



# **2023**

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# **WASHINGTON BRAZIL OFFICE**

## **ANNUAL REPORT**

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## INTRODUCTION

In the face of evolving political landscapes, the Washington Brazil Office steadfastly embraced its mission to defend and uphold democracy and human rights in Brazil throughout the past year. Our commitment to democratic values became particularly poignant in the wake of challenges that surfaced following Lula's election. The WBO stood firm in its dedication to fostering a robust democratic framework, ensuring that the core principles of transparency, inclusivity, and accountability remain at the heart of Brazil's political discourse.

The aftermath of Lula's election unleashed a storm of challenges against democratic institutions, presenting a crucible for the WBO. Through strategic advocacy, collaboration, and unwavering dedication, we sought to fortify the democratic fabric that binds Brazil's political ethos.

In tandem with our defense of democracy, our commitment to racial equality was paramount. Recognizing the intersectionality of democracy and racial justice, we embarked on initiatives to dismantle systemic barriers and address racial disparities. Through targeted programs, partnerships, and advocacy, we sought to create a more inclusive and equitable society.

The WBO also remained a staunch advocate for human rights, cognizant of their intrinsic connection to a thriving democracy. Amidst challenges, our initiatives aimed at safeguarding human rights, protecting vulnerable communities, and fostering a culture of accountability.

As we present this Annual Report, we invite you to delve into the multifaceted initiatives that define our journey. From defending democracy to championing racial equality, human rights, and freedom of expression, our collective resilience and dedication have illuminated the path forward. In the pages that follow, witness the impact of our endeavors and the stories that embody the values we hold dear.

## STRUCTURAL CHANGES

The year 2023 marked a transformative period for the WBO as we underwent significant structural changes to enhance our capacity, relevance, and impact. Committed to advancing democracy, fostering gender equality, and promoting freedom of expression, the organization welcomed three new dynamic individuals to lead specialized programs. Additionally, an advisor was appointed to guide initiatives focused on gender, diversity, and race.

- **Democracy Program Coordinator:**

In response to the evolving landscape of democratic challenges, the Democracy Program Coordinator was appointed to spearhead efforts in safeguarding and strengthening democratic principles. This program will focus on fostering civic engagement, electoral integrity, and democratic institutions, working towards a resilient and inclusive democratic framework.

- **Gender and Freedom of Expression Program Coordinator:**

Through targeted strategies and collaborations, the coordinator will make substantial contributions to advancing gender equality and ensuring robust freedom of expression in the Brazilian context.

- **Europe Program Coordinator:**

Acknowledging the global interconnectedness of today's challenges, the Europe Program Coordinator was appointed to strengthen our ties with European partners. This program aims to facilitate cross-continental collaborations, exchange best practices, and facilitate the access of Brazilian civil society voices in European human rights bodies.

These strategic additions have expanded our organizational structure to a robust team, comprising an Executive Director, Advocacy and Administrative Coordinator, Socioenvironmental and Just Transition Program Coordinator, Communication and Press Coordinator, International and Social Articulation Coordinator, Institutional Development and Projects Coordinator, Gender and Freedom of Expression Coordinator, Democracy Coordinator, and Europe Program Coordinator. In November 2023, the WBO launched a selection process to hire a coordinator for its Racial Justice Program. Due to the need to relocate resources internally, the selection process was paused. The selection process is expected to finalize in the first semester of 2024 once additional funds are secured for the position.

## AFFILIATED ORGANIZATIONS

In 2023, the number of organizations affiliated with the Washington Brazil Office increased from 42 to 58. Such substantial growth illustrates the expansion of the organization's activities throughout the year. The organization has also mapped and connected with dozens of other civil society organizations that might collaborate with the WBO in the future.

