

## PRESENTATION



We have reached issue seven of *Sur – International Journal on Human Rights* with an excellent response from our readers and a new partnership with the International Center for Transitional Justice.

An evaluation of the journal was conducted to gain some feedback for us to improve the quality, to cater more to the interests of our readers and to make it even more accessible and critical. Of the 15% of readers who responded to an online survey, among them professors and human rights activists, 66% considered the journal to be excellent and 34% judged it to be good. The best qualities they identified were: (a) the high standard of the journal; (b) its potential to disseminate information on human rights; and (c) its broad application, both for university and non-university courses. The main challenges, meanwhile, are: (a) to address more specific thematic issues; (b) to publish new authors; and (c) to improve the dissemination of the journal. To meet these challenges, the following steps have already been taken: (a) we shall focus this and future issues on topics specifically related to the Global South, such as transitional justice, access to medicine and freedom of expression; and (b) we have staged launches in human rights centers at universities on different continents. Furthermore, we have plans in 2008 to establish a monitorial system, whereby new authors who have written promising articles will be supervised by more experienced researchers or professors. (For a more detailed account of the evaluation, please see the report at the end of this issue.)

In addition to the evaluation, we have also forged a partnership between Conectas Human Rights, which has published the journal since its first issue, and the International Center for Transitional Justice. This center was set up in 2000 with the mission to promote

justice, peace and reconciliation in societies emerging from repressive regimes or from armed conflicts, as well as to establish democracies where historical or systemic injustices remain unresolved.

The partnership was established so we could focus on a key topic for countries in the southern hemisphere: transitional justice. The balance between peace and justice and between reconciliation and retribution in post-conflict societies, or in cases of historical and persistent injustices, is dealt with by the authors from different geographical perspectives: Australia, Cambodia, Peru and Uganda. The authors, however, raise questions that often transcend these local contexts. By addressing the violated rights of aboriginal children in Australia who were forcibly taken from their families, for example, Ramona Vijayarasa questions whether Truth Commissions can help build more inclusive societies. By analyzing the Extraordinary Chambers in Cambodia, Tara Urs attempts to identify what truth commissions and extraordinary courts can realistically expect to accomplish. She also examines how culturally specific processes can help shape transitional justice and how best to respond to the interests of the victims. Looking at Peru's case, Elizabeth Salmón sheds some light on the links between conflict and poverty, and questions whether transitional justice should have a specific role beyond universalistic public policies. Finally, when addressing the situation in Uganda, Cecily Rose and Francis Ssekandi consider the role of amnesty in the consolidation of peace and question how to implement transitional justice in situations where peace agreements are still being reached.

To round off this subject, the journal is publishing an interview with Juan Méndez, director of the International Center for Transitional Justice.

This edition of the journal also carries an analysis of the recently established structure of the UN Human Rights Council (Lucia Nader) and a study on the influence of the inter-American system and "transnational legal activism" on the protection of human rights in Brazil (Cecília Santos).

We would like to thank the following professors and partners for their contribution to the selection of the articles for this issue: Glenda Mezarobba, Helena Olea, J. Paul Martin, Jeremy Sarkin, Juan Amaya Castro, Juan Carlos Arjona, Kawame Karikari, Maria Herminia Tavares de Almeida, Paula Ligia Martins, Richard Pierre Claude, Thami Ngwenya and Vinodh Jaichand.

Finally, we would like to announce that the next edition of the SUR Journal will be a special issue on access to medicine and human rights, to be published in collaboration with the Brazilian Interdisciplinary AIDS Association (ABIA). The journal will also carry articles on other topics.

The editors.