

ADVANCED DIPLOMA

CLIMATE LITIGATION IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN



**FRAY BARTOLOMÉ DE LAS CASAS
INSTITUTE OF LEGAL RESEARCH**



About the Fray Bartolomé de las Casas Institute

The Fray Bartolomé de las Casas Institute of Legal Research (IFBC) pursues the generation of critical knowledge to enhance the enforceability and applicability of economic, social, cultural, and environmental rights (ESCR), recognizing their inherent interdependence with civil and political rights, while also promoting the effectiveness of international human rights standards that safeguard the progressive development of communities.

Through research and capacity-building initiatives, the IFBC seeks to advance the recognition and effective implementation of ESCR across all domains, with particular emphasis on migratory and colonial contexts, advocating for equality and the respect for human dignity. In pursuit of this objective, it engages with a diverse range of stakeholders to shape public policies that promote sustainable development and safeguard human rights.

THE HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF FRAY BARTOLOMÉ DE LAS CASAS

A prominent 16th-century theologian, Fray Bartolomé de las Casas was known for his defense of Indigenous peoples against the brutality of the conquistadors. He advocated for respect and equality toward the Other and laid the foundations for the human rights approach more than four centuries before their universal declaration. In alignment with Fray Bartolomé's legacy, this Institute, which bears his name, upholds the fundamental primacy of these rights as essential to ensuring human dignity.

OUR WORK

The IFBC is dedicated to the advanced training of professionals, researchers, and judicial officials in areas related to ESCR, employing research groups, seminars, and specialized courses that provide tools to analyze these rights across diverse contexts.

- **RESEARCH:** the development and production of original knowledge, fostering interdisciplinary study to address specific issues and formulate innovative, evidence-based solutions. The work groups focus on four key areas: judicial structures, colonialism, migration, and climate emergency.

- **TRAINING:** a specialized academic program aligned with its research areas, designed to enhance the competencies of professionals, researchers, and judicial officials. Its courses and seminars aim to foster the exchange of knowledge, the acquisition of advanced methodological tools, and the implementation of best practices.

The generation and dissemination of original knowledge enhance regional capacity to address pressing challenges such as climate change—one of the core objectives of this advanced diploma and a priority emphasized by Pope Francis in *Laudato Si'* and *Laudate Deum*—thus fostering a more sustainable, inclusive, and equitable model of development.



The IFBC was established by **Pope Francis** on August 15, 2023, within the framework of the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences, through Chirograph No. 0570, under the functional authority of the Pan-American Committee of Judges for Social Rights and Franciscan Doctrine (COPAJU).

MISSION

The defense and promotion of economic, social, cultural, and environmental rights (ESCR).

INSPIRATION

Fray Bartolomé de las Casas, a defender of Indigenous peoples and a pioneer of human rights.



STRATEGY

Raising awareness within the academic community and the general public, while generating knowledge to inform decision-making at various governmental levels.



Alberto Filippi (IFBC Director), Roberto Andrés Gallardo (COPAJU President), Lucas Ciarniello Ibáñez (Academic Secretary) and Eugenio Raúl Zaffaroni (IFBC Director).

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The climate emergency is one of the greatest threats to humanity, with disproportionate effects on communities in situations of heightened vulnerability. In Latin America and the Caribbean, its impacts include an increase in the frequency of natural disasters, the deterioration of critical biomes such as the Amazon, and structural violations of human rights linked to environmental degradation. Within this framework, climate litigation serves as a key tool for environmental protection and the enforcement of human rights.

OBJECTIVES

The Advanced Diploma in Climate Litigation in Latin America and the Caribbean of the IFBC, in agreement with the National University of José C. Paz (UNPAZ), aims to foster critical reflection on key topics in climate science, the regional impacts of climate change, and international legal frameworks. The objective is to develop a deep understanding of the causes of climate change, its effects on the region, relevant legislation, and landmark cases in climate jurisprudence, in order to promote more informed and strategic decision-making.

TARGET AUDIENCE

MAGISTRATES, JUDGES AND JUDICIAL OFFICERS FROM LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN.

MODALITY

This academic program is designed to be delivered in a virtual learning environment that facilitates learning and interaction between faculty and students. The IFBC Campus, an online platform, will be used to host content, manage academic activities, and foster communication among participants. Synchronous sessions will be conducted via Zoom, while the infrastructure and resources of the IFBC campuses in Buenos Aires and Brasília enable the possibility of hybrid sessions.

