



CEBES and Abrasco remain mobilized in support of Guilherme Franco Netto

Guilherme was released Sunday, August 9. We are pleased that this just man is once again at liberty—a first victory achieved. We remain mobilized. Please follow and share [this site](#). The fight goes on!

Why this initiative?

Guilherme Franco Netto is an upstanding individual who has dedicated his life to scientific scholarship in collective health, the construction of Brazil's Unified Health System (Sistema Único de Saúde, or SUS), and initiatives to promote socioenvironmental justice.

Guilherme, who received his medical degree thirty-five years ago, is a recognized leading public health expert, specializing in health, the environment, and sustainability. He is a father, grandfather, and very dear friend of many.

This site was created by friends of Guilherme who have come together to speak out against the arbitrary acts committed against him and to defend his dignity and reputation. We stand with Guilherme!

Who is Guilherme Franco Netto?

Guilherme Franco Netto has a long career rendering public services to the country and is an eminent scholar of public health both in Brazil and internationally, always in the defense of more vulnerable peoples.

He received his medical diploma from the Universidade Federal Fluminense and his PhD in epidemiology from Tulane University, in the United States. He served as director of the Department of Environmental Health and Workplace Health Surveillance, within the Ministry of Health, from 2007 to 2013. He was formerly a consultant in environmental health and sustainable development for the Pan-American Health Organization/WHO. Since 2015, he has been a researcher at Fiocruz.

He has always applied his medical training to the defense of public health and the SUS.

He was a member of the National Health Council and rapporteur for the National Council on Health Surveillance.

He participated actively in the construction of Brazil's National Health Surveillance Policy and in strengthening environmental health surveillance within the SUS, promoting health and prevention, and controlling the deleterious public health effects of such environmental factors as pollution and deforestation.

He has organized and taken part in vital debates aimed at constructing public policies in the field of environmental health.

Guilherme was one of the creators of the First National Conference on Environmental Health, which gathered hundreds of people from across Brazil to define initiatives and guidelines in the realm of health and the environment. He was also rapporteur at the First National Conference on Health Surveillance.

He coordinated such major Fiocruz endeavors as the monitoring of the public health impact of the oil spill along Brazil's northeastern coastline and the collapse of the Brumadinho dam, in Minas Gerais.

His contribution to public service and his work in the field of environmental health has earned him the recognition of prominent institutions in Brazil, including Fiocruz, Abrasco, and CEBES, and also of the scientific communities at large, both in Brazil and internationally.

Letter in support of and solidarity with the physician and researcher Guilherme Franco Netto

Everyone who has the privilege of knowing the physician and researcher Guilherme Franco Netto through his professional work and personal life was shocked by the news of his arrest on Friday, August 7, 2020. This sentiment was soon replaced by indignation, when it was discovered that no formal charges had been filed against him.

For unclarified reasons, and without a single concrete motive based on evidence or information from investigations, a devoted civil servant with an exemplary history of scholarship and active engagement in issues of public health and environmental concern was unexpectedly taken to jail. Authorities failed to employ the appropriate measures called for in the investigation of administrative acts, and Guilherme was publicly and appallingly made to look like a criminal. It is unacceptable that a public servant who has always fulfilled his duties should be subjected to such unfair treatment.

Guilherme Franco Netto is a scientist and intellectual committed to public health, sustainability, and environmental justice in our country and Latin America as a whole. He formerly worked for the Brazilian Ministry of Health and for the Pan-American Health Organization and is currently on the staff at the Oswaldo Cruz Foundation (Fiocruz).

Guilherme has always conducted himself with honesty, transparency, and respect for public assets.

Guilherme played a lead role in organizing responses to major public health disasters in Brazil in recent years, such as the failures of the tailings dams in Mariana and Brumadinho, Minas Gerais, and the oil spill that hit Brazil's northeastern and southeastern coasts. Guilherme is involved with such topics as the health effects of pesticides and the promotion of agroecology, access to sanitation, and the health of Indigenous and other communities of traditional peoples. In his work, he strives to elucidate damages suffered and support the people whose health has been impacted, by providing information that can be used to underpin the shaping of public policy, determine socioenvironmental reparations, and foster sustainable, healthy territorial spaces. Overall, his work has effectively contributed to expanding the Brazilian citizen's right to health, a hallmark of our

Constitution, but one which, unfortunately, is still denied to many vulnerable populations.

Brazil has just reached one hundred thousand deaths from Covid-19 and three million officially recognized cases. This drives home the importance of the Unified Health System (Sistema Único de Saúde, or SUS) and of science itself, where Fiocruz also plays a fundamental part. The arbitrary arrest of a physician, researcher, and SUS staff member is symbolic, and should sound a warning.

We demand that Guilherme be accorded due respect. There is no justification, either ethically or judicially, for Guilherme's arrest, and therefore we call for his immediate release. We underscore the principle of the presumption of innocence, the right to present a complete defense, and the need for explanations regarding the motives behind his imprisonment and for transparency in the investigations. We cannot allow precipitous accusations and conclusions to tarnish the honor of institutions and persons devoted to the country.

Those of us who recognize Guilherme's work have mobilized in his support and are paying close attention to all developments. We are here to manifest our respect and admiration for the researcher Guilherme Franco Netto and, as friends and colleagues, to express our indignation over his arrest and demand transparency and justice.

#westandwithguilherme

Brazilian Collective Health Association (Associação Brasileira de Saúde Coletiva – ABRASCO)

Brazilian Center for Health Studies (Centro Brasileiro de Estudos de Saúde – Cebes)