

2017
2018

BIANNUAL
REPORT

CEJIL 

Defending
RIGHTS to
CHANGE
Realities



Center for Justice and International Law (CEJIL)
2017 - 2018 Biannual Report
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Letter from Executive Director



Dear Friends,

Over the last two years, our continent has faced serious threats to the rule of law, high levels of violence, repression of social protest, attacks against human rights defenders and indigenous peoples, a massive displacement and refugee crisis, increased levels of social and economic inequality, and impunity. Yet time and again, resilient movements seeking a better future for all of us countered these threats. Mass mobilization on behalf of equality, social rights, and democracy expressed the commitment of broad sectors of society with our shared values; joint litigation and advocacy on critical issues served as a counterpoint to these worrying trends; and creative expressions from survivors and allies inspired further action. As challenges mounted domestically and spread regionally, human rights defenders sought and found solidarity with international mechanisms and civil society spaces that served as vital lifelines amidst adverse national contexts.

Throughout, CEJIL has stood shoulder to shoulder with those who demand truth, justice, equality, democracy, and protection of the environment. We have worked together with thousands of activists and organizations to bring key discussions to the Inter-American System of Human Rights and the United Nations via coordinated litigation, advocacy and communications strategies. We have documented human rights crises, and developed and implemented local initiatives to promote rights, especially in the context of violence, criminalization and threats against human rights defenders, statelessness, and attacks against women's rights. The development of a new Strategic Plan has guided our efforts to strengthen our alliances and hone our strategies for social change.

There is no doubt that the next two years will bring new challenges for the world, for the Americas, and for the human rights movement. However, as the past two years have shown, linking the local and the global generates strength, builds hope, and achieves impact. Amplifying the voices of human rights defenders and indigenous peoples is critical for the future of democracy and our earth. CEJIL will continue to contribute our tools, knowledge, experience and passion to the fight for rights, sustainability, and democracy.

We invite you to read our biannual report, which highlights only a snapshot of our work, but nevertheless underscores our contributions in the Americas and beyond. Ultimately, we expect that our work in the region helps bend the arc towards equality and justice across the globe.

We also express our deep gratitude to our fellow human rights defenders, followers, and supporters, and hope to continue to work together and count on your engagement for years to come.

With hope and gratitude,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Viviana Krsticevic'.

Viviana Krsticevic
Executive Director



CEJIL

WHO WE ARE?

The Center for Justice and International Law (CEJIL) is an organization of human rights defenders founded in 1991 that seeks to reduce inequality and violence by strengthening democracies, protecting and promoting human rights, and fighting impunity in the Americas.

CEJIL represents more than 10,000 individuals, including victims and individuals in need of urgent protection, in over 300 contentious cases and precautionary and provisional measure requests before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (I/A Court).

CEJIL pursues work with more than 400 allied organizations for the purpose of restoring the human rights of victims and changing the realities that make it possible for the violation of their rights.



ORGANIZATIONAL OBJECTIVES

Reducing inequality

CEJIL works to reduce inequality and expand access to justice for those groups that have suffered historical discrimination in the individual and collective exercise of their rights.

Strengthening democracy

CEJIL contributes to strengthening democracy and the rule of law with a focus on the effectiveness of the administration of justice, democratic institutions and democratic oversight processes.

Strengthening international governance

CEJIL contributes to the development and strengthening of an effective international human rights by focusing on Inter-American human rights bodies and, through specific initiatives, organisms within the United Nations.

Guaranteeing access to justice & reparations

CEJIL works to ensure access to justice and to obtain transformative reparations for victims of structural violence and serious human rights violations committed by state and non-state actors.

Supporting the development of plural and open societies

CEJIL creates healthy ecosystems for the protection of rights by strengthening alliances, building capacity, and supporting and opening spaces for national and international civil society.

STRATEGIES FOR CHANGE

Strategic Litigation

We litigate emblematic cases before the Inter-American Human Rights System to change the realities for all inhabitants of the region.

Advocacy

We identify key issues and stand shoulder to shoulder with local, national and regional groups to work towards social changes.

Media work

We raise our constituents voices and stories in the press and through other forms of media to promote human rights across the Americas.

Strengthening Key Stakeholders

We build the capacity of key stakeholders striving towards a continent where people can freely exercise their human rights.

