

THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION'S REPORT OF THE CENTRO OF SOCIAL STUDIES TURNED THE PAGE OF DENIALISM OF HARASSMENT AND ABUSE OF POWER

6th Letter from the Collective of Victims of Moral and Sexual Harassment, Abuse of Power, and Intellectual Extractivism at the Centro de Estudos Sociais

Courage is the most important of all the virtues because without courage you can't practice any other virtue consistently.

We can't be kind, true, merciful, generous, or honest. You can practice any virtue erratically, but nothing consistently without courage.

– Maya Angelou

About a year ago, the Collective of Women Victims of Harassment at the Centre for Social Studies (Centro de Estudos Sociais/CES) of the University of Coimbra initiated a process to validate allegations of moral and sexual harassment, abuse of power, and intellectual extractivism (the theft of work and ideas) by institution members. Today, a week after the Independent Commission (IC) presented its inquiry results, we, women of the Collective, affirm that **the pattern of harassment and abuse of power has finally been recognised.**

We have won the first battle.

Our ongoing struggle against harassment within academia, both in and beyond its walls, persists. The Centre for Social Studies must rise to the occasion and demonstrate the courage to implement the measures suggested by the Independent Commission's (IC) results. Currently, the eradication of harassment, violence, and discrimination within higher education institutions remains an untold tale. The university is far from being a safe haven.

Harassment and Abuse of Power: Oblivion or Accountability?

March 13 is a significant date in the struggle against all forms of gender-based violence in academic settings. At a time when the standard response to harassment cases in university environments is that allegations of harassment lack sufficient evidence to confirm

denunciations, an independent commission has now confirmed what we have been asserting for nearly a year: **patterns of abuse of power and harassment persist among senior staff members at the Centre for Social Studies of the University of Coimbra, Portugal.**

The Independent Commission has diligently fulfilled its role, adhering to the terms of reference published on CES's website. With the report's publication, the tactics of defamation, retaliation, censorship, and threats used to undermine the complainants are laid bare and no longer tenable. **This report marks a turning point, dispelling the denialism surrounding harassment and abuse of power, and validated by the Centre for Social Studies.** CES promptly apologised to the victims, the short shortcomings we will address shortly.

The burning question at the moment is: What now? More specifically: **What now, CES? What now, University of Coimbra? What now, Ministry of Science, Technology, and Higher Education? What now, judicial authorities?** An assertive report has recognised the consistency of repeated malpractice and situations of abuse experienced by different individuals at CES over many years if not decades. What comes next? Will the report fade into oblivion, obscured by superficial measures seemingly justified by fragile excuses —such as legal statutes of limitations and the illusion that harassment is something of the past? Or will the democratic principles upon which the institution is founded, and the norms established in its codes of conduct be taken seriously? Will measures be implemented to hold the guilty accountable, ensuring that these harmful practices never again resurface?

We affirm our commitment to work towards truth, justice, reparation, and the prevention of further harassment and abuse identified by the Independent Commission (IC). We will persist in fulfilling our role.

I. TRUTH

1. Our Complaints

We are a collective of women who have endured moral and sexual harassment, abuse of power, and intellectual extractivism at CES. In our first collective letter, published on April 17, 2023, we denounce the systematic pattern of abuse that has disproportionately affected women at CES

over the years. In our second letter,¹ we reiterate the urgent need to break with the past pact that prioritises the production of truth based on a hierarchical power structure. Instead, we chose to stand in solidarity with Indigenous Mapuche activist Moira Millán, who, while not an academic, has been a victim of sexual abuse and public defamation, perpetuating the processes of colonial silencing and inferiorisation that the theory produced at CES so astutely recognises and challenges, and which the institution theoretically opposes.

On September 30, 2023, our collective submitted a 213-page file dossier to the IC. This dossier contains meticulously documented **reports of moral and sexual harassment, abuse of power, and intellectual extractivism**, supported by detailed facts and evidence, including emails, chat screenshots from the time of the incidents, contracts, articles, book manuscripts, and **18 witnesses** willing to corroborate all of the facts narrated.

In total, we were **ten courageous women** who came forward to report the abuse and violence that persisted for over 20 years in the history of CES. For the first time, after years of fear of retaliation, threats against our reputations, negligence, or active cover-up by those who had responsibilities and the duty to act, we felt safe to speak out. Finally, our voices have been heard by an independent body—one guided by principles of impartiality, autonomy, and independence. We no longer harbour the fear of repercussions for sharing our painful experiences. Our reports accounted for approximately one-third of the complaints submitted to the IC, which, according to the report, comprised 32.

