

**Dear Colleagues: Below is a petition that is being circulated internationally. If you would like to sign it, please send your name to: [James.Green@brown.edu](mailto:James.Green@brown.edu) or to [cawelch@unifesp.br](mailto:cawelch@unifesp.br)**

## **Brazilian Democracy Is Seriously Threatened**

We, the undersigned academics, students, and scholars, living and working in the United States, Europe, and other parts of the world, who are specialists in Latin American studies, are alarmed at the current political situation in Brazil, which poses a serious threat to democracy.

Since 1985, Brazil has been enjoying the longest period of democratic stability in its history, following a coup d'état in 1964 and a violent military dictatorship that lasted twenty-one years. Under the aegis of the 1988 Constitution, which guarantees a wide range of social and individual rights, Brazil has become a more democratic society, with greater political participation, broader and more inclusive notions of citizenship, and the strengthening public institutions.

In spite of these advances, corruption remains endemic. A series of scandals involving politicians of different party affiliations have outraged the public.

As a result, there have been widespread mobilizations demanding an end to illicit practices. There have also been bold actions by state institutions, such as the Federal Police, the Federal Prosecutors Service, and the Judiciary.

The combat against corruption is legitimate and necessary to improve the responsiveness of Brazilian democracy. But in the current political climate, we find a serious risk that the rhetoric of anti-corruption has been used to destabilize the current democratically-elected government, further aggravating the serious economic and political crisis that the country is facing.

Instead of retaining political neutrality and respecting due process, sectors of the Judiciary, with the support of major media interests, have become protagonists in undermining the rule of law. During their investigations, some public officials have violated basic rights of citizens, such as the presumption of innocence, the assurance of an impartial judiciary, attorney-client privilege, and the guarantee of the right to privacy.

The *Lava Jato* Operation, led by the federal judge Sérgio Moro, has centralized the principal corruption investigations over the last two years. These investigations have been marred by repeated excesses and unjustified measures, such as arbitrary preventive detentions, dubious and problematic plea-bargaining agreements, selective leaking of information to the media for political purposes, and the illegal wiretapping of both the current President of the Republic and the most recent former president.

All of this has taken place with the sustained support of powerful sectors of the media in an unprecedented effort to influence public opinion for specific political ends. *The combat against corruption must be carried out within strict legal limits that protect the basic rights of the accused.*

The violation of democratic procedure represents a serious threat to democracy. When the armed forces overthrew the government of President João Goulart in 1964, they used the combat against corruption as one of their justifications. Brazil paid a high price for twenty-one years of military rule. The fight for a democratic country has been long and arduous. Today, all those who believe in a democratic Brazil need to speak out against these arbitrary measures that threaten to erode the progress made over the course of the last three decades.

