

**CONECTAS EMPLOYS A NUMBER OF** different strategies to defend the human rights of the prison population against the systematic violations endured by this segment of the population on account of the country's flawed prison system and inefficient democratic institutions:

## **Pedrinhas Case.**

Late in 2013, one of the worst crises in the Brazilian prison system erupted at the Pedrinhas Prison Complex, in the state of Maranhão, where more than 60 inmates had been killed over the course of the year. Since then, Conectas and partner organizations have defended [federal intervention](#) in the prison and the [federalization](#) of the crimes committed there. Read more [here](#). Conectas also launched an offensive in the national and [international](#) media to expose and galvanize public opinion on the Pedrinhas case and the Brazilian prison system as a whole. The organization also used the [Freedom of Information Law](#) to request details from the Maranhão state authorities on each of the crimes committed in Pedrinhas.



**ON THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL,** Conectas and partners presented the 'Pedrinhas Case' and made an oral statement – during the 25th session of the UN Human Rights Council – on the killings and human rights abuses committed at the prison. Read more [here](#). Conectas also joined forces with a Maranhão state partner organization to work together on updating information on the unnatural deaths occurred at Pedrinhas to complement a [precautionary measure](#) issued by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights of the IACHR in December 2013.

In early July, 2014, Conectas and partner organizations conducted another inspection of the Pedrinhas complex, where another 12 unnatural deaths were recorded in the first six months of the year – 3 of which occurred while the inspection was underway. The inspectors concluded that Brazil had not complied with the precautionary measure issued by the OAS Commission. Read more [here](#). Conectas will continue to monitor the case closely.



## **Combating Mass Incarceration & Criminalization of Poverty.**

In Brazil, the so-called war on drugs is, in fact, an effective means of [criminalizing poverty](#) and black youth. Conectas has challenged attempts by the Legislative to throwback the law even further, such as [Bill No. 7.663/10](#), that proposes to increase prison sentences for drug use. In March 2014, Conectas participated in the first [thematic hearing](#) on drug policies in Latin America, when the organization had the opportunity to expose the legal setbacks in Brazil.



**CONECTAS ALSO CONTINUES TO SUPPORT** the unconstitutionality of article 28 of the Drug Law (Law No. 11,343/2006), which bans the consumption of drugs. In an *amicus curiae* brief presented to the Supreme Court in 2012, Conectas and partner organizations defended the unconstitutionality of the article and demonstrated how the current drug policy causes mass incarceration and the unequal treatment of whites and blacks, rich and poor. The case is expected to be heard by the Supreme Court in the second half of 2014.

### **Prison Visits & Inspections.**

Conectas is a member of the Community Council – the only body formed by public officials and civil society that has free access to Brazilian prisons. Once the visits have been completed, Conectas reports on the violations to the prison sentence enforcement authorities. More recently, in September 2013, the Associate Director of Conectas was appointed to the CNPCP (National Criminal and Prison Policy Council) of the Ministry of Justice, a body that examines and monitors prison conditions and recommends improvements to prison sentence enforcement standards.