Communities of Knowledge

We foster the creation of communities and networks dedicated to international law and identify innovative strategies to protect human rights.

Impact

2017-2018

HIGHLIGHTS

Mobilizing Local Justice

CEJIL works with family members, victims, and local groups and activists to achieve the following noteworthy advances in the region. This entails the active participation of anyone fighting for justice and equality throughout the region.



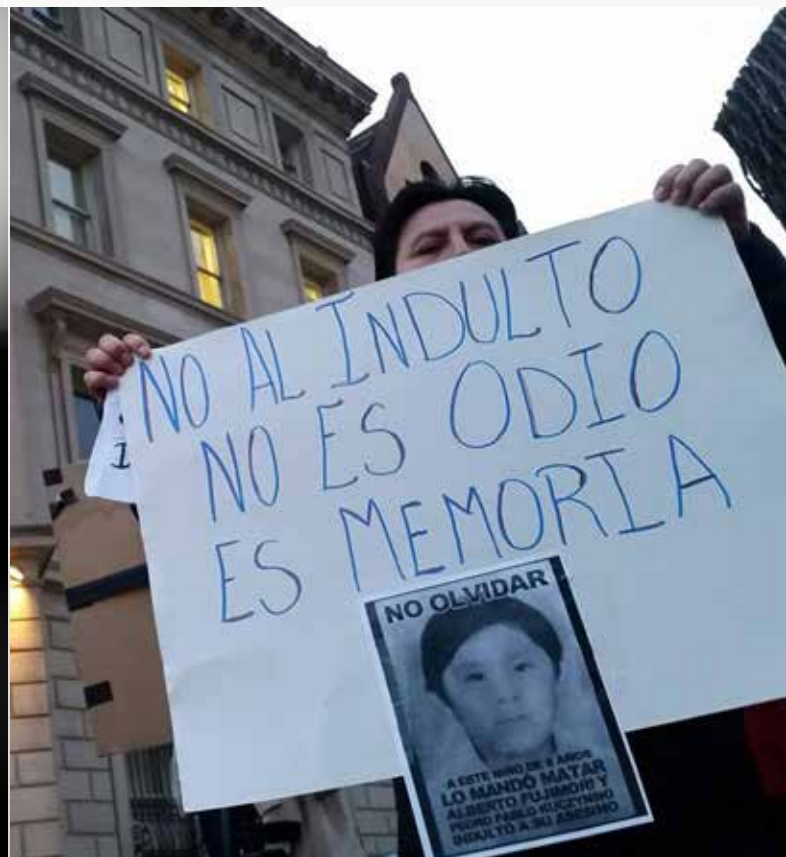
Justice for Mapuche Child in Chile

The Supreme Court of Chile reopened the case of those responsible for the murder of Alex Lemun, an indigenous Mapuche child murdered by police forces during a peaceful protest led by the community. In the reopening of the case, the Supreme Court of Chile ordered the case to be investigated by the Public Ministry as opposed to the military justice system. The re-opening of the case is a major success as it is an extremely rare occurrence, and serves as an opportunity for Chile to reform its military code and guarantee the development of non-repetition measures to prevent future stories like Alex Lemun's from happening.

Rewriting History in Guatemala

CEJIL's advocacy work with the Molina Thiessen family in Guatemala led to local compliance with an IAHRS order in the country regarding the forced disappearance of Marco Antonio Molina Thiessen. This resulted in the trial and indictment of former senior military commanders who, until recently, were considered untouchable. CEJIL's advocacy contributed to halting an amnesty law that would reverse decades of work in the pursuit of justice in the country.

Mobilizing Local Justice



Increasing Transparency towards Justice for Berta Caceres

Investigation into Berta Caceres' murder advanced following the publication of findings from GAIPE- an independent group of international experts who detailed the State's lack of effective measures to find those responsible. In 2018, local judges in Honduras issued sentences demonstrating the participation of mining company executives in the murder of the prominent human and environmental rights defender. CEJIL continues to push for transparency in the ongoing investigations.

Reversal of an Unconstitutional Pardon in Peru

CEJIL's continued compliance enforcement of two prominent cases in Peru (Barrios Altos v. Peru and La Cantuta v. Peru) resulted in the reversal of a humanitarian pardon granted in 2018 to former president Alberto Fujimori. The Supreme Court of Peru found the pardon unconstitutional, and specifically cited the IA Court's decisions on the cases, which CEJIL litigated.

