Universal Periodic Review
June 2012 - Brazil

National Coalition of World Cup and Olympics Popular Committees - Human rights violations in the context of Megaevents (World Cup and Olympic Games) – JOINT UPR SUBMISSION – BRAZIL

November 28 2011

The National Coalition of World Cup and Olympics Popular Committees is a national coalition that brings together local and regional committees located in these mega-events host-cities. Its main work consists in collect, organize and denounce human rights violations perpetrated as a consequence of the preparatory works for the games. Justiça Global (Global Justice) is a Brazilian non-governmental human rights organization founded in 1999 and based in Rio de Janeiro. The organization works to protect and promote human rights, as well as to strengthen civil society and democracy by: denouncing human rights violations, advocating for public policy formation processes based on fundamental rights, stimulating the strengthening of democratic institutions and demanding the guarantee of rights for marginalized populations and victims of human rights violations.

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Submission by the National Coalition of World Cup and Olympics Popular Committee for the 2012 UPR of Brazil, with respect to Mega-Events in Brazil

Introduction

1. In spite of constituting an undeniable victory in terms of international recognition, the recent selection of Brazil to host the 2014 World Cup, and of Rio de Janeiro to host the 2016 Olympic Games, has brought about a series of complications and human rights violations in the national arena. We can highlight three main categories of problems, relating to: (i) the right to adequate housing, (ii) new legislation and (iii) workers’ rights.

2. The question of financing is another major problem relating to Brazil’s upcoming mega-events. One of the principal financers, mainly in cases of stadium construction in host-cities, is the National Bank for Economic and Social Development – BNDES. The fact that part of BNDES’ money comes from the Workers’ Support Fund – FAT, and that the rights of workers are being systematically violated (described in greater detail below), shows a clear contradiction in the financing body’s operation. A serious complaint is one of a lack of transparency and the absence of a policy to guarantee the right of access to information. Cases of involving overpricing schemes have already been denounced. The Union Audit Court – TCU and the Comptroller General of the Union identified overpricing schemes in the construction of the Manaus (AM) stadium. In Rio de Janeiro, TCU recommended that BNDES suspend its distribution of resources for the new Transcarioca highway – to be built for the Olympic Games – until the construction works come into compliance with the terms of environmental regulations. The works continued without interruption.¹

Resistance, Organization and Methodology

3. Since the organization of the Urban Social Forum,² carried out in parallel with the Urban World Forum,³ which occurred in 2010 in the city of Rio de Janeiro, various civil society organizations and movements – NGOs that work with human rights, nationally and internationally, nuclei of research and university departments, grassroots movements, individuals who support the cause and many other actors – began to actively discuss forms of resistance to the imposition of a city model that excludes and stigmatizes, especially for the purpose of hosting mega-events.

4. The experience of the Pan-American Games in 2007 in Rio de Janeiro was a demonstration of this model. Arbitrary evictions, a lack of transparency and an aggressive security policy – coming to be known as the Pan Massacre – serve as a lesson and warning for those interested in guaranteeing the city as a democratic space. At the time of the 2007 Pan-American Games, we had created the Pan Social Committee,⁴ and the current Committees work in continuation of this kind of initiative.

5. As a form of resistance in the face of these and other illegal acts committed because of upcoming mega-events, civil society has been organizing. The main form by which resistance has been manifested is through the creation of the Peoples’ Committees, with branches in São Paulo,⁵ Belo Horizonte,⁶ Brasília,⁷ Curitiba,⁸ Fortaleza,⁹ Manaus,¹⁰ Porto Alegre,¹¹ Pernambuco,¹² Rio de Janeiro¹³ and Salvador¹⁴.

6. Now, with the quickly approaching World Cup and Olympic Games and their subsequent impacts in a great number of cities, the peoples’ organization has spread throughout the entire country. The goal is to combat, among many other violations, the lack of information surrounding the impacts of mega-events. While the administrative acts that affect the rights
of the population are many, the government does not clearly and systematically present the measures it is adapting and intends to adopt in the future.

