Human Rights Violations of Sex Workers in Brazil

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Submitted by: Davida – Prostitution, Civil Rights and Health

In partnership with: The Prostitution Policy Watch, The Brazilian Network of Prostitutes, The Association of Warrior Women, The Group of Prostitute Women from the State of Pará (GEMPAC), Transrevolução, and Casa Nem/PrepareNem

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This report focuses on the civil and human rights violations of those engaged, or perceived to be engaged, in the commercial sale of sex in Brazil. It draws on Davida’s advocacy for sex worker rights for nearly twenty-five years, and that of our partner organizations and network throughout Brazil. It also draws on the ethnographic and historical research conducted by members of Prostitution Policy Watch, both collectively and independently, over the past decade to document changing sex work conditions in Brazil.

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i Davida: Prostitution, Civil Rights and Health (http://www.davida.org.br) was founded in 1992 by sex worker Gabriela Leite to improve the working conditions and the legal and societal status of prostitutes in Brazil.

ii Prostitution Policy Watch (Observatório da Prostituição, http://www.observatoriodaprostituição.ifcs.ufrj.br) was founded in 2013 as an extension project of the Institute for Regional and Urban Planning at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ). It conducts ethical research on sex work to promote the full protection of their labor and human rights, particularly as reflected in the design/implementation/execution of public policies and legislation.

iii Founded in 1987 by Gabriela Leite and Lourdes Barreto, the Brazilian Network of Prostitutes is comprised of sex worker organizations throughout Brazil. Its core principles include defending prostitution as a form of labor and ensuring sex workers’ rights are acknowledged as sexual rights (www.redebrasileiradeprostitutas.org.br).


v Founded in 1990, GEMPAC is one of the first sex worker rights organizations in Brazil. It is located in the Northeast region, in Belém de Pará. https://blogdasesquinas.wordpress.com

vi Transrevolução fights for trans rights in Rio de Janeiro. The group is part of the Grupo pela Vidda – RJ, one of the first NGOs founded to support people living with HIV in Brazil. http://www.pelavidda.org.br/site/

vii The Casa Nem is a social, cultural, activist and living space for transgender people in situations of high social vulnerability in Rio de Janeiro. It is also home to the college preparatory course for the transgender population called PrepareNem: http://glo.bo/2dTfMsY

viii Dr. Ana Paula da Silva (UFF), Dr. Soraya Simões (UFRJ), Dr. Laura Murray (Columbia University/UERJ), Dr. Thaddeus Gregory Blanchette (UFRJ), Dr. José Miguel Olivar Nieto (UNICAMP), Dr. Gregory Mitchell (Williams College), Dr. Amanda De Lisio (University of Toronto), Flavio Lenz (UERJ), Dr. Natania Lopes (UERJ) and many others.