Changing Realities on the Ground

CEJIL carries out advocacy efforts, hand in hand with local organizations and activists, to promote structural changes at the local level.

Impact

Nicaragua

In the wake of extreme state repression and violence in response to student protests, CEJIL's advocacy work placed the issue on an international stage and called for key actors to take action. CEJIL opened up key spaces at the U.N. and OAS for Nicaraguan activists, who were silenced within their country's borders.

El Salvador

As an organization representing, Imelda Cortez, a young woman mistakenly imprisoned under El Salvador's abortion laws for having given birth prematurely, CEJIL collaborated with local groups to carry out a coordinated advocacy strategy and communications campaign to underscore the repressive nature of El Salvador's abortion laws.

Colombia

CEJIL promotes the proper investigation of threats against human rights defenders in Colombia through advocacy efforts targeted towards state representatives and investigative authorities. On numerous occasions, CEJIL has called on government representatives to reform and implement measures that properly investigate threats against human rights defenders and adequately integrate the investigation of threats into existing protection mechanisms and standards.



Universal Recognition of Human Rights

Defending the Rights of Women in Venezuela

Linda Loaiza, a Venezuelan survivor of torture and rape at the hands of a well-connected aggressor, achieved an important step towards justice through a ruling issued by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights that found the Venezuelan State guilty for its inability to prevent the abuse or investigate her case. This sentence lays the foundations for Venezuela to carry out structural changes in laws, public policies and the administration of justice in terms of preventing and punishing violence against women in Venezuela.

Confronting Sexual Violence in Mexico

The Women of Atenco received a landmark sentence by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights that opens the possibility for ending impunity in cases of state violence against women across the region. After suffering grave human rights violations at the hands of the government in 2006, these women sought international justice to ensure others do not suffer such acts of violence and repression.



Universal Recognition of Human Rights

Combatting Structural Discrimination in Brazil's Favelas

After years of being denied access to justice, victims of state violence in Brazil received a landmark ruling with regards to the murders of Favela Nova Brasília. This decision recognizes the systematic nature of the violence perpetrated by officers belonging to the public security forces of the state of Rio de Janeiro. This is the first international decision addressing police violence against this population in Brazil. It also recognizes the structural, economic and racial discrimination affecting thousands of Brazilians.

Fighting Discrimination against those with HIV

Prior to the IA Court sentence in 2018, those living with HIV in Guatemala were stripped of their right to proper health services. Despite existing structural obstacles for adequate treatment for those living with HIV, the judgement calls for the guarantee of integral care for those under these conditions.

Retracing the steps of Arbitrary Separation

Following years after his irregular adoption as a child, when he was separated from his family in Guatemala, Osmín Ramírez achieved justice before the Inter-American Court where it judged Guatemala responsible for his and his brother's arbitrary separation in 1997. Representing the precarious situation children in poverty face in Guatemala, the sentence addresses structural causes increasing children's vulnerability including discrimination and gender stereotypes.



Regional Approaches to Local Phenomena



CEJIL works at the regional level to address phenomenon that affect the region as a whole, using its holistic view and expertise to work with local partners in response to the region's most pressing issues.

Shrinking of Civic Space

The closing of civic space is a rising global trend that threatens the defense of human rights, the rule of law, and the sustainability of democracy. In Latin America, there are ascending social and political movements that fuel public discontent and allow for conservative and authoritarian agendas that reinforce and legitimize crackdowns on active citizenry. This targets the rights of freedom of expression, association and assembly and limit the voices of those promoting human rights within their borders. **CEJIL works with local organizations to guarantee their participation on the international stage such as the Inter-American System of Human Rights and the Organization of American States. CEJIL is creating new spaces for dialogue between civil society and other key actors in order to both counter act and pressure governments to act in accordance with international standards.**

Protection of Human Rights Defenders

Human rights defenders in Latin America work without the guarantee of State protection or accountability while carrying the pain and concerns of thousands whose rights have gone unprotected. In 2018, 321 human rights defenders were killed across the world (according to Front Line Defenders), with Colombia and Mexico alone accounting for 54% of the total killings. Efforts to silence, discredit and intimidate HRDs have increased and made Latin America the most dangerous region to promote human rights. **Through the development of Protocolo La Esperanza, CEJIL works hand in hand with HRDS to strengthen methods of investigation and promote approaches that aim to stop murders before they happen.**