2. Independent Commission's Report²

The report unequivocally recognises patterns of harassment and abuse of power perpetrated by individuals in positions of authority at CES. This conclusion arises from a thorough analysis of the evidence and the validation of testimonies and interviews conducted using the in-depth content analysis technique. The criteria for this analysis can be found on page 42 of the report. An important point to consider is that some individuals who were denounced admitted to the existence of harassment, which was widely known.

¹ The public letters in Spanish are available here:

<https://rcinfo.noblogs.org/cartas-de-moira-millan-e-do-coletivo-de-vitimas-a-boaventura-s-santos/>

² The IC report in Portuguese is available here:

<https://www.ces.uc.pt/ficheiros2/files/Relatorio%20Final%20-%20CI.pdf>

Our testimonies describe, in detail, repeated situations of violence that correspond to practically all categories of moral harassment, sexual harassment, sexual abuse, and abuse of power outlined in the IC Report between pages 68 and 70. **The combination of our experiences sheds light on a distressing pattern of moral and sexual harassment, sexual abuse, and abuse of power:** the humiliations and aggressive disqualifications we suffered impacted the self-esteem of some of us. Rumor and intrigue created isolation that, in turn, placed barriers to our careers, limiting them as a result. We were overwhelmed by excessive and inappropriate demands within and beyond the scope of our professions. As a result, being overwhelmed prevented us from meeting defined goals, and failing to meet defined goals added to our vulnerability, such implications that we owed more as compensation. We received messages at inappropriate hours, which kept us in a state of permanent alert and anxiety. The lack of respect for our rest hours and family life caused severe disruptions in our personal relationships. Systematic demands for tasks that did not suit our researcher status diminished us and blocked our potential.

Additionally, derogatory or inappropriate comments about our appearance or clothing humiliated us and made us vulnerable. Rejection and violent criticism of our intellectual work, which we later saw exploited in publications and classes without credit for our contribution, angered and demotivated us. Imposing certain concepts and theoretical approaches, with retaliation when we did not yield, limited our academic freedom. More or less subtle proposals for intimate relationships resulted in career retaliation when firmly refused. Furthermore, attempts to control our sexual life and life plans, including the decision to be mothers, were highly invasive and disturbing. Even sexual relations without free and informed consent caused continued and severe psychological harm, especially in situations of deep vulnerability for some of us, e.g., persons in positions of greater power. Non-consensual personal contact caused discomfort and kept us on alert, preventing us from enjoying a healthy and enriching academic environment. Ultimately, the absence of boundaries prevented the separation between personal and professional life and promoted the normalisation of harassment. Even individual attempts to impose boundaries were disrespected and violated. Efforts to affirm boundaries often resulted in multiple outbursts of anger that were emotionally draining. Being subjected to outbursts of rage, which served as an example of what we would experience if we dared to denounce, led us to extreme exhaustion.

The systematic abuse, which occurred repeatedly while we were studying or working at the Centre for Social Studies, is not confined to the past. They resulted in numerous psychological damages, including constant crying spells, panic attacks, chronic muscle pain, anxious depressive syndrome, gastrointestinal dysfunctions, restless leg syndrome, post-traumatic stress disorder, burnout symptoms, urinary incontinence, disruption of menstrual cycles due to high-stress levels, weakened self-esteem and motivation, persistent mental confusion, institutional loneliness, chronic anxiety and guilt, and insecurity crises in academic or other activities. Additionally, the material harm resulting from harassment, sexual abuse, and abuse of power in our lives continues to affect us to this day.

We commend the methodological rigor adopted by the IC, which is evident in how it transparently acknowledged the limitations in validating testimonies. The IC recognised that certain reported acts could not be confirmed. We understood that the IC is neither a judicial nor an administrative body, and we did not expect it to verify every situation or find complete alignment between complainants' accounts and those accused. Anyone is capable of understanding that such an outcome would not be possible. Our trust in the IC's work stemmed from our belief that an impartial group, analysing our testimonies rigorously, would inevitably uncover sufficiently conclusive indications of the existence of an **ecosystem of harassment and abuse of power at CES**. Over the years, this ecosystem has been **sustained by a closed hierarchy entrenched in a circle of limited authority, which became accustomed to concealing and silencing complaints**.

All the abusive behaviors recognised in the report—moral harassment, sexual harassment, sexual abuse, and abuse of power—were reported by us with rigor, detail, and evidence because we recounted the stories of our lives and what we systematically faced for years while occupying different roles and establishing various relationships within CES. It wasn't the first time we considered these issues, but it was the first opportunity to speak out.