The names of all the affiliated organizations are:

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 342 Artes</li><li>• ABGLT</li><li>• Abong</li><li>• Ação da Cidadania</li><li>• Articulação dos Povos Indígenas do Brasil – APIB</li><li>• Artigo 19 Brasil</li><li>• Assessoria Popular Maria Felipa</li><li>• Associação Brasileira de Relações Internacionais – ABRI</li><li>• Associação Brasileira Interdisciplinar de AIDS – ABIA</li><li>• Bem-Te-Vi Diversidade</li><li>• CEERT – Centro de Estudos das Relações de Trabalho e Desigualdades</li><li>• CEN – Coletivo de Entidades Negras</li><li>• Cendhec – Centro Dom Helder Camara de Estudos e Ação Social</li><li>• Central Única dos Trabalhadores – CUT</li><li>• Centro de Análise da Liberdade e do Autoritarismo – LAUT</li><li>• Coalizão Brasil por Memória, Verdade, Justiça, Reparação e Democracia</li><li>• Coletivo RJ Memória, Verdade, Justiça e Reparação</li><li>• Comissão Arns</li><li>• Comitê Chico Mendes</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• CONAQ – Coordenação Nacional de Articulação das Comunidades Negras Rurais Quilombolas</li><li>• Conselho Nacional das Populações Extrativistas – CNS</li><li>• Diplomacia para Democracia</li><li>• Frente de Evangélicos pelo Estado de Direito</li><li>• Fundo Agbara</li><li>• Geledés – Instituto da Mulher Negra</li><li>• Greenpeace Brasil</li><li>• Grupo Tortura Nunca Mais São Paulo</li><li>• Ibase – Instituto Brasileiro de Análises Sociais e Econômicas</li><li>• IDDH – Instituto de Desenvolvimento e Direitos Humanos</li><li>• Instituto Cidade Segura</li><li>• Instituto Cultural Steve Biko</li><li>• Instituto de Referência Negra Peregum</li><li>• Instituto Maria e João Aleixo</li><li>• Instituto Marielle Franco</li><li>• Instituto Novos Paradigmas</li><li>• Instituto Pólis</li><li>• Instituto Sou da Paz</li><li>• Instituto Vladimir Herzog – IVH</li><li>• LabJaca - Laboratório de dados e narrativas sobre favelas</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• MND – Mulheres Negras Decidem</li><li>• Movimento de Justiça e Direitos Humanos</li><li>• Movimento dos Atingidos por Barragens</li><li>• Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra – MST</li><li>• Movimento dos Trabalhadores Sem Teto – MTST</li><li>• Movimento Nacional de Direitos Humanos - MNDH</li><li>• N’Zinga – Coletivo de Mulheres Negras</li><li>• Observatório da Branquitude</li><li>• Observatório para Monitoramento dos Riscos Eleitorais no Brasil – DEMOS</li><li>• Odara – Instituto da Mulher Negra</li><li>• Pacto pela Democracia</li><li>• Plataforma Cipó</li><li>• Rede Cerrado</li><li>• Redes da Maré</li><li>• Saúde &amp; Alegria</li><li>• Themis – Gênero, Justiça, Direitos Humanos</li><li>• Transparência Internacional Brasil</li><li>• UNEafro Brasil</li><li>• União Geral dos Trabalhadores – UGT</li></ul> |
|--|---|--|

## ACTIVITIES

### The Defense of Democracy in the Context of the January 8<sup>th</sup> Attacks

During the tumultuous events of January 8th in Brasília, the WBO played a pivotal and commendable role in upholding democratic values and international cooperation. As the attacks on Brazil's democratic institutions unfolded, the WBO swiftly took action by reaching out to a range of U.S. Congressional members. Their tireless efforts resulted in a collective call for condemnation of the attacks, emphasizing the importance of preserving democratic norms and the rule of law. This outreach proved instrumental in mobilizing support on both sides of the aisle, reinforcing the international community's commitment to democratic principles in the face of adversity.

Furthermore, the WBO's commitment to fostering international collaboration was demonstrated through their meticulous coordination of a binational statement. With over sixty U.S. and Brazilian Congressional members endorsing this statement, a resounding message of unity against the attacks was delivered. This joint condemnation not only sent a powerful signal to those seeking to undermine democracy but also underscored the importance of transnational cooperation in safeguarding democratic values. Additionally, the WBO's collaboration with Rep. Castro, who led a congressional letter signed by 40 members, calling on the U.S. administration to revoke former President Bolsonaro's U.S. visa and investigate U.S.-based instigators of the Brazilian insurrection, showcased the organization's dedication to ensuring accountability and justice.

