human, Economic, Social, Cultural and Environmental Rights.

## About Plataforma Dhesca Brazil

Plataforma Dhesca Brazil is a national network formed by Brazilian civil society organizations, which acts for the promotion, protection and reparation of human rights, aiming to strengthen citizenship and democracy. It was created in 2001 as the Brazilian chapter of the Inter-American Platform for Human Rights, Democracy and Development (PIDHDD)<sup>2</sup> and has the general objective to contribute to building and strengthening a culture of rights, developing strategies of enforceability and justiciability of human rights as well as focusing on the formulation, execution and control of social public policies.

Along with PIDHDD, Plataforma Dhesca participates and supports the campaign for the ratification of the Optional Protocol of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) which, in general terms, will enable victims of human rights violations to seek justice internationally.

Besides that, the Plataforma also acts to strengthen initiatives of capacity building and disseminating experiences on economic, social, cultural and environmental rights, to monitor the fulfillment of commitments made by the Brazilian government, through advocacy in the formulation and monitoring of public policies on human rights, like the National Program for Human Rights III (PNDH3)<sup>3</sup>, and to contribute for a higher standard of respect to human rights in Brazil, through the implementation and strengthening of National Human Rights Rapporteurships.

The Human Rights Rapporteurships are central to the work of Plataforma Dhesca and are based on the enforceability and justiciability of economic, social, cultural and environmental rights in the country. As mentioned above, this publication will focus on the work done by the Rapporteurships between 2009 and 2011.

## 10 years of the Human Rights Rapporteurships: Building and strengthening a culture of rights in Brazil

The National Human Rights Rapporteurs are an unique and successful initiative by the Brazilian civil society that emerged with the aim to contribute to the adoption of a higher standard of respect for human rights in Brazil, based on the Brazilian Federal Constitution, the Third National Program for Human Rights, the international human rights treaties ratified by Brazil and the recommendations of the UN Rapporteurs and the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The project was created in 2002 by Plataforma Dhesca Brazil and was inspired by the Special Rapporteurs of the United Nations.

In the last ten years, the Rapporteurships have become an important instrument for expanding the enforceability of human rights in the country, through the diagnosis and the publicity of violation processes at local level. Besides being a reference in Brazil, the methodology developed by the project, which is in continuous being improved, has been replicated in other countries, such as Paraguay, Argentina and Yemen.

Through the missions (on-site visits), public hearings, meetings and speeches, with the involvement of hundreds of organizations and social movements, as well as representatives of the Executive, Legislative branches of government and Justice System, the Rapporteurships have influenced the public agenda, at the same time as offering recommendations and measures that should be adopted by the government in order to ensure the dignity and the protection of the people in a vulnerable situation or whose rights have been violated.

The intervention of the Rapporteurs often allows communities, social movements and organization to identify their problems within a larger context of violations, which also enhances their mobilization capacity and has a clear character of popular education. There are many reports of people and groups who, from the interventions, had the first opportunity to talk with the government - which shows the immaturity of our democracy and the importance of projects like the Rapporteurships for overcoming this problem.

Thus, the Rapporteurships also aims to contribute to strengthening the organizational capacity of civil society regarding the social control of public policies and the social monitoring of human rights, enhancing civil society as an independent and empowered political subject.

<sup>2</sup> The PIDHDD ([www.pidhdd.org](http://www.pidhdd.org)) articulates itself since the 1990s to promote the exchange of experiences and the sum of efforts in the struggle for human rights implementation, it integrates civil society organizations in Brazil and several countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, especially in Peru, Ecuador, Argentina, Chile, Bolivia, Colombia, Paraguay and Venezuela.

<sup>3</sup> PNDH-3 is available in [http://www.dhesca.org.br/attachments/174\\_pndh3.pdf](http://www.dhesca.org.br/attachments/174_pndh3.pdf).