However, we believe that the Independent Commission should have gone further into its investigative work, particularly regarding two aspects that, from our perspective, are essential:

1. **In recognising the intricate matrix of our vulnerabilities and analysing the intersecting dimensions of the violence we endured.** Our group comprises women from the Global South, from disadvantaged backgrounds and diverse sexual orientations. It is crucial to emphasise that among the complainants are Indigenous women who carry the intergenerational trauma of centuries of colonial violations perpetuated by universities and their Eurocentric model of power. Our gender, origins, and individual identities determined the degree and type of violence we confronted. Our differences in belonging, translated into different stories of suffering and pain. The absence of an intersectional lens to analyse violence, harm, trauma, and suffering limits the understanding of different vulnerabilities and degrees of violence.

In this letter, we affirm our solidarity with **Moira Millán** and **Miye Nadya Tom**, Indigenous women who belong to Native peoples whose bodies and territories have borne systematic harm from acts of extractivism, appropriation, harassment, and abuse. They have been victims of severe violence in their interactions with CES. As evidence of this commitment and solidarity, Moira Millán and Miye Nadya Tom sign this letter alongside us—the collective of women who jointly filed a complaint with the IC.

2. **Since the IC chose not to analyze the systematic intellectual extractivism and violation of our labour rights,** we dedicate a specific section of this letter to this point.

3. CES's Apology Letter

On the day the report was presented, before its public discussion, the Management and Presidency of the Scientific Council of CES published an open letter in which they validated the report's conclusions and apologised to the victims. In this letter, while acknowledging that they are "not certain about everything that may have occurred, when, and how," they recognise that the IC "[validated the] testimonies." They further state that "the reported situations resulted from individual actions," which they intend to address, along with institutional failures that fostered an environment prone to abuse of power.

We commend the CES's response to our letters from the outset and acknowledge that our demands have been partially addressed. We applaud the validation of the report, the commitment to "take all necessary steps to ensure there are consequences for the complaints," and the willingness to listen to those seeking reparations. Furthermore, we welcome the commitment to combat the precarity of labour—a serious problem in Portuguese academia

that affects both early-career researchers and those with extensive experience. However, we cannot ignore the gaps in recognising the complexity of the framework of violence that permeates university institutions.

Our vulnerabilities are not limited to precariousness alone. First and foremost, harassment disproportionately affects women. However, it is a mistake to assume that only men engage in such behavior or that placing women in positions of power constitutes a definitive solution to the problem. **CES must actively combat structural sexism, sexist management models, and other forms of vulnerability.**

Moira Millán, an Indigenous Mapuche activist who has been a victim of sexual abuse and defamation, is not an academic. She could not recognise herself in the CES's open letter, which committed to making the necessary change within academia. The history of violence and racism persists whenever a European university perpetuates the silencing and invisibility of Indigenous women. Structural sexism, colonialism, and racism permeate interpersonal relationships, social practices, and institutions. From CES, we expect recognition of these issues and active efforts to **create safe spaces for all women, men, and gender-diverse individuals**, even when national scientific policies remain unchanged.

It is also expected that CES denounces the silencing mechanisms used by the accused. CES failed to take a firm stance against the defamation of the complainants and other processes of revictimisation and dehumanisation, such as the public sharing of private correspondence as a form of retaliation against the complainants. CES also fell short of expectations when it remained silent in the face of an attack on academic freedom, which occurred when an international book that precisely analysed harassment in scientific production environments and processes was canceled following legal maneuvers (*Sexual Misconduct in Academia: Informing an Ethics of Care in Academia*, ed.. Erin Pritchard e Delyth Edwards, Routledge, 2023). We emphasise that the book in question underwent rigorous peer-reviewed scientific evaluation, adhering to internationally accepted scientific criteria. We strongly urge CES to acknowledge that more could have been done and to take steps to rectify the situation.

II. Justice

1. For Justice to Prevail, the Perpetrators Must Be Identified and Held Accountable

Although the report refrains from mentioning names due to the commitment to confidentiality and maintaining the anonymity of the victims, it underscores the pivotal role played by the ‘power elite’ within CES, which is comprised of a small number of researchers who have directly and indirectly dominated the highest management and decision-making positions in the institutional hierarchy for years. It is undeniable that Boaventura de Sousa Santos (BSS) has been a central figure in this group. BSS served as the director of CES from its founding in 1978 until 2019 when he assumed the position of emeritus director—a role from which he suspended himself following the public accusations.

