

Cases in the Supreme Court.

In 2013, Conectas continued to step up its engagement with the Supreme Court (STF) with the use of *amicus curiae* briefs, legal instruments that allow civil society to present its views and opinions to the court justices in an attempt to inform and influence their decisions. Conectas continues to monitor and present new *amicus curiae* briefs on a wide range of topics, including *quilombola* communities (Quilombos are settlements founded by escaped slaves before the abolishment of slavery in Brazil. Today, they are inhabited mostly by their descendants), the slave labor blacklist, decriminalization of drug use, the solitary confinement and stable homosexual unions, among others. All the *amicus curiae* briefs and other cases of strategic litigation presented by Conectas are now available on the organization's online platform, [STF in Focus](#).

Transparency and civil society participation in the Supreme Court.

As part of its strategy in 2013 to contribute to the transparency and civil society participation in the appointment of Supreme Court justices, Conectas and partner organizations presented 11 questions to senators during the confirmation hearing of Justice Luis Roberto Barroso in the Senate. Of the 11 questions, 7 were asked by the senators. [Read more here and here](#).



How the appointment process works:

the process begins with a nomination, by the Presidency of the Republic, of a candidate for the vacancy. The only criteria constitutionally established for this choice are for the candidate to be between 35 and 65 years old and have 'outstanding legal knowledge' and an 'unblemished reputation'. The nomination is published in the Federal Gazette and submitted to the Senate, where the candidate is subject to a confirmation hearing in the Constitution and Justice Commission (CCJ) of the house before being approved in the full Senate. Finally, the candidate is appointed Supreme Court Justice by a Presidential Act.