*March 24, 2016*

*Organized by James N. Green and Renan Quinalha*

1. Alexandra Isfahani-Hammond, University of California, San Diego
2. Amy C. Lind, University of Cincinnati

3. André Carpinelli, Universidade de Lisboa
4. Andrea Allen, University of Western Ontario
5. Andrea Laplane, CEPAL
6. Anthony Bagues, Brown University
7. Aviva Chomsky, Salem State University
8. Barbara Glowzewski, École des hautes études en sciences sociales
9. Barbara Weinstein, New York University
10. Benjamin Arthur Cowan, George Mason University
11. Benjamin Junge, State University of New York, New Paltz
12. Brodwyn Fischer, University of Chicago
13. Bruno Carvalho, Princeton University
14. Bryan McCann, Georgetown University
15. Camila Maroja, Brown University
16. Carolina Sá Carvalho, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill
17. Cecilia Santos, University of San Francisco; University of Coimbra
18. Charles A. Perrone, University of Florida
19. Christopher Dunn, Tulane University
20. Claudia Damasceno, École des hautes études en sciences sociales
21. Clifford Andrew Welch, Universidade Federal de São Paulo
22. Colin Snider, University of Texas, Tyler
23. Cristina M. Mehrrens, University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth
24. Débora Ferreira, Utah Valley University
25. Deborah Levenson, Boston College
26. Edith Wolfe, Tulane University
27. Elizabeth Hordge-Freeman, The University of South Florida
28. Elizabeth Leeds, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
29. Federico Tarragoni, Université Paris Diderot
30. Flora Thomson-Deveaux, Brown University
31. [Francis Virginio, PhD candidate, University of Strathclyde, UK.](#)
32. Germán Vergara, Brown University
33. Geraldo Renigue, City University of New York
34. Geri Augusto, Brown University
35. Gianpaolo Baiocchi, New York University
36. Giacomo Pirazzoli, University of Florence
37. Gillian McGillivray, York University, Canada
38. Gladys Mitchell, University of Wisconsin Milwaukee
39. Graciela Montaldo, Columbia University
40. Ivonne del Valle, University of California, Berkeley.
41. James N. Green, Brown University
42. James Woodard, Montclair State University
43. Jeffrey W. Rubin, Boston University
44. Joel Wolfe, University of Massachusetts, Amherst
45. John Chasteen, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill
46. John Collins, Queens College, CUNY
47. John L. Hammond, Hunter College and Graduate Center, CUNY
48. John Samuel Burdick, Syracuse University
49. John Womack, Jr., Harvard University
50. Joseph Jay Sosa, University of Chicago
51. Judy Bieber, University of New Mexico
52. Karin Schneider, The New School
53. Kathy Swart, Pierce College
54. Keisha-Khan Perry, Brown University
55. Kirsten Wald, Harvard University
56. Leah VanWey, Brown University

57. Leandro Benmergui, State University of New York, Purchase
58. Leo Garofalo, Connecticut College
59. Liliana Feirstein, Humboldt Universität, Berlin
60. Livia Streit, Auburn University
61. Louis Forline, Univ. of Nevada-Reno
62. Luis Figueroa-Martínez, Trinity College
63. Maud Chirio, Université Paris-Est Marne-la-Vallée
64. Marc Hertzman, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign
65. Marcelo Timotheo da Costa, DePaul University
66. Marcus Rediker, University of Pittsburgh
67. Margaret Keck, Johns Hopkins University
68. Margaret Power, Illinois Institute of Technology
69. Marianne Schmink, Professor Emerita, University of Florida
70. Mark Langevin, George Washington University
71. Marshall Eakin, Vanderbilt University
72. Matheus Hardt, Princeton University
73. Maxine L. Margolis, University of Florida, Gainesville
74. Miguel Valle de Almeida, ISCTE, Lisbon, Portugal
75. Millie Thayer, University of Massachusetts, Amherst
76. Misha Klein, University of Oklahoma
77. Mônica Raisa Schpun, École des hautes études en sciences sociales
78. Nelson Vieira, Brown University
79. Nicholas Rauschenbert, Universidad de Buenos Aires
80. Nina Schneider, University of Konstanz, Germany
81. Paula Dias, Brown University
82. Paula Halperin, State University of New York, Purchase
83. Paulina Alberto, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor
84. Pedro Meiro Monteiro, Princeton University
85. Peter Evans, Brown University
86. Peter M. Beatie, Michigan State University
87. Rachel Elizabeth Harding, University of Colorado, Denver
88. Rafael R. Ioris, University of Denver
89. Raimundo Barreto, Princeton Theological Seminary
90. Ralph Della Cava, Queens College, CUNY & Columbia University
91. Rebecca Atencio, Tulane University
92. Reid Andrews, University of Pittsburgh
93. Ricardo Leito Ribeiro, New York University
94. Richard Marin, Université Toulouse-Jean Jaurès
95. Robert Rowland, Instituto Universitário de Lisboa
96. Roger Kittleson, Williams College
97. Roquinaldo Ferreira, Brown University
98. Seth Garfield, University of Texas, Austin
99. Sidney Chalhoub, Harvard University
100. Sonia Alvarez, University of Massachusetts, Amherst
101. Stephen Bockay, Harvard University
102. Stuart Schwartz, Yale University
103. Sueann Caulfield, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor
104. Susan C. Quinlan, University of Georgia
105. Teresa Meade, Union College
106. Victoria Langland, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor
107. Victoria Ruétalo, University of Alberta, Canada
108. Wendy Wolford, Cornell University
109. William Smith, University of Miami