We demand that CES take immediate action based on the IC report. This includes a serious process of accountability for those involved in moral and sexual harassment, abuse of power, and intellectual extractivism. It is unacceptable for CES to absolve itself of responsibility by citing time limitations to initiate disciplinary and/or administrative proceedings. This amounts to merely creating a facade of accountability and keeping the aggressors within the institution without further consequences. Perpetrators should face consequences, and individuals violating CES’s Code of Conduct should not continue as members of the institution. CES should not renew employment contracts for those directly implicated in harassment and abuse. In this regard, the CES Code of Conduct emphasizes:

“CES and the members of their Community, regardless of their contractual relationship, have the duty to ensure that CES’s spaces are safe and free from moral and sexual harassment, adopting preventive and proactive measures such as adhering to best practices and investing in information, awareness, and reporting mechanisms to combat various forms of harassment (III.c) Moral and sexual harassment 15).”

It additionally states:

“The Management is particularly responsible for ensuring an appropriate response to violations of the conduct outlined in this code as it pertains to discrimination, workplace harassment, or sexual harassment.” (34.).

We understand that there are sufficient legal mechanisms to initiate a serious accountability process, which must be transparent, ensuring full access to information for victims and other interested parties. The truth, now finally acknowledged, demands justice, and there can be no justice without accountability. We will initiate a detailed legal analysis process of our dossier and the IC report to ensure that the response to the report is not impunity and lack of consequences. We will bring these complaints to the relevant bodies within the University of Coimbra and the **Ministry of Science, Technology, and Higher Education and file complaints with the Portuguese Public Prosecutor's Office**. We know that the law tends to protect aggressors. Still, we will persist in seeking justice and exposing the legal limitations that impose incredibly short statutes of limitations to report and seek justice for sexual crimes and workplace harassment. A mere six months to press charges renders the complaints ineffective and allows perpetrators to continue practicing indiscriminate harassment without consequences.

Some of us have decided to lift the anonymity to ensure the consequential action of CES and other bodies with administrative and judicial responsibility. **We assert that we are willing to share our stories** should the perpetrators persist in denying the abuses they are accused of, evading responsibility and the associated consequences. We have revealed our identities so that other affected individuals can approach us, join us, and find the necessary strength within our collective to seek justice for decades of violence.

The report states that 29% of the accused individuals, which amounts to 4 people, were directly implicated in cases of moral and/or sexual harassment or abuse of power. In the complaints we submitted, we identified **Boaventura de Sousa Santos, Bruno Sena Martins, and Maria Paula Meneses as responsible for direct acts of abuse of power, sexual harassment, sexual abuse, and moral harassment.**

Moreover, the Commission's conclusions underscore critical factors that perpetuated patterns of abuse and harassment. These factors include the absence of precise tools and guidelines, as well as inadequate formal and inclusive communication (p. 73) and **the complicity of CES's management** that, spanning successive administrations, minimised indications of inappropriate behaviour among members of its community, **thus reinforcing the normalisation of abusive**

patterns. In our complaints, we explicitly assert that the bodies overseeing CES's management and direction cannot absolve perpetrators of our suffering. **It is imperative that the Centre for Social Studies thoroughly investigate the cover-ups and negligence and apply appropriate sanctions to the perpetrators based on the severity of their actions.**

2. A Call for the CES Ethics Committee to Act on the Abusive Violation of Labour Rights and Intellectual Extractivism

The dossier we submitted to the Independent Commission reported **abusive labour rights violations.** Violations included exhausting working hours, denying the right to holidays and the right to strike, the lack of a separation between work and leisure time, the absence of compensation or unfair remuneration for requested services, and abusive requests, among other practices.

The testimonies of intellectual extractivism refer to different situations: 1) requests for written works or reviews from research assistants, doctoral students, or junior researchers, which served as inspiration and/or were incorporated into published articles and books without proper authorship credit (acknowledgment in the preface of a publication is not acknowledging the authorship of the contributors); 2) extracting ideas shared in brainstorming sessions, often conducted in a profoundly violent environment, and later incorporated into publications without due credit; 3) co-writing publications without sharing authorship; 4) publishing a book manuscript entirely written by a doctoral student and published exclusively in the name of the supervisor.

During its investigation, we submitted ample evidence of abusive labour rights violations and **the appropriation of some of our intellectual work** to the IC. We provided testimonial evidence, email exchanges, employment contracts, and manuscripts of articles and books. The IC considered that, although intellectual extractivism is a category of moral harassment, it would be challenging and complex to analyse all the information provided to investigate these occurrences adequately. The IC applied a similar understanding to issues related to violations of the Labour Code. The IC decided not to evaluate complaints in either of these categories because they fall outside the IC's function and because it believes this assessment falls under the Ethics Committee's jurisdiction.