Over the last ten years, the Human Rights Rapporteurs influenced emblematic human rights violations and often anticipated major confrontations. Missions in traditional communities, indigenous territories, evicted or in risk of eviction urban communities, schools, hospitals, prisons, land reform settlements, places affected by the “Growth Acceleration Program”, major infrastructure projects and mega events, and also several meetings with public organs, and the promotion and participation in public hearings throughout Brazil, made the National Rapporteurships an important political subject to the realization of human rights in Brazil.

### **Ten years of Rapporteurships in numbers**

22 rapporteurs and 24 advisors  
124 missions  
More than 100 Brazilian cities visited

### **Who are the rapporteurs?**

The rapporteurs are human rights experts, chosen by a selection board consisting of the collegiate coordination of Plataforma Dhesca Brazil, which currently formed by the Instituto de Estudos Socioeconômicos, Justiça Global, Rede Feminista de Saúde and Terra de Direitos, organs of Legislature (Commission on Human Rights and Minorities of the Chamber of Deputies and the Commission on Human Rights of the Senate), the Executive (Human Rights Secretariat and Ministry of Foreign Affairs), Justice System (Federal Prosecution Office on Citizens' Rights) and UN Agencies (FAO, UNDP, UNESCO, UN Women, UNV, UNICEF, UNFPA) for a two years mandate.

The criteria considered for the selection of those experts are knowledge and experience in the field of human rights; public recognition of their commitment to the promotion of such rights; legitimacy in forums, networks and civil society organizations and autonomy and independence from the government.

The challenge of the rapporteurs is to diagnose, report and recommend solutions to human rights violations pointed out by civil society. In order to investigate the complaints that were received, the Rapporteurs conduct on-site visits, have public hearings, advocate with public authorities and publish reports with recommendations for overcoming the identified problems.

## **RAPPORTEURSHIP ON THE HUMAN RIGHT TO THE CITY**

### **Major urban enterprises and mega sports events in Brazil: dilemmas and challenges of the right to the city**

The growing hegemony of entrepreneurial governance founded on the logic of urban businesses, that treats the city as a commodity, triggers an economic, social, political and environmental dynamic that is directly opposed to the principles of the city rights and the right to the city. The City Statute, after ten years of its enactment, seems to suffer the effects of the conflicts between these two views, which also explains the dilemma faced for the effectiveness of the instruments it predicts.

Recognizing the diversity of causes triggering process of violations of the right to the city, the Rapporteurship realized the importance of monitoring cases of violation linked to large urban enterprises, generally related to the restructuring of the central areas and the creation of infrastructure aimed at boosting economic cities and also holding mega sports events, considering that Brazil will host the 2014 World Cup and the Olympics in 2016.

Therefore, the missions of the Rapporteur on the Human Right to the City included visits to communities where there were allegations of urban conflicts and human right violations resulting from the following processes: urban restructuring interventions related to specific areas of the city (the central area revitalization); completion of road works related to urban restructuring of cities, urban sprawl of cities, and execution of works relating to the preparation of the city for the World Cup and the Olympics.

<sup>4</sup> The “Programa de Aceleração do Crescimento” (Growth Acceleration Program) is a major infrastructure program of the federal government with the objective of accelerating economic growth in the country.

## **Mission: evictions and removals of low-income communities**

The Rapporteurship on the Human Right to the City conducted four missions to monitor complaints of violations of the right to housing and to the city. In all the cases, the violation of the human right to the city, particularly the right to housing, was very clear. Other social and individual rights such as the rights to education, safety, child and adolescent protection, care to the homeless, health, water, sanitation and the environment were also violated. The Rapporteur found families living in homes without dignity, with close proximity to polluted streams; threats of eviction and repossession; compensations negotiated individually and without any clear criteria; children with their social reproduction threatened by situations of extreme unhealthy conditions and physical insecurity caused by the construction works; uncertainty about the future.

