

# PRESS RELEASE

## Brazilian Lawyer Valdênia Aparecida Paulino Lanfranchi Receives the 2014 CCBE Human Rights Award

28/11/2014

**The Plenary Session of the Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE) today granted its 2014 Human Rights Award to Ms Valdênia Aparecida Paulino Lanfranchi, a Brazilian lawyer who has devoted her life to the defence of those most vulnerable in her country's *favelas*.**

Ms Paulino grew up in Sapopemba, one of the poorest quarters in the city of São Paulo. She became involved in her neighborhood's civic life at a young age and, after finishing her law degree, devoted her life as a lawyer to the protection of those most vulnerable, taking on cases of human rights violations and police brutality. In 1996, Ms Paulino founded the Centre for the Defence of the Rights of Children and Adolescents (CEDECA) and, in 2003, founded the Sapopemba Centre for Human Rights. She was also an ombudsman and police mediator for the Paraíba State Human Rights Council in São Paulo until September 2013. She further volunteered at the Dom Oscar Romero Human Rights Defence Centre (CEDHOR) in Santa Rita, providing assistance and legal advice to those who cannot afford it. In addition, she is involved in the national campaign to demilitarise the police in Brazil, and lobbies in favour of a bill to create autonomous supervisory bodies for police activities.

Her commitment to human rights has earned Ms Paulino numerous death threats and forced her to leave her country twice. In October 2007, she left Brazil and spent six months in Spain under Amnesty International's programme for the protection of human rights defenders. Unable to return to her hometown, she left Brazil in 2013 and currently lives in the Washington D.C. with the support of Freedom House, a non-governmental organisation.

Ms Paulino still receives death threats and was the target of false accusations of breaking ethical rules in a case where she defended child victims of sexual abuse voluntarily and free of charge. Despite the danger to her life and liberty, she remains dedicated to her work. In granting her the 2014 Human Rights Award, the CCBE honours her extraordinary determination, commitment and perseverance in defence of Human Rights.

The CCBE represents the bars and law societies of 32 member countries and 13 further associate and observer countries, and through them over one million European lawyers. Since 2007, the CCBE has annually granted its Human Rights Award to a lawyer or lawyers' organisation that has brought honour to the legal profession by upholding the highest values of professional and personal conduct in the field of human rights. More information about past recipients and criteria for the award is available [here](#).

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