7. The people remain in the dark about what might happen to their houses, work and living conditions, particularly in the poorest section of the host-city. In order to attempt to mitigate this problem, the Committees have had as one of their principal activities the collection and systematization of human rights violations that have occurred as a result of the mega-events, as can be seen by visiting the web pages of the local Committees. At the present moment, each Committee is actively collecting data surrounding the local situation, and the national articulation of these data plans to organize and publish a national report denouncing the serious human rights violations resulting from the realization of mega-events. It remains to be seen whether we will have an urban and social policy that is more transparent and democratic.

**Forced Evictions and Affected Communities**

8. The achievement of the mega-events depends on the fulfillment of a series of requirements by the International Olympic Committee – IOC, and by the Fédération Internationale de Football Association – FIFA, in order to prepare the city to host the Olympic Games. The principal obligations require the host-city’s government to carry several different construction projects and urban interventions. The removal of communities begins with a quick and efficient process of convincing part of the residents to leave a given location. Nonetheless, such convincing almost always occurs in conjunction with coercion and threats, making the words almost synonymous.

9. The mega-events have yet to begin; nonetheless, they are already leaving their legacies – which are not necessarily positive – throughout the city. The various construction projects predicted to occur (and others which are already underway), on first glance seem important for urban mobility. Still, these construction projects have caused the massive relocation of innumerous communities, which were formerly located in the project’s path. It is important to mention that these removals were never previously discussed with residents of these locations. In Rio de Janeiro, such is the case of the construction of the Transoeste highway, which will link Barra da Tijuca to Santa Cruz. Due to such construction project, the following three communities have practically already disappeared: Vila Harmonia, Vila Recreio II and Notre Dame.

10. The communities of Vila Recreio II and Vila Harmonia were originally comprised of hundreds of families, which had occupied the area for 40 years (on average). As a result of construction of the Transoeste highway, the City Government began an aggressive campaign to forcefully evict residents from these communities. In the case of Restinga, according to statements by residents, on July 22, 2010, some of the residents were notified by the City Government that, because of the Transoeste highway construction, they were required to leave their community within five days. The community’s residential houses were eligible for indemnification; however, the community’s commercial establishments were demolished without any kind of compensation. During the second semester of 2010 and the beginning of 2011, both communities became practically extinct because of City Government action. There are residents who have still not received reparation for the harms they incurred.

11. This fact was even highlighted by the UN Special Rapporteur on adequate housing Raquel Rolnik. The City Rapporteur of the Dhesca Platform made a visit to Rio de Janeiro in May of this year, culminating in an extensive report denouncing the atrocities committed against communities throughout the city. The report denounces several violations, including that: evictions were frequently conducted without any prior indemnification payment; residents were routinely threatened; and, there existed no discussion with community members prior to
evictions. The same has been repeated in other cities, such as São Paulo and Cuiabá, among others.

12. In the case of Paraná, according to the report drafted by the Peoples’ World Cup Committee of Curitiba, the construction of the Metropolitan Highway will cause the removal of more than one thousand houses.

13. In Belo Horizonte, a report drafted by the Group for Studies on Environmental Themes affirms that the installation of a new public transport system will cause the removal of hundreds of residences. Residents denounce the lack of information available and the low indemnification values provided.

14. Also in Belo Horizonte, the construction project for an overpass occupies a space formerly inhabited by 65 families, in the community of Vila Recanto UFMG. In 2009, judicial decision ordered the return of community’s the land to the landowner, not recognizing the rights of prescription of residents of Vila Recanto UFMG. Tense negotiations between the City Government and families lasted for several months. Residents complained of a lack of dialogue and transparency on the part of the City Government and, principally, insufficient compensation for removal.

15. Other construction projects in Belo Horizonte for the World Cup that are expected to begin in 2012 will affect the communities of Vila da Paz and Vila da Luz, where 2600 families currently live. Furthermore, representatives of the quilombola (ex-slave) community of Mangueiras demonstrate deep concern with respect to the future of their community, in light of the construction projects for the World Cup. Other urban occupations faced with the threat of removal feel threatened by the urban revitalization process that the city is undergoing, such as: Camilo Torres (140 families), Irmã Dorothy (130 families), Torres Gêmeas (180 families) e Dandara (900 families). At a public hearing on the social impacts of the 2014 World Cup, Dandara residents reported rumors of a construction project of a soccer training facility and hotel in the center of the occupation, which worried many residents.