Digital Rights in the Human Rights Movement

The inevitable merging of the human rights movement within the digital realm led to a coordinated agenda and advocacy strategy to promote international standards for protection on and off line. **CEJIL is collaborating with digital actors to promote inter-connected approaches to respond to the role of threats in the digital realm and the internet's introduction of various factors that could promote violence against human rights defenders.**

Protection of Environmental Defenders

Environmental defenders in Latin America face differentiated risks as governments and companies find the protection of the environment as obstacles to a country's development and wealth. Moreover, indigenous groups struggle to retain and exercise their territorial autonomy in the face of extractive industries that destroy the home and culture of entire communities. **CEJIL's works with environmental defenders, indigenous groups, and rural communities in their struggle to defend their territories.**

Advocating for equal representation of women in international justice

CEJIL mobilized representatives of States, internationally renowned scholars, law-yers, jurists and activists to The Hague through its GQUAL campaign to meet for three days to discuss the current state of affairs of women's participation at international tribunals and monitoring bodies. The objective of the conference was to draft the GQUAL Action Plan to promote gender parity in international justice. **In the coming years, it is expected that this document will serve as a road map and a call for action to motivate, inspire and inform all those who take part in the campaign.**

Human Mobility Across the Americas

The Americas have historically experienced frequent instances of increased human mobility, causing unpredictable shifts in national and regional priorities as governments and civil society attempt to grasp the complexities of such mass migrations. The region is experiencing new waves of mass forced displacement, many of which have developed at high speeds.

CEJIL has responded by created the 'Grupo de Movilidad Humana', the Americans Network on Nationality and Statelessness (Red ANA) and launching the first Civil Society Action Plan to ensure the respect of human rights for all of those forced to flee in the region.





CEJIL in the Press

In 2018, CEJIL was mentioned over 4.093 times in the press, representing a 132% increase from 2017.

Caso Linda Loaiza:

'I was sexually abused, humiliated and beaten. Legal victory was a great balm' (The Guardian)

'I was sexually abused, humiliated and beaten. Legal victory was a great balm'

After the inter-American court ruled in her favour against the Venezuelan state, Linda Loaiza tells of her long fight for justice

Caso Atenco:

CorteIDH sentencia a México por violencia sexual, violación y tortura a 11 mujeres (BBC Mundo)

Caso Atenco: CorteIDH sentencia a México por violencia sexual, violación y tortura a 11 mujeres

Ana Gabriela Rojas
Corresponsal de BBC News Mundo en México

Defender el derecho a defender los derechos humanos en America Latina (El Pais)

Defender el derecho a defender los derechos humanos en América Latina

Luchar por una causa es una tarea titánica en el mejor de los casos, y una condena de muerte, en el peor

Condenado por chacinas no Alemão, Brasil ignora sentença de corte internacional (The Intercept)

CONDENADO POR CHACINAS NO ALEMÃO, BRASIL IGNORA SENTENÇA DE CORTE INTERNACIONAL

Bruno de Lencastre
7 de Abril de 2018, 19:03

Who Ordered Killing of Honduran Activist? Evidence of Broad Plot is Found (2017 NYT)

Who Ordered Killing of Honduran Activist? Evidence of Broad Plot Is Found

Media Spotlight

DOCUMENTING REALITIES TO CREATE CHANGE

While not an exhaustive list of everything achieved in the past two years, the following highlights are just some brief examples of how our press and media work have helped move the needle towards justice across the region:



#PorQuienesNosDefienden / DefendtheDefenders

In 2018, CEJIL addressed the high rate of deaths faced by Colombian human rights defenders, among them a tweet-a-thon in partnership with Colombian civil society groups using the #PorQuienesNosDefienden which went viral; and the coordination of a week of action in Washington, D.C. with the film crew of “Nos Están Matando”, to tell the story of human rights defenders in Colombia to American audiences. Meanwhile, press work focused on highlighting the toxic impact of threats. This became a crucial message presented at an IACHR hearing in December of 2018.