In São Paulo and its metropolitan area, the mission could see plenty of resources for the major infrastructure works, but carelessness and lack of priority by the government and the contractors for the housing rights of citizens living in the intervention areas of these projects. The Rapporteur witnessed a truck from the City of São Paulo throwing water on some residents who were sleeping on the sidewalks of the city center. The problems encountered in Brazil's largest city, as the noted by the Rapporteur, are directly related to the construction of mega-enterprises, such as the expansion of the Marginal Tietê, the implementation of the Wetlands Park Tietê (known as linear park) and the construction of the Rodoanel.

In the cities of Nazária and Terezina, in the state of Piauí, and in the cities of Paço do Lumiar and São Luís, in the state of Maranhão, the Rapporteur found that the housing deficit, coupled with the high number of unused and private urban areas in a state of abandonment, without fulfilling its social function, generated brutal contradictions and the occurrence of many cases of land conflicts. This is reflected in the occupations held by entire communities who move to these places despite the lack of infrastructure or decent housing.

In Rio de Janeiro, the mission of the Rapporteur included visits to communities where there were complaints of violations arising from the road works for the deployment of BRT (Bus Rapid Transit) Transcarioca and Transoeste, the reform of the Maracanã stadium, the construction of the Olympic Village and interventions related to the urban redevelopment of specific areas of the city (revitalization of the Port Zone - Projeto Porto Maravilha).

The Rapporteur on the Human Right to the City considered it urgent to approach the local Judiciary on the duty to comply with international human rights standards. Moreover, it was noted that it is necessary to deepen and implement the instruments of the City Statute in order to prevent many of the urban unused areas at the expense of existing large housing shortage, as well as to promote public policies and to have effective social housing.

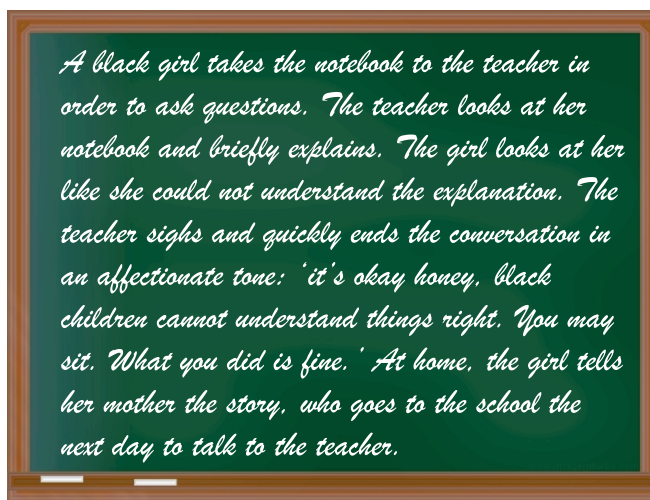
## **RAPPORTEURSHIP ON THE HUMAN RIGHT TO EDUCATION**

### **The guarantee of the right to quality education: the challenge of persistent inequities**

Education is a human right that consists in the development of all human skills and potentials. This entails being available to everyone, with equal opportunities of access, continuance and completion of education. A human rights based education considers that education has to have quality, regardless of the ethno-racial, social, religious, cultural, generational, territorial, physical, individual condition or gender, sexual orientation, nationality, political choice, among others.

However, despite being a right, education is marked by inequities, which differs from inequalities while it recognizes that it does not necessarily imply a moral judgment about the differences in social reality, while the definition of the latter, points to value judgments about differences that should not exist because they are unjust, unnecessary and avoidable. Educational inequities reproduce themselves in a systematically way related to the ethnicity/race, social class, gender, sexuality and territory.





Testimonials like the above were heard by the staff of the Rapporteurship on the Right to Education, throughout the missions that focused on racism in Brazilian education, which was the main issue of the 2009-2011 mandate. The rapporteur address issues as religious intolerance towards adepts of African religions in public schools, the education in traditional communities and expressions of racism in everyday school life while conducting the interviews with teachers, children, teenagers, families, communities, principals, activists, religious leaders and law enforcement officials. These issues have very little visibility in public debate and have not yet been adequately addressed by educational public policies.