In May, the WBO facilitated a virtual meeting between Representative Raskin, who chaired the United States House Select Committee on the January 6 Attack, and members of the congressional committee in Brazil tasked with investigating the January 8th attacks on democratic institutions. This gathering allowed for a profound exchange of experiences and knowledge, as Rep. Raskin shared insights and best practices garnered from his leadership role on the U.S. committee. Furthermore, the inclusion of civil society stakeholders added another layer of transparency and accountability to the discussions, reinforcing the WBO's commitment to promoting democratic governance through international cooperation and knowledge sharing.

### International Strengthening of the Brazilian Black Movement

The Washington Brazil Office's Racial Justice Program aims to support the international articulation of Black movements in Brazil. In December 2022, it created a Working Group (WG) on Racial Justice, which today includes 16 organizations related

to Brazilian Black movements, in order to support and expand participation of organized civil society in actions related to the issue of racial justice in Brazil and the United States. The group maintains dialogues with the governments of Brazil and the United States, the U.S. Congress, the Organization of American States (OAS), the United Nations (UN) and American civil society.

The Working Group has an approach based on active listening to the demands of affiliated Black movement organizations, resulting in the elaboration of a work plan formulated directly by the Brazilian civil society organizations that make up the Working Group and whose content reflects their international agendas.

In thirteen months of joint action, the Working Group on Racial Justice managed to promote a series of initiatives linked to the interrelationship among the governments of Brazil and the United States, multilateral organizations, and academia. Among these actions is the central role of the advocacy carried out by the WG for the reactivation of JAPER – the acronym in English of the Joint Brazil-United States Action Plan for the Elimination of Ethnic-Racial Discrimination and the Reduction of Inequality. This advocacy resulted in the US and Brazilian governments resuming the plan and promising to give more space and greater weight to civil society organizations in the design and implementation of their joint policies for the sector.

- [Work on JAPER](#)

After the Working Group's deliberation on the centrality of social articulation around JAPER, the first action taken by the group was to send a letter on February 8 to Presidents Joe Biden and Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, in which the organizations demanded the effective implementation of the binational agreement that had been signed in 2008 during the Lula da Silva and George W. Bush administrations. The group, which at the time was made up of only 10 of the 16 current organizations, also asked that the implementation of the agreement be carried out with the effective participation of civil society in both countries, and not be limited only to government actions.

One of the results of the meeting between Presidents Lula and Biden in Washington in February of this year was the announcement of the resumption of JAPER, as requested in the letter sent to both presidents on the eve of the meeting between the two leaders.

The subsequent months were followed by several engagements between the Black Movements and the Brazilian Governments, which resulted in the group's participation in the official relaunch of the JAPER in May 2023. Further, the group participated in official

negotiation meetings with the Brazilian government, the US government, and US Civil Society organizations on this matter. The WBO played a key role in organizing the movements in preparatory meetings and the organization of joint statements containing the position of the Brazilian Black movements on which topics should be prioritized within the initiative, as well as which activities should be implemented within the plan's main pillars.

At the end of 2023, the group was officially nominated to participate in a Technical Working Group of the Ministry of Racial Equality. The WG will deliberate on the official positions of the government towards the agreement. A first meeting of the WG was held on January 26, 2024. An expanded description of the activities held on JAPER can be found [here](#).

- [Beyond JAPER](#)

The articulation to reactivate JAPER and to increase civil society participation in the binational agreement is just one of the international activities that the WBO has developed alongside Black movement organizations.

On March 10, a group of seven Brazilian and foreign organizations promoted in New York a “side event” (category of “parallel event”) to the UN Commission on the Status of Women entitled “The Movements of Brazilian Black Women and their Contributions to the Global Anti-racist Struggle”.

On May 30, eleven organizations from the Brazilian Working Group on Racial Justice presented a letter at the UN Permanent Forum of People of African Descent, held in New York, in which they defended the adoption of a racial reparations agenda that has a Brazilian perspective. Among several points contained in the letter, the group requested that the next session of the Forum take place in Brazil. This UN body was created in 2021, had its first meetings in 2022 in Geneva, and the second set of meetings in 2023 in New York.