DURATION AND WORKLOAD

The total duration of the diploma program is six months, with the first edition scheduled to begin in May 2025. Seminars will be held consecutively from May to October, with a break in July. The integration workshop will take place in October. The total workload amounts to 200 hours, which will be completed through weekly synchronous classes of three hours and asynchronous activities such as readings and practical assignments to be carried out on the IFBC Campus.

SIX-MONTH DURATION

200 TOTAL
HOURS WORKLOAD

WEEKLY SYNCHRONOUS CLASSES
OF 4 HOURS VIA ZOOM

**TARGETED AT MAGISTRATES
AND JUDICIAL OPERATORS
FROM LATIN AMERICA AND
THE CARIBBEAN**

LOCATIONS

The **IFBC** has two locations: one in the **Autonomous City of Buenos Aires**, Argentina (Av. Ingeniero Huergo 1189), and another on the campus of the **Catholic University of Brasília**, Brazil (QS 07, Lote 01, Taguatinga Sul - Taguatinga, Brasília/DF).



Marcelo Suárez Orozco (IFBC Director; Chancellor of the University of Massachusetts, Boston, United States).

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COPAJU has emphasized its priority interest in addressing the climate emergency, given its implications for social justice and ESCR. This led the IFBC, together with UNPAZ, to design an advanced diploma that tackles the climate emergency from a judicial perspective and promotes the enforceability of social rights across the region.

FOUR SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- A)** To develop a comprehensive understanding of climate science
- B)** To conduct a critical analysis of regional climate impacts
- C)** To achieve a general overview of key legal frameworks for climate litigation
- D)** To examine relevant climate jurisprudence

THEMATIC UNITS

The training program consists of four thematic axes and an integration workshop for the development of the final project. Each thematic unit will include three to four synchronous classes, each lasting approximately three hours, along with asynchronous coursework conducted through the IFBC Campus.

THREE SESSIONS



1 - FUNDAMENTALS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

2- CLIMATE CHANGE AND ATMOSPHERIC SCIENCES

3- CLIMATE DATA AND ATTRIBUTION

UNIT 1

INTRODUCTION TO CLIMATE SCIENCE

Basic principles of climate science and its historical development. How human activity, particularly the emission of greenhouse gases and aerosols, contributes to anthropogenic climate change; critical processes influencing Earth's climate system and the need to curb warming in the short term, from the next 10 to 20 years and beyond 2050. Climate data and its use in projecting future scenarios and in specific litigations. The causal chain that links specific events with climate change, a crucial attribution process to connect this phenomenon with impacts in the legal and political context.

THREE SESSIONS

1 - ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACTS

2- CLIMATE CHANGE AND VULNERABLE GROUPS

3- REGIONAL CLIMATE RISKS AND DISASTER PREPAREDNESS



UNIT 2

IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Environmental and socio-economic impacts of climate change in the region: biodiversity, ecosystems, water resources, air quality, and human health. Unique vulnerabilities of Latin American countries and the intersection of climate change with issues such as poverty and inequality. Effects on vulnerable communities, their resilience strategies, and the importance of integrating their perspectives, knowledge, and practices in climate adaptation efforts and procedural justice. Strategies for disaster preparedness, risk reduction, and fostering resilience. The role of government policies, international aid, and community-led initiatives.

FOUR SESSIONS

- 1 - LEGAL FRAMEWORKS AND INTERNATIONAL LAW
- 2- PROCEDURAL TECHNIQUES AND JUDICIAL REMEDIES
- 3- LANDMARK CASES IN CLIMATE LITIGATION
- 4- EFFECTIVE JUDICIAL SANCTIONS IN THE CURRENT REGIONAL CONTEX

UNIT 3 CLIMATE CHANGE AND LAW



International legal frameworks governing climate change. The role of international courts and tribunals. Effects on human rights and state responsibility. An introduction to climate litigation categories, procedural techniques, innovative approaches, types of remedies, and challenges in enforcing judicial orders. Landmark cases in climate litigation. The intersection of climate change and human rights. Access to justice and standing in litigations. Accountability of state and non-state actors in climate policy. Existing sanctions in the judicial systems of the region's states related to climate justice. Specific environmental jurisdictions and common guidelines for thinking about regional environmental courts.

