



Center for Gender & Refugee Studies

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Submission to the Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Racism

Visit of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance to Brazil

Center for Gender & Refugee Studies
University of California College of the Law, San Francisco

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The Center for Gender & Refugee Studies is grateful for the [opportunity to contribute input](#) to inform your report on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance to Brazil to the United Nations Human Rights Council in June 2025.

In 2021, the Center for Gender & Refugee Studies (CGRS) and Haitian Bridge Alliance (HBA), together with Instituto para las Mujeres en la Migración (IMUMI), prepared a report, [A Journey of Hope: Haitian Women's Migration to Tapachula, Mexico](#) (please see attached), which provides analyses related to Brazil that respond to several questions presented in the call for input. We would like to particularly draw your attention to the Haitian and Black migrant women who experience racism and xenophobia in Brazil.

We hope this research will be of assistance in further research and fact-finding during your visit to Brazil.

What are the key trends in racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, including systemic racism, in Brazil, including the experiences of those, such as women, persons from religious minorities, people with disabilities, LGBTI persons and/or migrants, who have faced intersectional discrimination?

In our report, we describe the barriers Haitian and other Black migrants face in obtaining humanitarian assistance and legal protection while navigating intersectional discrimination in Brazil. Several key trends in racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance have significantly impacted the experiences of various marginalized groups, including Haitian and other Black migrants.

For background, many Haitian migrants began migrating to Brazil after the devastating 2010 earthquake in Haiti. Our report documents that from 2010 to 2018, 128,968 Haitians reportedly entered Brazil, of which 32,498 left and 96,487 stayed. The influx of migrants necessitated a pressing need for the regularization of their status. However, bureaucratic delays and governmental challenges created difficulty in defining a clear pathway to obtaining a legal status. This exacerbated social crises in areas receiving migrants. Social attitudes led to situations where migrants, including women and those from religious minorities, faced dire living conditions, such as sleeping in open fields without basic amenities like bathrooms and running water.

Haitian and other Black migrants in Brazil experienced xenophobic and anti-Black racist attitudes that further exacerbated already dire circumstances. There were multiple instances of violence against Haitian immigrants fueled by perceptions of job competition and economic downturns. In 2015, there were two shooting attacks against groups of Haitian immigrants in São Paulo. In 2018, a group of Brazilians forcibly removed migrants from a makeshift shelter in Roraima State and burned their belongings. Such attacks and other rumors created fear among Haitian communities.

Obtaining permanent residency became increasingly difficult. Discrimination, xenophobia, and anti-Black racism in Brazil persisted, creating a hostile environment for many Black migrants, particularly Haitians.

What are the key economic, social and cultural rights issues affecting those from racially marginalised groups, including, but not limited to, in the context of access to adequate housing, land, a safe and healthy environment, healthcare, including maternal and reproductive services, education and food?

Of particular importance, it is essential to explore the economic rights of Haitian and other Black migrants in Brazil, especially the right to work. The economic recession and lack of available employment made staying in Brazil challenging for many migrants. The recession, particularly after major events like the FIFA World Cup and the Olympics, led to a decline in job opportunities, forcing many migrants to leave the country. Many of the attacks against Haitian communities were motivated by the idea that Haitians were responsible for the recession. Our report documents that one attacker yelled: "Haitians, you steal our jobs!" Despite the layered challenges of unemployment, anti-migrant xenophobia, and anti-Black racial tensions in Brazil, forcing many Haitians to leave, other Haitians continued to enter Brazil, reflecting the limited options available to Haitians seeking refuge.

The experiences shared by Haitian and other Black migrants in Brazil demonstrate the intersectional discrimination they face due to their race, nationality, and socio-economic status. It is essential to address these issues not only through legal reforms but also by challenging the deep-rooted prejudices and promoting inclusivity and tolerance within Brazilian society.