### **Education and Racism in Brazil mission**

A phenomenon has manifested itself in Brazilian schools; religious intolerance against students who practice religions of African origin. The Rapporteur received reports that informed the occurrence of religious intolerance among students, education professionals and families, which justified conducting the mission.

Among the complaints of religious intolerance that reached the Rapporteur, in various regions of the country, there were cases of physical violence (punches and even stoning) against students; resignation or expulsion of teachers that practiced religions of African origin or who used their content in religion classes; prohibition of books and teaching capoeira in schools; inequalities in the access to school facilities to religious leaders linked to religions of African origin; omission in cases of discrimination or abuse by teachers and principals who used the school space for religious proselytism etc. These situations often lead students to hold back a year, drop out of school or to transfer to other educational units. It also damages self-esteem and contribute to low school performance.

Some respondents reported that religious intolerance is increasing due to the growth of certain fundamentalist religious groups on the outskirts of the cities and their media power; the ambiguity of educational policies regarding the explicit defense of the secular state and insufficient investment in implementation of the Act 10.639/2003, which amended the Act on the Guidelines and Basis of National Education that made the teaching of African and Afro-Brazilian history and culture compulsory in all primary schools.

### **Education in Traditional Communities mission**

The Rapporteur on Education visited the cities of Paulistana, Paquetá and Amarante, in the state of Piauí, in September 2011. The aim of the mission was to investigate complaints of violation of the right to education of children, teenagers and adults in traditional communities, who often rely on many years being taught together in primary school and lack opportunities of higher education. Complaints submitted to the Rapporteurship informed that school meals were inadequate considering the reality of traditional communities, that there was no school transport, poor infrastructure in the schools, as well as lack of teaching materials and teachers.

### **Rapporteurship contributes with information on gender and education to CLADEM**

The Rapporteur on the Right to Education also contributed to the report Gender and Education in Brazil, produced by the NGO Ação Educativa at the request of the Latin American Women's Rights Committee (Cladem), in collaboration with the organization Communication and Sexuality (Ecos), the Center of Reference to Victims of Violence of the Institute Sedes Sapientiae (CNRVV-SP). The document discusses, among other challenges to gender equality in education in Brazil, the situation of black boys, respect and value education professionals, the challenges to secularism in Brazil, affirmative action and inequalities for women in education.

## **Equalization goal in the new National Education Plan**

The Rapporteurship presented, through the National Campaign for the Right to Education, an innovative proposal for the drafting of the new National Education Plan (2012-2021). The Rapporteur stated that there is a need to establish an equalization goal to decrease inequality between population groups in 60% over the next decade, taking into consideration inequalities of income, race/ethnicity, gender, country/city, disability, sexual orientation, national origin and region.

Equalizing means to make equal, seek a better balance, reduce inequalities between the different. The proposed equalizing goal in the National Educational Plan contributes to the clarification and confrontation of structural inequalities that mark the Brazilian education by introducing public policies aimed at reducing such inequalities in the next ten years.

## **RAPPORTEURSHIP ON THE HUMAN RIGHT TO ENVIRONMENT**

### **Development model and energy matrix**

The triumphant discourse that the Brazilian economy would have never been so solid and Brazil would have never grown at rates as expressive propagates the idea that the model of "development" is a kind of Brazilian successful example of development based on the export of natural resources.

There is, however, a less glorious face of the expansion of Brazilian capitalism frontiers, a kind of negative picture of prosperity that discloses the Brazilian economy inside Brazil and worldwide. These are the political, social and environmental implications of what can be called "crescentismo", a neologism that seeks to explain the logic that inspired the Growth Acceleration Program of Lula and continues animating Rousseff's economic project. Economic growth reemerges as a value in itself: it is to grow at any cost, or more precisely, without considering the costs of this option and its impacts on the environment, on the different ways of life existent in our society and on historically vulnerable social groups.