16. Finally, on October 21, 2011, 24 houses in the community of Zilah Sp’osito in Belo Horizonte were demolished, and families evicted, without judicial order – which was denounced by the Public Defender’s Office for Human Rights, which filed a preliminary injunction to prohibit further illegal demolitions. The de-occupation carried out in a forced and unplanned way by the City Government causes social movements to accuse the executive power of acting impulsively for real estate market speculation tied to the games, as well as for the practice of sterilization of poverty in several areas of the city.

17. In Fortaleza, a procedure of forced evictions due to construction projects for the transportation sector – promoting a special organizational structure geared toward tourists and fans but nevertheless turning a blind eye toward the local population. More specifically, the city’s investment plan for the World Cup foresees the integration of the metro with buses, which will require the widening of several avenues and cause the relocation of residents living at the street margins. Still, plans for this construction project have not been openly discussed, and it is unknown who will be the affected or benefited population, and indemnification amounts have yet to be negotiated with residents.

18. In Porto Alegre, the community of Vila Dique is currently being removed for the expansion of runways for the Salgado Filho airport. The community has existed in this location for more than thirty years and is comprised of one thousand families, 400 of which were already transferred and another 500 of which await the same transfer procedure. The removal process began over one year ago, and the transferred residents complain of poor conditions in the location to which they were relocated. Among the principal complaints are houses with cracked walls and an overall lack of basic public services.
19. In the case of Salvador, a report drafted by the Regional Engineering Board of Bahia, together with other entities, denounces, among others: the inexistence of an environmental impact study and a neighborhood impact study for the construction project that will be carried out in the city, the lack of respect for the norms relating to accessibility and the removal of housing occupations due to several World Cup related construction projects.

20. The 2014 World Cup Peoples’ Forum in Manaus has been denouncing the lack of information available with respect to several of the construction projects to be carried out due to the upcoming mega-event. From the managing coordinator of the City Government responsible for the 2014 World Cup, the Forum requests information relating to the construction of the BRT – the same transport system implemented in Rio de Janeiro which spurned the removal of the communities of Vila Harmonia and Restinga – regarding the number of families that will be affected and how the related negotiations will be carried out. The Forum also requests information relating the construction of the Amazônia Arena – a stadium to be built for the World Cup – and the monorail transport system.

21. In Cuiabá, due to the construction projects relating to the implementation of the BRT in the city, expected relieve traffic blockages throughout Cuiabá, residents of potential areas of removal are living with great uncertainty, not knowing what will happen to their homes and communities, nor how the removal processes will be carried out.

New Laws

22. Another aspect of the mega-events is the creation of new laws as a result of FIFA requirements. The problem with this relates not to the promulgation of new laws per se, but rather to the fact that these laws, in order to meet the expectations of the international organization, overrun already-existing national law provisions and open the door for new violations. In the national context, two new laws can be highlighted: (i) the creation of the Differentiated Public Hiring Regime and (ii) the General World Cup bill, which is currently pending before National Congress.

23. The first law – which is already the target of complaints within the Federal Supreme Court in the form of a direct unconstitutionality action proposed by the Federal Public Prosecutor’s Office – creates an opening in the Brazilian bidding process, allowing the Public Power to hire services and carry out construction projects without a clear definition of purpose of such projects. Furthermore, it is not clear what the scope of the new law is, appearing opens space for the Government to use the law in cases that should not be covered by the same. It is important to underscore that, according to the governing body, this new law may be misconstrued so as to do away with the environmental license requirement.

24. The General World Cup law is the target of most striking criticisms, which can be divided into seven topics: creating a differentiated protection scheme for industrial property with respect to FIFA’s symbols, allowing the almost automatic control over any expression that the organization wants to have exclusive right to; permitting FIFA to be the exclusive rights holder for images, sound and radio broadcasting, wherein FIFA would be able to bar the entry of press into any locations it desires; creating a restricted commercial area within which only FIFA and persons indicated thereby would be able to carry out commercial sales; giving to FIFA the power to unilaterally set prices, in violation of Brazilian national laws that seek to facilitate access to events by students and the elderly; creating three new types of penalties and creating the possibility of having special courts designated specifically for causes relating to the sporting events; conceding visas almost automatically for the event participants, independent of how such were regulated before; and, finally, holding the Union responsible for any harms or damages incurred by FIFA during the event.