On another front, the WBO co-organized the visit to the United States of a delegation made up of fourteen Black movement organizations, which, between May 29 and July 8 was in Washington and New York to expand international cooperation and strengthen the fight against impunity in cases of racial violence in Brazil. The organizations, which are part of the Black Alliance for the End of Violence, with support from the Elas+ Fund, were received, among other interlocutors, by the Office of Western Hemisphere Affairs of the US Department of State, by the Brazilian Mission to the Organization of American States (OAS), the Inter-American Commission on Human



Rights (IACHR), and the Congressional Black Caucus, a group that, since 1969, has brought together members of the U.S. Congress of African descent.

Dialogues with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) took place through meetings with the thematic rapporteurs on the Rights of People of African Descent and against Racial Discrimination and on Economic, Social, Cultural and Environmental Rights (REDESCA), which resulted in the visit to Brazil by the then head of REDESCA, Soledad García Muñoz, who, between the June 11 and 17, was in São Paulo, Brasília, Salvador and Rio de Janeiro. The visit resulted in the presentation of a final report on the situation of human rights in Brazil, in which issues of racial justice are present.

The WBO has also supported the dialogue of Black movements with UNESCO for greater social participation in the Global Forum against Discrimination and Racism, whose 2023 session took place in São Paulo between November 29 and December 1. The group hosted two parallel events at the Global Forum on the Black Movements' challenges, strategies, and fight against racism in Brazil.

- In-Person Gathering and Creation of an International Articulation

Between November and December 2023, in partnership with CEERT and SESC, the WBO hosted the first in-person meeting of the Brazilian Black Movements that are part of our Racial Justice Working Group. The gathering had the goal to evaluate the work that was done through 2023 and establish the next steps for the group. At the end of the meeting, the movements decided to create the International Black Articulation Luiza Bairros, which represents a major milestone towards the independence of the Black Movements in conducting their international advocacy agenda. The Washington Brazil Office will provide technical support to the articulation.

The following organizations make up the WBO Racial Justice Working Group and created the International Black Articulation Luiza Bairros:

- Center for the Study of Labor Relations and Inequalities (CEERT)
- National Coordination of Quilombos Coordination (CONAQ)
- Collective of Black Entities (CEN)
- Agbara Fund
- Geledés - Black Women's Institute
- Peregum Black Reference Institute
- Maria and João Aleixo Institute (IMJA)
- Marielle Franco Institute (IMF)

- Mulheres Negras Decidem (MND)
  - Steve Biko Cultural Institute (ICSB)
  - Data and narrative laboratory about favelas (LabJaca)
  - NZinga Black Women's Collective
  - Observatory of Whiteness
  - ODARA – Black Women’s Institute
  - Redes da Maré
  - UNEAFRO Brazil
- 
- Global Racial Justice Roundtable

In December, the WBO participated in the Global Racial Justice Roundtable, a three-day event organized by the Global Initiative for Justice, Truth and Reconciliation (GIJTR), partnering with the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience (ICSC) and the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVr). The meeting had the participation of civil society leaders from a wide range of countries, representatives of the United Nations Permanent Forum of People of African Descent, government officials, and donors who work on racial justice. The agenda included panel discussions on racism, visits to sites of culture and memory, and the discussion of an assessment tool on racism as a risk factor for atrocity crimes.

### Memory and Democracy Working Group

The WBO has taken a significant step in its commitment to promoting memory and democracy by establishing a working group composed of prominent civil society organizations. This collaborative effort is aimed at addressing critical issues related to the historical memory of Brazil and the preservation of democratic values. The working group consists of the following esteemed organizations: the Center for Economic and Policy Research; Coalizão Brasil por Memória, Verdade, Justiça, Reparação e Democracia; Comissão Arns; Instituto Vladimir Herzog; Artigo 19; and Coletivo RJ Memória, Verdade, Justiça e Reparação. These organizations have come together to pool their expertise and resources, recognizing the importance of their collective mission.

