



CYRUS R. **VANCE CENTER**
FOR INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE

Vance News

December 2014

Vance Center Hosts Mayor of Easter Island

The Vance Center and the Inter-American Affairs Committee of the New York City Bar Association hosted the mayor of Easter Island, **Pedro Paulo Edmunds Paoa**, who spoke of the current conditions and history of the **Rapa Nui**, the island's indigenous inhabitants. His remarks described ongoing litigation in Chile to account for alleged crimes against humanity during Chile's oppressive administration of Easter Island until reform legislation in 1966, as well as to eliminate onerous tariffs that the Chilean Navy currently charges Rapa Nui fishing boats to use the island's harbor. He also mentioned efforts underway to preserve the culture, heritage and environment of the approximately 5,000 Rapa Nui, as well as to develop their economy. Vance Center Committee member **Hunter Carter** of Arent Fox and Vance Center pro bono partner **Ciro Colombara** of Rivadeneira Colombara Zegers, who are representing the Rapa Nui, also spoke at the event.



*Fundacion Pro Bono Chile board member **Ciro Colombara** of Rivadeneira Colombara Zegers,*

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Vance Center Committee Member Werner Ahlers, Easter Island Pedro Paulo Edmunds Paoa, Vance Center Executive Director Alex Papachristou, and Cristina de Hollanda of Sheldrick & Co. PLLC

The Vance Center Welcomes the Final Report of the Brazilian Truth Commission



The **Brazilian National Truth Commission** (Comissão Nacional da Verdade or CNV by its Portuguese acronym) presented its final report to President Dilma Rousseff on December 10th, 2014, International Human Rights Day. The three-volume report names 377 public officials responsible for human rights violations during the military dictatorship (from 1964 to 1988), including high level military officers and former presidents, and recommends that the 191 still alive be held accountable for their crimes and the country's amnesty law be set aside.

The report also analyzes the impact of grave human rights violations on different segments of society, such as urban workers, peasants, indigenous populations, members of certain religious congregations, academics and the LGBT community. The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights called the release of the report an important and historic moment for Brazil which will “contribute to the strengthening of the democratic State and democracy in the Americas and elsewhere and provide a voice and hope to victims and their families”.

The Vance Center has worked throughout the past year with civil society and state institutions in Brazil to support the work of the Truth Commission and transitional justice in Brazil. In December 2013, the Vance Center, together with the **Instituto de Estudos da Religião (ISER)**, convened Brazilian and international experts in an event at the New York City Bar Association: “Transitional Justice in Brazil: Measuring Progress and Confronting Challenges” Members of the CNV, the Brazilian government, and Brazilian and international NGOs reflected on current transitional justice initiatives in Brazil, in light of best practices and international standards, and suggested how Brazil can continue address past human rights violations so that they do not recur.

The Vance Center also worked with ISER on a comparative study of other Latin American and African truth commissions, to assist in recommending to the Brazilian Truth Commission how to secure the participation of civil society its work. The Vance Center continues to support Brazilian civil society and government as transitional justice develops.



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(Photo Credit: Getty Images)

Vance Center Issues Annual Appeal



This is the season for goodwill and good giving. The Vance Center has delivered our annual appeal to all friends and colleagues asking to support our work. Individual contributions are particularly important, because they fund our core activities: identifying the needs of human rights and environmental organizations worldwide and organizing multi-jurisdictional legal teams to undertake pro bono projects on their behalf. This year our annual appeal features highlights from our staff sharing projects that embody the mission of the Vance Center.