Workers’ Rights
25. Even recognizing that the upcoming mega-events create new opportunities for thousands of Brazilians, they mega-events cannot be carried out in disrespect of the rights of these workers. One of the principal union bodies in Brazil, the CUT, signed and disclosed a letter repudiating the repression of workers carried out in virtue of the upcoming mega-events.xxxvii In the letter, CUT denounced the way in which the informal workers are treated and will be treated during the mega-events, being that, as expressed above, they cannot work in areas considered to be of exclusive FIFA domain.

26. The civil construction worker labor unions also presented a list of complaints, highlighting the need for more equitable salaries, additional night-shifts and better work and health conditions.xxxviii FIFA itself was already alerted as to the very poor work conditions in the construction sites for the World Cup, as well as to the possibility of new strikes.xxxix Belo Horizonte and Rio de Janeiro already had workers’ strikes by virtue of their work conditions, and in Brasília and Pernambuco, the construction works were temporarily suspended as a result of the same kind of problems.

27. An especially dramatic example of the workers’ situations in the upcoming mega-event construction projects is that of Porto Alegre. On worker was killed by being run-over in the route between his housing accommodation and the construction site, causing revolts and a subsequent fire in the worksite dormitory.xliv Because of this fact, and due to several other denunciations made by workers, the Public Prosecutor’s Office for Labor undertook to submit a request for information with respect to the implantation of supervision in the worksite dormitories.xlv The complicated local situation caused approximately 150 workers to request to be laid-off.xlvi

28. Another example of violations of workers’ rights includes the situation surrounding the first large construction project for the World Cup in Belo Horizonte: reform of the Governor Magalhães Pinto stadium (“Mineirão”). Some small construction projects for the stadium already began in February 2010. Since June 2010, the stadium has been closed for further structural interventions. Also since that time, owners of the small commercial stands that were set up around the stadium at game-time have been without work. In public hearings promoted by the Federal Public Prosecutor’s Office, representatives of the Association of Stand-Sellers around Mineirão relay that approximately 150 families are having difficulty generating enough income to sustain their families. At the hearing, the stand-sellers demanding that the City Government provide a support stipend for the term of the stadium’s closure and guarantee that the workers be allowed to continue working around the stadium upon its re-inauguration, and especially during the FIFA World Cup.xlvii

Public Security

29. With respect to public security, the Government indicated that it will use the Army to help provide security during the World Cup and the Olympic Games.xlviii The use of military forces suggests the upcoming mega-events are heading in the direction of a possible repetition of the security tactics used in 2007 during the Pan-American Games – ones which resulted in the assassination of 19 individuals in the community of Complexo do Alemão on June 27, 2007, also known as the Pan Massacre.xlix

Public Defender’s Office

30. An important change in Rio de Janeiro’s landscape involves the weakening of the Nucleus of Land and Housing of the Public Defenders Office of the State of Rio de Janeiro – NUTH. NUTH was the main body responsible for the legal defense of community members under threat of, or in the process of, forced eviction – therefore working closely with the communities affected by construction projects relating to the city’s preparations to host part of the World Cup and the entire Olympic Games. By means of a professional, ethical and
proactive stance, the public defenders of NUTH were at one time able to slow down and stop some of the public entities’ attempts at arbitrary eviction.

31. In spite of the City Government having been able to, in many instances, revert decisions that were favorable to community residents and carry out the eviction of many community members defended by NUTH, at that time, the work carried out by NUTH was undeniably important. Nonetheless, exactly because of the high quality of services it provided to the population, NUTH began to be targeted by the Public Defenders Office itself.

32. The Public Defender General was substituted for another, and, as a consequence, a change occurred in the perceived role of the Public Defenders Office as working together with peoples’ movements. The result included a transformation in the composition of NUTH, in retaliation for the group’s previous operations. According to the former coordinator of NUTH, Roberta Fraenkel, who was fired from the organization before the general change in the organization’s composition, her removal was brought about by the fact that she did not agree with the way in which Justice was being achieved: with disregard for the law.