One of the primary objectives of this working group is to advocate for the declassification of all documents pertaining to the Brazilian dictatorship period held by the United States government. In a landmark move, a formal letter making this request was sent to President Biden in July. This bold step signifies the group's determination to shed light on historical events and ensure transparency in the pursuit of truth and justice.

In addition to this initial effort, the working group is actively strategizing and exploring alternative avenues to achieve the declassification, demonstrating a steadfast commitment to preserving Brazil's democratic values and historical memory. The WBO and its collaborating organizations are poised to play a pivotal role in the quest for truth and accountability, setting an inspiring example of international cooperation in the pursuit of democracy and justice.

In December, the WBO organized a significant event in the U.S. Congress. Under the auspices of Representative Velazquez, a congressional briefing was convened, providing a platform for distinguished speakers to expound on the critical importance of the United States declassifying documents related to the Brazilian dictatorship period. Professors James Green and Maria Herminia Tavares, along with Gabrielle Abreu from the Institute Vladimir Herzog, eloquently elucidated the imperative of shedding light on this historical chapter. Their presentations underscored the vital role such declassification plays in acknowledging the truth and fostering accountability. As we march into 2024, the WBO remains resolute in its commitment, declaring that the campaign to declassify these documents will persist, unwavering in its pursuit of justice and historical veracity.

#### [Precautionary Measure for Dom Phillips and Bruno Pereira](#)

In 2022, the WBO and other partners filed for an international precautionary measure with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights for Dom Philipps and Bruno Pereira, who were murdered in the Amazon.

The IACHR granted the international precautionary measure and extended protection to the family members and other environmental defenders threatened in the region. Precautionary measures are meant to protect the leader and co-founder of the Univaja Surveillance Team (EVU), Beto Marubo; Cristóvão Pissango Negreiros, a member of EVU; Univaja's legal counsel, Eliesio da Silva Vargas Marubo; Higson Dias Castelo Branco, an EVU member; anthropologist Juliana Oliveira; Manoel Barbosa da Silva, a Univaja collaborator; lawyer Natália France Neves Carvalho; indigenist Orlando Possuelo; Univaja's coordinator, Paulo Dollis; Univaja's vice-coordinator, Varney Kanamary; and Valdir Estevão Marubo. All of them are in greater vulnerability due to their work in safeguarding the Indigenous peoples of the Javari Valley and their territory, their direct involvement in the search for Bruno Pereira and Dom Phillips, and the demand for justice.

As a result of this precautionary measure, a Joint Working Group was established to implement the protection measures ordered by the IACHR to the Brazilian state. The

creation of a Joint Working Group aims to ensure the safety of the 11 members of the Union of Indigenous Peoples of the Javari Valley (Univaja). Univaja is based in Atalaia do Norte (AM) and gained notoriety due to the murder case of indigenist Bruno Pereira and British journalist Dom Phillips from The Guardian in June of last year.

#### Support in International Visits to the U.S.

The WBO also played a crucial role in supporting the visit of Douglas Belchior (a leader of the Black movement and one of the founders of UNEafro Brazil) to Washington, DC. During his stay in the U.S. capital, Belchior had the opportunity to participate in crucial meetings at the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and in the U.S. Congress. The office provided logistical support, scheduled important meetings with authorities, and offered essential information so that he could share his perspectives on human rights in Brazil. Through this partnership, Douglas Belchior's voice gained greater international prominence, allowing for relevant discussions on human rights and social justice in Brazil to be widely debated in high-level forums.

The WBO demonstrated its commitment to fostering international collaboration and addressing labor issues by providing vital support to a delegation of specialists from Brazil, Colombia, and Argentina during their visit to Washington, D.C. The delegation included esteemed members such as Laura Carla Moisa Elicabide, Marcio Pochmann, and Cecilia Senen Gonzalez. Throughout their visit, these experts engaged in constructive dialogues and consultations with key institutions, including the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, the Department of Labor, and the AFL-CIO. This initiative facilitated a valuable exchange of insights and ideas, furthering the WBO's mission to promote labor rights, cooperation, and advocacy on a regional scale.