FOUR SESSIONS

- 1 - RECENT CASES AND ONGOING CLIMATE LITIGATIONS
- 2- BIOME PROTECTION AND THE OBLIGATION OF PRIOR CONSULTATION
- 3- THE OBLIGATION OF REGIONAL COOPERATION
- 4- JUDICIAL BODIES OF ENVIRONMENTAL POLICE

UNIT 4 CLIMATE LITIGATION IN LATIN AMERICA

Overview of climate litigation in the region. Unique judicial challenges and opportunities in Latin America. Fundamental concepts in legal anthropology and indigenous law regarding the protection of key biomes. The impact of colonialism. ILO Convention No. 169 and prior consultations. The interdependence of ecosystems, common challenges, and the essential nature of regional cooperation in addressing climate change. The need to integrate technical bodies of environmental police into judicial structures. The creation of these specialized bodies as a step toward more effective environmental justice. Their interaction with other key actors. Political and budgetary challenges.



INTEGRATION WORKSHOP AND FINAL PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

A key stage in the learning process, the integration workshop will consolidate the knowledge acquired in order to apply it practically. This space is designed to foster interdisciplinary collaboration, combining legal, social, and scientific perspectives in the analysis of specific climate litigation cases. During the final project, participants will put their analytical and creative skills into practice, designing proposals that integrate both theoretical and practical elements. The goal is not only to assess what has been learned, but also to generate innovative and applicable solutions, with initiatives that reflect a comprehensive and transformative approach to addressing climate change challenges.

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FACULTY AND TUTORS PROFILE

The seminars will be led by expert instructors in each subject, selected through comprehensive research conducted among leading institutions in the region. Many members of the teaching team have collaborated with the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. All activities will be supported by specialized tutors in virtual education focused in human rights.

GRADUATE PROFILE



Graduates of the Diploma in Climate Litigation in Latin America and the Caribbean are expected to have the ability to:

- Comprehensively understand the foundations of climate science.
- Analyze scientific evidence to assess arguments and evidence in climate litigation cases.
- Identify and evaluate the environmental and socio-economic impacts of climate change in Latin America and the Caribbean.
- Contextualize climate litigation within the framework of regional vulnerabilities and challenges.
- Apply relevant international legal frameworks for climate change.
- Interpret and apply jurisprudence to reinforce legal arguments in climate litigation.
- Establish connections between climate change and the protection of human rights.
- Design effective legal strategies for climate litigation cases.
- Make informed decisions in the judicial field, integrating scientific, legal, and regional context knowledge.
- Promote judicial practices that contribute to sustainability and safeguard the rights of vulnerable populations.

CERTIFICATION

Certificates will be issued, supported by the **IFBC, The Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences**, and allied universities such as the **National University of José C. Paz**, Argentina.



THE PONTIFICAL
ACADEMY OF SOCIAL
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UNPAZ

**FOR MORE INFORMATION,
VISIT THE IFBC CAMPUS:**



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Climate change through the lens of Pope Francis

“

CLIMATE CHANGE IS A GLOBAL PROBLEM WITH SERIOUS ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, DISTRIBUTIVE, AND POLITICAL DIMENSIONS, AND IT POSES ONE OF THE MAIN CHALLENGES FOR HUMANITY TODAY. THE WORST IMPACTS WILL LIKELY FALL ON DEVELOPING COUNTRIES IN THE COMING DECADES.

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“...today we cannot fail to recognize that a true ecological approach always becomes a social approach, which must integrate justice into discussions about the environment, to listen both to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.”

“It is necessary for developed countries to contribute to resolving this debt by significantly limiting the consumption of non-renewable energy and providing resources to the most needy countries to support policies and sustainable development programs. The regions and countries that are the poorest have fewer opportunities to adopt new models to reduce the environmental impact because they lack the training to develop the necessary processes and cannot cover the costs. Therefore, we must keep in mind that climate change involves differentiated responsibilities.”

“Many of those with more resources and economic or political power seem to focus mostly on masking the problems or hiding the symptoms, trying only to reduce some of the negative impacts of climate change. But many symptoms indicate that these effects may get worse if we continue with the current models of production and consumption.”

Laudato si' Encyclical Letter on the care of our common home (May 24, 2015).

AUTHORITIES

FRAY BARTOLOMÉ DE LAS CASAS INSTITUTE FOR LEGAL RESEARCH (IFBC)

Created by Pope Francis on August 15, 2023, within the framework of the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences, under the functional dependency of the Pan American Committee of Judges for Social Rights and the Franciscan Doctrine (COPAJU).

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Established in accordance with the Founding Act of June 4, 2019, Vatican City, under the inspiration of Pope Francis. It was constituted as a International Private Association of the Faithful and as a legal entity within the canonical order through papal Chirograph on August 15, 2023.

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