33. Following Roberta’s removal, as well as the firing of another four defenders, NUTH’s center for assistance closed its doors, and security guards impeded access thereto by defenders and interns alike. Subsequently, all of the interns who had worked at NUTH were informed that they were being fired, by means of a letter dated as of May 1, or Labor Day – stating that the interns had not fulfilled their internship responsibilities.

34. Thus, although it may be possible to imagine that some changes carried out by the Government were necessary, one cannot lose sight of the fact that the only legal defense that had worked on behalf of the communities of Rio de Janeiro was dismantled by the Brazilian State itself, making it very difficult to mount a strong institutional resistance as described in our previous letter.

Recommendations for Brazil

35. Require strategies for monitoring human rights impacts throughout the organization of the upcoming mega-events and after such events occur

36. Require procedures to investigate and sanction violations of human rights standards and to offer redress to victims

37. Set up regulations and procedures to prevent forced evictions, discrimination and harassment against local populations in connection with the upcoming mega-events

38. Select sponsors for the upcoming mega-events according to detailed criteria, taking into account company records concerning corporate social responsibility and respect for international human rights standards – giving priority to corporations that have appropriate codes of conduct or social corporate responsibility initiatives

39. In contractual agreements with sponsors, partners and private companies for the preparation of the upcoming mega-events, incorporate contractual clauses that regulate the actions of these corporations in conformity with human rights standards, wherein: (i) explicit provisions should be incorporated to prevent corporations from executing forced evictions, harassing or intimidating local populations or discriminating against vulnerable groups; and (ii) corporations should be held accountable and redress should be provided to the victims of any abuse resulting therefrom

40. Consider mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating compliance with these standards by all relevant stakeholders involved in the upcoming mega-events; investigate and sanction abuses; and establish complaint procedures

41. Gear projects toward the construction of effective links of integration of the city with low-income and marginalized communities, placing such at the center of urban politics during the preparation for the upcoming mega-events and after such events occur
42. Protect and guarantee social rights, starting with public investments in the fields of education, culture, jobs creation, income, security and housing
43. Ensure that investments made for the preparation of the cities are well managed
44. Create legacies of Civil Society Participation or “The Great Capacity of Mobilization of Citizens in Defense of the Interests of the Greater Good”
45. Make advancements in the organization of social movements in the fight for the construction of a just and democratic city
46. Avoid the pitfalls of Pan 2007 in the upcoming mega-events
47. Create a network capable of producing a space for public debate in order to achieve social cohesion instead of an alternative discourse which allows for consensual and collective action
48. Ensure oversight at every step of planning for the upcoming mega-events
49. Make information accessible to civil society
50. Make sure that displacement actions are monitored by public bodies such as the Public Ministry, Public Defense Office, Human Rights Commission of the Legislative Assembly and of the Federal Congress and the Special Secretary of Human Rights, in addition to other independent institutions such as the Federal and Order of Brazilian Attorneys, which may supervise the action of police officers and the Armed Forces

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1 Data obtained from the report from the workshop, “BNDES and the mega-events,” of December 24, 2010.
4 See: http://www.oocities.org/br/fporj.
15 Interview with Restinga resident Michel Souza Santos, December 29, 2010.


Ibid.

Report by UN Special Rapporteur on adequate housing, 2011b.

GESTA Report, supra note xi.


GESTA Report, supra note xi.


Ibid.


In this regard, it is worth mentioning the report that one of the communities assisted by the new NUTH had to hire a private attorney because the public defenders said that they could not do anything to stop the eminent displacement. The private attorney was able to stop the state action. See *Ausência de atuação do NUTH quase remove comunidade* [“Absence of Performance by NUTH Almost Removes a Community”], National Movement in the Fight for Housing – MNLM (May 25, 2011), available at http://mnlmrj.blogspot.com/2011/05/ausencia-de-atuacao-do-nuth-quase.html (last visited November 28, 2011).

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xlvii GESTA Report, supra note xi.


l *RJ changes the nucleus that questioned the construction projects for the Olympic Games – Group of public defenders sought justice against the removal of favelas for projects relating to road construction*, Folha de São Paulo (May 10, 2011).


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