In May 2023, the WBO had the pleasure of providing support for the agenda of the Ibirapitanga Institute in the United States. During this working visit, the Institute had the opportunity to visit various museums, research centers, and civil society organizations dedicated to the issues of memory and reparations. The visit facilitated a valuable exchange of knowledge and experiences, allowing representatives of the Ibirapitanga Institute to connect with experts and activists engaged in the promotion of historical justice and the pursuit of redress for past injustices.

In September 2023, the WBO mobilized its team to support the participation of Brazilian civil society in meetings around the UN General Assembly. The following supporting initiatives were held:

- *Assessoria Popular Maria Felipa (APMF)*

The recently affiliated organization, which works on supporting women who face mass incarceration in Brazil, was invited to participate in UN Global Compact meetings in New York. The WBO, in partnership with Columbia University and New York University, organized two events where APMF's representatives presented their work to the academic community.

- *Vladimir Herzog Institute (IVH)*

The São Paulo-based institute focuses its activities on the topics of Human Rights, Democracy, and Freedom of Speech. The WBO helped the institute establish connections with political stakeholders in Washington DC and also promoted an event at Columbia University on how civil society responded to threats against democracy in Brazil.

- *LabJaca and the National Confluency of the Favelas*

LabJaca is one of the affiliated organizations of the WBO. In 2023, the organization partnered with other movements from all over Brazil to establish the National Confluency of the Favelas, which encompasses a wide range of activities and discussions that aim the empowerment of the voices of the people of favelas and peripheral communities on the discussion and proposition of solutions around climate change.

The WBO supported LabJaca in establishing a strategic agenda during their three-week long visit to the United States, which included: accompanying LabJaca team in the Brazil Climate Week event in New York, connecting LabJaca with potential donors (Rockefeller Foundation, JP Morgan, Inter-American Development Bank), establishing connections with relevant political stakeholders (US Department of State, Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives, McLarty Associates, Office of Senator Bernie Sanders), and organizing a large scale event in New York that counted with the participation of nearly 150 activists, potential donors, and political stakeholders. In 2024, the WBO expects to continue its support to the National Confluency of the Favelas in this and other fora, such as the Permanent Forum for the People of African Descent.

- *Minister of Women*

The office provided direct contributions to building a strategic agenda for the Minister of Women, Cida Gonçalves, in New York during the UN General Assembly. Some examples of the supported activities include the Minister's participation in a

meeting with the leadership of the Rockefeller Foundation, as well as a reception for the Minister that was hosted by the Brazil Foundation in New York.

In September, the WBO also played a pivotal role in promoting cross-cultural dialogue and understanding by supporting the participation of Congresswoman Dandara and Fernanda Santiago from the Finance Ministry in the Annual Legislative Conference of the Black Caucus held in Washington, D.C. This initiative showcased the WBO's commitment to facilitating international exchanges on critical issues, particularly those related to racial challenges and inequalities. By providing Congresswoman Dandara and Fernanda Santiago with a platform to speak about Brazil's experiences in addressing these challenges, the WBO contributed to a broader global conversation on strategies for fostering inclusivity and combating systemic inequalities. Moreover, the Annual Legislative Conference served as a valuable opportunity for the Washington Brazil Office to strengthen its ties with Congresswoman Dandara.

### Brazil in Transition Conference

The Brazil in Transition Conference emerged as a hallmark event, epitomizing the Washington Brazil Office's commitment to fostering informed dialogues on critical issues. This two-day conference, co-organized with Georgetown University, served as a dynamic platform where government representatives and civil society leaders converged to deliberate on the nation's trajectory. A series of five engaging roundtables facilitated nuanced discussions, addressing key facets of Brazil's socio-political landscape. The event not only provided a space for diverse perspectives but also fostered meaningful connections among stakeholders dedicated to shaping Brazil's future.

The resounding success of the Brazil in Transition Conference has paved the way for future collaborations. With active participation from both government and civil society, the conference exemplified the power of collaborative efforts in navigating Brazil's complex transitions. Georgetown University, impressed by the impactful dialogue and outcomes, has expressed keen interest in partnering once again for the 2024 edition. This prospect not only underscores the success of the event but also highlights the shared commitment to fostering a deeper understanding of Brazil's evolving landscape through informed, collaborative discourse.