In this context, the work of the National Rapporteurships becomes more important, especially the work of the Rapporteurship on the Human Right to Environment, that makes public the voices of the social groups who were made vulnerable by the growth model adopted by the country in recent decades while organizing missions to places that have been affected by local decisions in which the population was not participant and also by drawing attention of operators of justice at national level - and sometimes international - to the conflicting dynamics and impacts experienced or potentially experienced by these groups.

### **Xingu Mission: Human rights violations in the licensing of Belo Monte hydroelectric plant**

In 2009, from September to November, the Rapporteurship on the Right to Environment conducted the "Xingu Mission", which took place in the cities of Altamira, Belém and Senador Porfírio, in the state of Pará. Belo Monte Project is the third attempt by the Brazilian government to build dams to generate electricity on the Xingu River. The current project includes the detour of most of the water flow of the river, in a stretch of about one hundred kilometers known as Volta Grande of Xingu, to a passage that is currently occupied by forests and settlements of small producers.

The Environmental Impact Statement and the Environmental Impact Report showed deficiencies that motivated the creation of an independent group of experts to evaluate the project. The group carried out a meticulous examination of the Environmental Impact Statement and the Environmental Impact Report and pointed out gaps and methodological flaws that allowed underestimating the serious environmental and social impacts of the project. One of these impacts is a significant decrease in the volume of water in the region, due to the variation of the river flow throughout the year, which would directly affect local biodiversity. The National Institute on Environment (IBAMA)'s technical reports on the Environmental Impact Statement inform that there is no guarantee of maintenance of biodiversity, navigability of the river, reproduction of species, water quality and viability of fisheries, which, in practice, prevents the existence of these physical and social groups.

### **Human Rights Violations in the Madeira River Hydroelectrics**

On March 31 and April 1, 2011, the Rapporteur conducted an emergency mission to investigate the reason for the uprising of the workers employed in the construction of the hydroelectric plants of Santo Antônio and Jirau in the state of Rondônia. Between the 15th and 17th of March, the workers set fire to 54 buses and 70% of the households.

Only at the Jirau plant there were 21,000 workers sharing living quarters, who reported the outbreak of viruses, the excessive working hours and other bad work conditions caused by the magnitude of the enterprise and the rush to finish it. The consortium responsible for the construction intended to advance the completion of the projects, to maximize their profits with the advance sale of energy. In 2007, the Rapporteur on the Right to Environment found that the environmental licensing process of the plants on the Madeira River occurred in clear violation of the rules governing the environmental licensing procedures.

### **Uranium leaks in Bahia and Mission Caetité**

In July 2010, the Rapporteur on the Right to Environment went to Caetité, in the state of Bahia, and conducted a mission to investigate allegations of uranium contamination of the wells that supply the rural communities of the city, adjacent to the mining and the uranium processing unit of NIB - Nuclear Industries of Brazil.

In April 2011, the Rapporteur returned to the city to perform the "Mission Caetité: Human rights violations in the Nuclear Cycle." The report of the mission gathered several complaints made by the communities, including leaks of radioactive material, lack of information about the risks to the community, greater uptake of uranium by the population and abnormal incidence of cancer, decrease in the water resources of the region and the lack of security to NIB workers, who are responsible for the extraction and mining of uranium in the county.

## **RAPPORTEURSHIP ON THE HUMAN RIGHT TO SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH**

### **Rapporteur studies maternal deaths and the situation of women deprived of their liberty**

Maternal death is a major cause of death in women of reproductive age in most developing countries and is linked to the living conditions under poverty and the neglect by public authorities in relation to the lives of women, including access to health services when needed.

Despite the creation of the National Pact for the Reduction of Maternal and Neonatal Deaths by the Ministry of Health, deaths of women in this situation are common and considered a serious violation of human rights. Maternal deaths from unsafe abortion occur throughout the national territory and indicate non-compliance by the Brazilian government of international agreements, particularly the Millennium Development Goals, to reduce these deaths by 75% by 2015.

From this analysis, the Rapporteur prioritized, for the 2009-2011 term, two areas of work: violations of sexual and reproductive rights of women through the cases of maternal death from unsafe abortions and the situation of sexual and reproductive rights of women deprived of freedom.

