

# FABIO DE SA E SILVA

Candidate for the IACHR | 2026–2029 Term

For over two decades, Fabio de Sa e Silva has worked to support individuals facing exclusion and vulnerability, and to address structural challenges to the promotion and protection of human rights – key priorities of the IACHR’s current Strategic Plan.

His experience as a public official, consultant, and scholar has been shaped by a strong commitment to the rights of persons deprived of liberty; the development and advocacy of a citizen-centered public security agenda; and the ongoing effort to expand access to justice.

Recognized for his ability to foster dialogue and negotiation – a skill made especially visible during his time in the federal Executive – Fabio de Sa e Silva will work in close partnership with commissioners, state representatives, civil society organizations, and individuals affected by human rights violations to strengthen the inter-American system amid a complex global landscape.





## HUMAN RIGHTS EXPERIENCE

At the Ministry of Justice, Fabio de Sa e Silva led major initiatives to ensure the rights of persons deprived of liberty.

He joined the Ministry in 2004, shortly after the massive riot at Urso Branco prison, and worked directly to facilitate dialogue between the Brazilian state and the inter-American system, as well as to coordinate a joint action plan with the state government.

He led the *Educating for Freedom* project — a partnership with the Ministry of Education and UNESCO — which resulted in the creation of Brazil's first federal policy on prison education, ensuring people deprived of liberty access to regular classes and the opportunity to pursue higher education while serving their sentences. In this context, he also supported legal reforms to expand incentives for studying in prison.

He spearheaded efforts to secure voting rights for pre-trial detainees and to ensure dignity in the treatment of incarcerated women — producing unprecedented assessments, concrete proposals, and inter-institutional coordination that culminated in permanent policies.

He represented the Ministry on the National Human Rights Council and the National Committee for Human Rights Education, contributing to the drafting of Brazil's National Human Rights Education Plan, which remains in force today.

As a researcher at Ipea, Fabio de Sa e Silva produced key studies to advance human rights institutions, including the *Public Defender's Office Map*, which inspired constitutional amendments to democratize access to justice.

As a consultant, he supported projects to prevent torture and improve prison systems. He contributed to the development of state prison education plans and new guidelines for alternative sentencing policies, and to the training of professionals on the Mandela Rules and the Istanbul Protocol.

He also served as a consultant for the IACHR, contributing to its *Situation of Human Rights in Brazil* report (2019).

## BACKGROUND

Born in the border state of Mato Grosso do Sul—neighboring Bolivia and Paraguay—Fabio de Sa e Silva moved in 1998 to pursue a law degree at the University of São Paulo.

Soon after graduating, he began his career at Brazil's Ministry of Justice, focusing on prison policy. In Brasília, he met Michelle, a university professor and human rights advocate, with whom he shares two children: João Pedro and Manuela.

After his time in the federal government, Fabio de Sa e Silva served as a consultant for international organizations such as UNDP, UNESCO, the International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute (IBAHRI), and the IACHR itself.

He holds an LL.M. from the University of Brasília (2007) and a Ph.D. in Law, Policy, and Society from Northeastern University in the U.S. (2013).

In 2009, he joined the Institute for Applied Economic Research (Ipea) through a national civil service exam. There, he served as Coordinator for Studies on State and Democracy and as Chief of Staff to the Institute's President.

In 2015, he completed a postdoctoral fellowship at Harvard Law School, where he remains an affiliated fellow at the Center on the Legal Profession. Since 2017, he has been a professor at the University of Oklahoma, where he founded a research center dedicated to academic and cultural exchange between Brazil and the United States.

His intellectual and organizational leadership is widely recognized by peers. He was elected Trustee of the Law & Society Association (LSA) in the class of 2023 and is the President-elect of the Brazilian Studies Association (BRASA) for the 2026–2028 term.

# PLATFORM

Despite important advances in equality and non-discrimination throughout the Americas and the Caribbean, human rights continue to face critical challenges across the region.

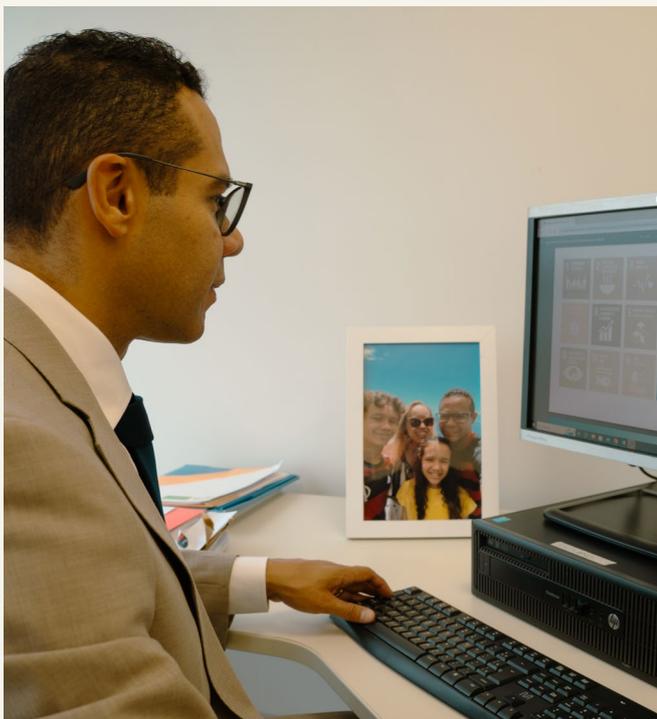
The erosion of multilateralism and the growing difficulty of building consensus — even within the Commission itself — demand a renewed commitment to cooperation among States, civil society, and the inter-American system.

If elected, Fabio de Sa e Silva will bring to the IACHR both his experience in building strong institutions and public policies, and his commitment to dialogue and active listening. He will work in collaboration with fellow commissioners, grounded in the IACHR's Statute and Rules of Procedure:

- To uphold the Commission's autonomy and safeguard the normative legacy of the Commission, the Court, and the Rapporteurships.
- To ensure sound legal reasoning, promoting predictability and legal certainty across the inter-American human rights system;

- To foster coordination between the inter-American and universal human rights systems, avoiding duplication and promoting complementarity;
- To maintain continuous cooperation with States and engage attentively with civil society and people whose rights have been violated;
- To recognize and elevate the Caribbean's legal contributions to the development of inter-American jurisprudence and standards;
- To advance the indivisibility of human rights, with special emphasis on the right to development;
- To promote balance, transparency, and responsibility in the Commission's communications;
- To strengthen friendly settlement procedures as a viable means to address case delays and enhance the system's effectiveness.

Fabio de Sa e Silva is committed to an efficient, accessible, and equitable Commission — capable of meeting today's challenges without losing sight of its essential mission: to promote and protect the dignity of all people across the Americas and the Caribbean.



## TECHNICAL AND ACADEMIC PRODUCTION

Fabio de Sa e Silva is the author of numerous articles, books, and reports on justice, public security, prison systems, and institutional democracy. Many of his recent works have received awards in Brazil, the United States, and Europe.

His scholarship reflects strong analytical skills in evaluating progress and challenges in the implementation of human rights, as well as in the global diffusion of legal norms and practices—core themes for the IACHR's mission.

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## Contacts



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