#VocesconNicaragua

Due to the crisis that erupted in Nicaragua in mid-April, CEJIL launched an online campaign called VocesconNicaragua/VoiceswithNicaragua to support on the ground activists in their claims against government-led oppression and raise their concerns to an international level, putting the issue on the map of key political stakeholders

Media Spotlight

Overall, the organization has experienced a 65% increase in Facebook followers in the last two years; and a 60% increase in Twitter followers in the last two years



#YoVoto

Formed in 2016, the campaign for adequate Inter-American Commission and Court representation saw significant gains in 2017 and 2018. The campaign was launched during elections for members to the Inter-American Court three years ago and seeks to generate awareness on the need for both human rights bodies of the OAS to include ideal, ethnically diverse and gender-inclusive representation. In 2017, it was the centerpiece for actions at the OAS General Assembly in Cancun, receiving 20 hits in press and widespread support in social media.

#VenezuelaMigra

In response to the Venezuelan migrant and refugee crisis, several actions were carried out via digital and social media. Two tweet-a-thons were carried out using the #VenezuelaMigra that incorporated groups from across the region, going viral in Colombia and Ecuador, as well as the circulation of an Avaaz petition to add to signatures generated from Civil Society's Declaration. From August to October, roughly 432 press hits were achieved around the issue. A web portal was created to house the Action Plan as well as a news bulletin that circulates up-to-date information on the situation of Venezuelan migrants and refugees from Venezuela to stakeholders across the region.

Financials

Supporting Change for New Realities

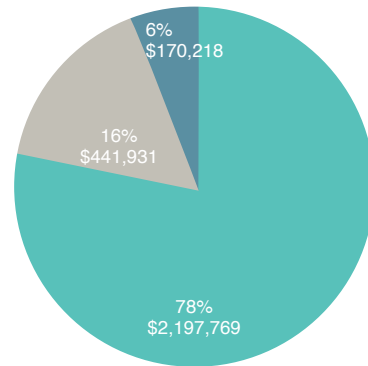
In 2017-2018

CEJIL invested 78% of its revenue into programs that promote human rights across the region.

CEJIL increased its revenue from individual fundraising by 345%.

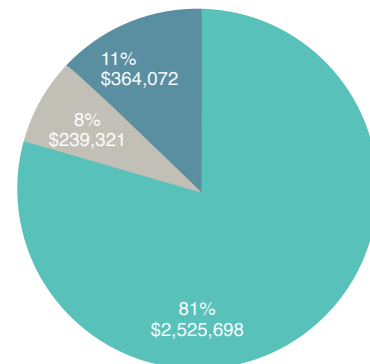
2018 Expense Overview

■ Program Service ■ Administrative ■ Fundraising



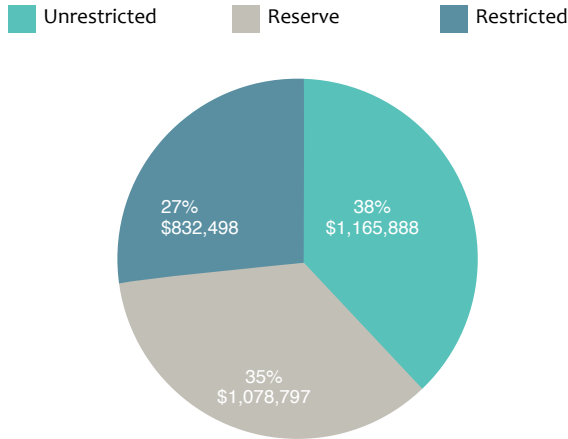
2017 Expense Overview

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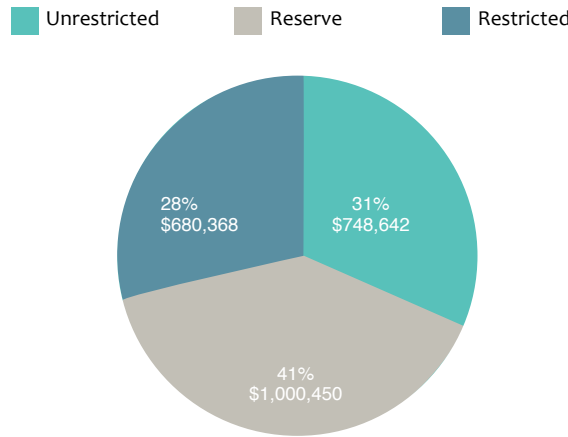