## Freedom of Artistic Expression Workshop

In a pivotal collaboration between Article 19, the WBO, and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), the Freedom of Artistic Expression Workshop unfolded in November 2023. This significant event brought together a diverse array of organizations, including PEN International, Mobile, IFEX, among others, to deliberate on the crucial issue of safeguarding artistic expression. Attended by various rapporteurs from the IACHR, the workshop sought to galvanize efforts toward establishing standards and principles for the defense of artistic expression and the rights of art workers within the Inter-American System of Human Rights.

The workshop witnessed the presence of notable figures deeply invested in the cause of artistic freedom. Maria Marighella, the president of FUNARTE, brought her expertise and advocacy to the table, contributing to the richness of the discussions. Antonio Grassi, a prominent actor from Brazil, added his influential voice to the discussion, emphasizing the need for robust protections for artists. The event not only fostered dialogue among diverse stakeholders but also served as a catalyst for inspiring the IACHR to actively engage in the creation of comprehensive standards that champion the freedom of artistic expression across the Americas.

## Socioenvironmental Agenda

Throughout the year, the WBO maintained engagement with the technical staff of the Natural Resources Committee of the U.S. Congress, advocating against illegal mining in the Amazon. Notably, this advocacy, initiated in August 2021, persisted, and has been bolstered by the regional expertise of Caetano Scannavino from Projeto Saúde e Alegria, an organization affiliated to the WBO.

In October 2023, the WBO was contacted by Congresswoman Dandara Tonantzin's office and initiated discussions in response to the pressing need to internationalize efforts for the defense of the Cerrado. Recognizing the critical importance of this request, the WBO has been actively collaborating with the Congresswoman's office and the Rede Cerrado, a coalition of organizations dedicated to the protection of the Cerrado, Indigenous, and Quilombola Peoples. Subsequently, a comprehensive concept note crafted by the WBO was submitted and received funding approval from the Congresswoman's office. Currently, the WBO is refining the concept note to enhance its scope and impact, with plans for project implementation set to start in the middle of the year.



In November 2023, the WBO played a pivotal role in the launch of the 'Caucus for the Planet' initiative, spearheaded by Congresswoman Célia Xakriabá at COP28 in Dubai. Focused on rallying parliamentarians worldwide to combat climate change and champion the rights of Indigenous Peoples and traditional communities, this initiative relied on the WBO's extensive network. The WBO facilitated connections between Congresswoman Xakriabá's office and parliamentarians from the US and EU, garnering crucial support. Notably, the German Member of the European Parliament, Representative Kathrin Henneberger, emerged as the sole non-LAC parliamentarian to endorse the Caucus for the Planet, underscoring the impact of the WBO's strategic engagement.

Also in November, Aruac Filmes reached out to the WBO for assistance in broadening the reach of three short films highlighting the Yanomami Peoples, to be showcased in Washington, D.C. Directed by Indigenous filmmakers, these films have garnered acclaim at numerous festivals across Europe, the US, and Brazil. In collaboration with the Embassy of Brazil, the film "Mãri Hi - The Tree of Dream," based on a narrative written by Davi Kopenawa, will be prominently featured at the Reach to Forest and the Justice Forum at the Kennedy Center on February 20th and 21st, 2024. The WBO is coordinating the screenings while concurrently mobilizing funds to enable Mr. Kopenawa and director Morzaniel Iramari to participate in Q&A sessions in person. In anticipation of their potential attendance, the WBO aims to develop a congressional advocacy agenda for them to address issues concerning illegal mining in the Amazon and the ethical responsibilities of buyers, including various US corporations, towards gold and other natural resources.

## RESEARCH FELLOWS PROGRAM

In February 2023, the WBO published a call for applications for the 2023/2024 cohort of its Fellows Program, taking another step in consolidating the organization as a think tank that specializes in Brazilian topics in Washington, DC. All applications included the submission of a work plan, as well as a commitment to producing content related to the WBO's seven programmatic areas (with racial issues being one of them) and engagement in other activities conducted by thematic programs. Currently, the office has 19 Research Fellows.