### **Women deprived of freedom**

The Rapporteur on the Right to Health conducted missions in prisons of four Brazilian states; Salvador, Bahia, in March 2010; Verdejante, Pernambuco, in July 2010; Madre Pelletier Penitentiary, in Porto Alegre, Rio Grande do Sul, in July 2010, and the Reeducation Centre for Women in Belém, in the state of Pará, in October 2010.

The Rapporteur identified serious violations in the human rights of women, especially their right to health and access to justice. In relation to the right to health, there were aberrant situations that can be considered as torture and others as neglect. Among the cases analysed by the Rapporteur were: women in vulnerable situations without access to health care, such as HIV-positive and pregnant women; the absence of health professionals, physicians, psychologists, nurses; the lack of formal reference to labour and cases of unsafe abortions, leading women to wander in search of a hospital bed, which increases their vulnerability, which can lead to maternal death, according to studies on the subject.

The access to justice is another major problem faced by great part of the prison population. Most of them have no lawyer or public defender, a significant number has no defined sentences and is detained without trial. Many are abandoned by their lawyers and also by their families, especially those who are residing in other states or cities.

## Maternal death

Between the 5th and 7th of October 2010, the Rapporteur on the Right to Health was in Belém, in the state of Pará, in order to conduct its fourth mission, which had the objective of verifying communications of social movements about a preventable maternal death of a 14 years old teenager and the awful situation of the Women's Rehabilitation Centre of Ananindeua. The girl's death was caused by negligence and incompetence of the health system to comply with national laws and international human rights treaties signed and ratified by Brazil.

Besides the mission, the Rapporteur produced several texts and analysis on sexual and reproductive rights. Among them the document Analysis of cases of maternal under a human rights perspective, which sought to contribute to the reduction of maternal mortality rates among women discriminated by race/ethnicity and social status. Its purpose is to strengthen the vision of human rights in the analysis of cases of avoidable maternal death, taking into account the rights enshrined in international treaties ratified by Brazil. It also aims to contribute to create a culture of using human rights instruments applied to maternal death in the analyzes of study committees and prevention of this type of mortality.

## RAPORTEURSHIP ON THE HUMAN RIGHT TO LAND, TERRITORY AND FOOD

### The struggle for land and territory in the context of commodity markets

The Rapporteur on the Human Right to Land, Territory and Food acts in support and aims to make public the struggles and resistances of rural populations that denounce violations of rights. The Rapporteurship helped the enforcement of land rights and food sovereignty of rural populations, with national and local implications, by supporting struggles for land and territories, following up activities in Brasília, especially the Joint Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry (CPMI) of the Movement of Landless Rural Workers in 2010, and performing missions to verify specific violations of rights and hear the responsible organs, while demanding specific actions to stop the violations.

The work on issues related to the struggle for land and territories requires continuous thought on the meaning of the countryside, especially due to the prevalence and expansion of a production model that prioritizes the exportation of agricultural commodities. In the Amazon region, for example, the commodity wood is prioritized, directly affecting communities and people who are subjected to pressure from business groups interested in the development of their enterprises. It is no coincidence that there is increased visibility for the Amazon area, not only in a preservationist perspective, but also as an opportunity to concentrate wealth from the advancement of extraction of natural resources.

In opposition to this model and the conflicts arising from it, there are resistances and struggles of communities and social groups which, by opposing to the expansion, claim rights, reconstruct identities, express ways of living and appropriating land, different from the hegemonic model, with agricultural diversification and enhancement of forest and nature, insisting on the right to social and cultural reproduction.

### Mission Santarém: Human Rights Violations in Indigenous, Riverside and Traditional Communities in Rio Arapiuns

After receiving complaints of violations of the right to the territory from the indigenous people who live on the riverbanks of river Maró (affluent of the Arapiuns River) in the city of Santarém, in the state of Pará, the Rapporteur on the Right to Land, Territory and Food decided to conduct a investigative and advocacy mission, which was carried out in November 2009.