Center for Justice and International Law for the Year ended December 31, 2018

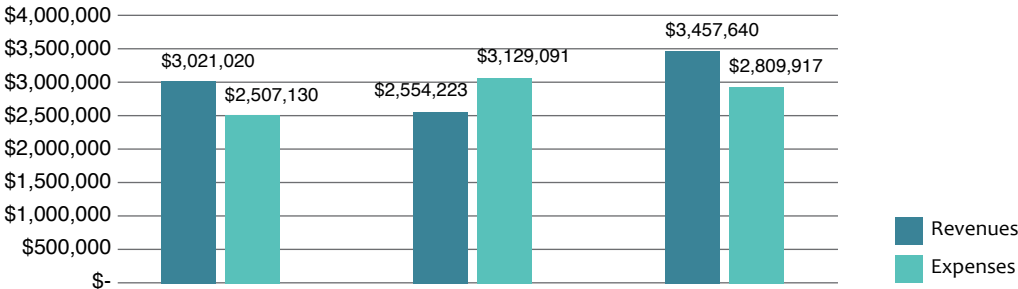
Net Assets Breakdown Year End 2018



Net Assets Breakdown Year End 2017



Net Assets Breakdown Year End 2017





CEJIL's work has been made possible thanks to the generous contributions of our donors within the period of this report, as well as anonymous donors.

Bread for the World – EED

Confederation Suisse – COSUDE

Ford Foundation

Diakonia

Panamerican Development Foundation

Organization for Cooperation (MISEREOR)

HIVOS

Kellogg Foundation

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway

National Endowment for Democracy (NED)

Open Society Foundations

Plan International

Principality of Liechtenstein

Sweden Sverige

The OAK Foundation

The Overbrook Foundation

Tinker Foundation

UNHCR



How can I help?

Support Justice CEJIL accepts donations from individuals and institutions.

To Donate, Please Visit

www.cejil.org

Fellowship and Internship Programs

CEJIL's work would not be possible without the dedication of our committed fellows and interns.

For more information, please visit

cejil.org/en/pasantias-en-cejil

Follow and Share on Social Media

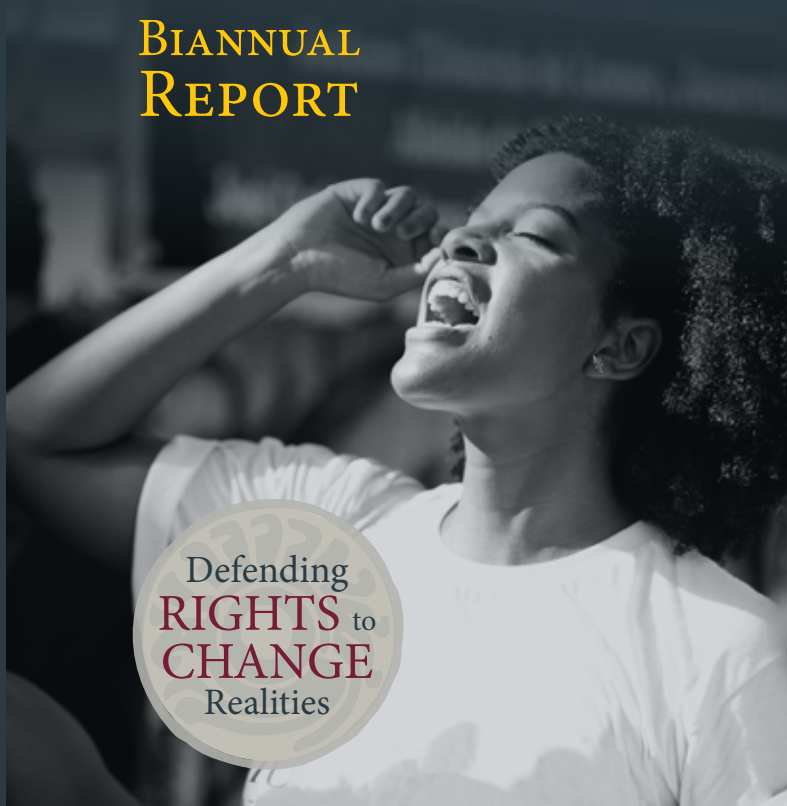
CEJIL is constantly sharing its efforts across the region on social media.

twitter.com/cejil

www.facebook.com/CEJIL/

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