The fellows had five general meetings throughout 2023, in which they debated on topics such as: racial discrimination, far right extremism, and Brazilian Foreign Policy. The research fellows also actively contributed to the WBO weekly newsletters.

## MEDIA PRESENCE

The WBO is increasingly receiving more space in the media. In the first semester of the year, 35 news reports, interviews, or opinion articles mentioning the WBO and the organization's work were published in the mainstream media. Some of the most prominent media outlets that covered our work were: *O Globo*, *Folha de S.Paulo*, *Valor*, *Veja*, *BBC*, *CNN*, *Correio Braziliense*, *Piauí*, *UOL*, and *Nexo*. Foreign publications like *The Guardian* (United Kingdom) and *RTVE* (Spain), also reported on the WBO's activities.

Hundreds of posts were published on the WBO's Twitter account, some of which were retweeted by political figures, such as the Brazilian Congressman André Janones (with over 1 million followers), Senator Randolfe Rodrigues (with 989,000 followers), and Congresswoman Sâmia Bomfim (with 663,000 followers). During 2023, the number of WBO's Twitter followers increased from 3,000 at the end of 2022 to 3,409 in December 2023.

The organization also began to have accounts on two social media platforms: Instagram and LinkedIn, attracting new followers beyond interactions on Twitter (3,401 followers), which had been the main network for the WBO. The Instagram account was created on November 28 and gained 95 followers in just over a month. The LinkedIn account was also created at the end of November and garnered 24 followers in the same period.

The website had approximately 32,000 visitors in 2023. This number was primarily driven by news of a letter signed by American lawmakers in support of democracy in Brazil in January, which led to a peak of nearly 12,000 website visits in that month. A peak in website visits also happened around the conference organized with Georgetown.

Fifty-six issues of the WBO's weekly newsletter were published. The newsletter's audience grew from 2,163 subscribers in January 2023 to almost 2,300 subscribers throughout the year. The percentage of readers who actually open the newsletter is around 38%, a rate that is approximately 10 percentage points above the average for this type of

institutional publication. The podcast "Brazil Unfiltered" had 7 editions in the second semester of 2023. July was the last month with biweekly editions of the podcast. Since then, the program has become monthly.

## FUNDRAISING EFFORTS

The year 2023 marked a pivotal year for the Washington Brazil Office (WBO), characterized by timid growth in our fundraising endeavors. Our journey in the past year, marked by the hiring of a dedicated fundraiser, was defined by a dual focus: deepening existing partnerships and charting new territories in donor engagement.

Our commitment to nurturing long standing relationships bore fruit, exemplified by the renewed support from Open Society Foundations, Instituto Ibirapitanga, and Instituto Galo da Manhã. The trust and loyalty of our individual donors were further solidified, reflecting the resonance of our mission with their values. A landmark achievement was the addition of Samambaia Filantropias to our community of supporters, signaling our expanding influence in the realm of philanthropy.

The WBO engaged in meaningful dialogues with potential partners like the National Endowment for Democracy and the Rockefeller Foundation, setting the stage for future collaborations. Prospects such as Porticus, Fundación Avina and Skoll Foundation, among others, were identified, laying groundwork for diversifying our funding streams. A spectrum of entities including the Oak Foundation, Ford Foundation, Luminate, and others were pinpointed as potential allies in our cause and began the groundwork for engagement.

The WBO ventured into governmental and multilateral funding opportunities applying for call for proposals of the US Department of State, United Nations Democracy Fund, European Union, and various embassies, aligning our mission and projects with their strategic interests whenever convergence was identified.

The strategic hiring of a dedicated fundraiser enhanced our ability to secure vital grants and foster new donor relationships, marking a significant step in our organizational development. As we forge into 2024, our goal is to deepen these existing connections and explore new avenues of funding, ensuring the continued success and expansion of our impactful projects.

In summary, 2023 was a year where the WBO not only grew its fundraising capabilities but also laid a strong foundation for future growth and impact, driven by strategic planning, effective relationship-building, and a clear vision for the future.