The complaints also showed that the actions of the government of Pará and the National Indigenous Foundation (FUNAI) were not guaranteeing the demarcation of land. Therefore, the local indigenous groups were witnessing their lands being invaded and the forest, the basis of their survival, being devastated. The complaint was also about the existence of threats against the lives of several leaders and attacks to the Movement in Defense of Life and Culture of Rio Arapiuns (MDVCA).



## São Francisco Mission

The wilderness of river São Francisco and the central wilderness of the state of Pernambuco, which are part of the semi-arid region face - in addition to the problems due to the drought and the failure of public policies to reduce it - human rights violations caused by the impacts of mega-projects envisaged in the Growth Acceleration Program, especially the Riacho Seco and Pedra Branca Dams, in the cities of Santa Maria da Boa Vista and Orocó, respectively, as an example, and the transposition of São Francisco River.

Given the human rights violations of traditional and riverside communities, indigenous populations and settler families of land reform on the river São Francisco, the Rapporteur conducted a mission to the semi-arid of Pernambuco, an area characterized by insufficient basic public policies and affected by the mega-projects. The mission, which took place on 15th and 16th of October 2010, included the cities of Petrolina, Santa Maria da Boa Vista and Cabrobó, in the state of Pernambuco, and found a number of human rights violations. Considering the regional reality, many of the violations are linked to the lack of basic services such as water supply for human consumption and for production, the actions of public organs with the financial resources and works of major infrastructure projects. In other words, the failure to provide services, on one hand, and government investment in large projects, on the other hand, have deepened social gaps and accentuated the violations.

## Mission to the Maró Indigenous Territory

The human rights violations in the indigenous territory of Maró in the western state of Pará, are common and range from the disrespect to the lands traditionally occupied by them, which include the invasion by timber companies and farmers to death threats and assault on the physical integrity of the leaders of these people. Given the gravity of the violations alleged by the indigenous population and based on the conflictive history of the place, already ascertained on a mission in the same area in 2009, the Rapporteur on the Human Right to Land, Territory and Food held a new mission in the indigenous community of Maró for the purpose of verifying and following-up the complaints, in August 2011.

The Rapporteur noted that, in addition to the conflicts related to the violation of the right to land and territories of the indigenous peoples of Maró, there was absence of structuring public policies directed to these communities. There are glaring problems in investment in education and health in these locations, ranging from lack of infrastructure, care for the sick, to the failure and difficulty in delivering school meals. The mission discovered that numerous trees, important to indigenous survival, were identified with aluminum platelets, ready to be felled.

## National Rapporteurships on Human Rights and the dimensions of gender and race in Brazilian society

Plataforma Dhesca Brazil, through the National Rapporteurships on Human Rights, intervenes in the context of human rights violations, reaching the field of social inequalities and demanding the fulfillment of economic, social, cultural and environmental human rights, which are still far from being effective in the country. This political demand aligns with the principles of integrity, indivisibility and interdependence of human rights, as reaffirmed at the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna, in 1993.

This objective, along with an evaluation process of the National Human Rights Rapporteurships, resulted in the incorporation of the gender and race dimensions in the various advocacy activities of the National Rapporteurships. The process of nomination of the rapporteurs in 2009, including their selection and the choice of contexts of the violations of rights that would be addressed, took into consideration the national conjuncture of serious threat of setback to advances in the field of health, sexual and reproductive health of women and an increase in discriminatory practices based on race, which were already being targeted by one of the rapporteurships.

Brazil has ratified non-discrimination treaties and conventions and has a national legal framework against racism, sexism and other forms of discrimination. However, there are still inequalities and inequities in access to health, education, work, income between men and women and between whites and blacks. So, incorporating gender and race in the intervention of National Rapporteurships on Human Rights has become indispensable. The verification of these dimensions in the context of violations observed also becomes an instrument for enforcing the rights of the Brazilian black and female population.