We conclude that the IC did not analyse a significant structural portion of the complaints of moral harassment and abuse of power, namely the exploitation of student and researcher labour and the intellectual extractivism aimed at sustaining the academic productivity rates of senior researchers. We have gathered sufficient evidence of misconduct by Boaventura de Sousa Santos that falls into these categories, which still require further investigation. **It is up to the CES Ethics Committee to act immediately on these reports, opening an appropriate channel to receive complaints and supporting information. It is also imperative that the CES Ethics Committee meet with the Independent Commission to be briefed on the cases reported thus far.**

3. CES's Culture of Retaliation and Defamation of Women Who Attempted to Report

Since the reports of allegations of CES's institutional culture of harassment hit the news and exploded on the internet last year, we have seen women who dared to narrate their firsthand experiences of harassment and who made public complaints, received threats, were smeared, and re-victimised. The perpetrators were swift in using the media, legal mechanisms, and their networks of contacts and influence to spread slanderous lies about the complainants.

In particular, we denounce the attempt to silence **Mapuche activist Moira Millán**, who, long before last year's media explosion, had already courageously reported the case of sexual assault she suffered at the hands of Boaventura de Sousa Santos. Her voice was only heard with attention when it was joined with the voices of other complainants. In addition to the trauma of the sexual abuse she experienced, there was a process of silencing and re-traumatisation, including attacks on her reputation. These are all indicative of the racist and colonial dimensions of violence.

Isabella Gonçalves was the first victim to come forward publicly after the publication made headlines. Following her media coverage, Boaventura de Sousa Santos subjected Isabella Gonçalves to further harassment by attempting to contact her with a proposal for reconciliation. In practice, however, this proposal proved to be an authoritarian move to promote her silencing through his legal networks in Brazil.

Lieselotte Viaene. In addition to media slander, Boaventura de Sousa Santos disseminated false information and stereotypical sexist classifications throughout international professional

networks. He accused Viane of seeking revenge for a disciplinary procedure that resulted in CES terminating her employment contract. CES admitted to a Portuguese journalist that the Centre had never terminated her contract. However, CES has yet to correct this misinformation publicly.

Miye Nadya Tom faced threats of legal action from her aggressor, who conducted a smear campaign against her character and integrity. She received intimidating emails from CES in an attempt to silence her. Last year, she witnessed a personal and private message being published without her consent, on social media, by one of the individuals accused of covering up her complaint.

CES must set an example and take a stand against this culture of retaliation, and replace it with a culture of compassion, by taking public complaints seriously and diligently investigating each complaint. **CES must also publicly oppose the defamation and censorship that have long been implemented to discredit complaints about the Centre's culture of harassment.**

III. RESTORATIVE MEASURES

As we have tirelessly repeated: It's not defamation, it's not McCarthyist persecution, it's not mediafare! The terms that capture what we have been denouncing during the last year are sexual harassment, sexual abuse, moral harassment, and abuse of power. And this is what the IC recently confirmed.

Similarly, we are not advocating for cancellation, *lawfare*, or persecution. **We want the truth to be recognised, reparations for the harm we have suffered, and guarantees of non-repetition**, so that we do not have to go through this again and that other women do not experience what we have endured. It can all be summed up in one word: Justice!

In response to CES's demonstrated willingness to discuss forms of reparation with victims while also taking into account the competencies and obligations of public authorities, we urge that the following measures be taken urgently:

AT CES

1. Immediately open disciplinary proceedings against Bruno Sena Martins and Maria Paula Meneses. Despite when events that were reported occurred and justifications based on statutes of limitation, the Commission's report is explicit in stating the violation of the

CES Code of Conduct by individuals directly responsible for acts of harassment, sexual abuse, and abuse of power. Administrative procedures must be initiated and presented to the General Assembly of CES, to remove both of these individuals from the institution's research staff, most urgently from activities related to teaching and student guidance, coordination of projects involving junior researchers, and coordination of doctoral programmes and courses, until the conclusion of the administrative and disciplinary proceedings.

2. Immediately initiate administrative **procedures to remove Boaventura de Sousa Santos from CES's roster of researchers through the CES General Assembly**. End Boaventura de Sousa Santos's self-suspension and determine that his suspension is a decision of the CES Directorate. Transparently and clearly define the terms of suspension and the types of actions and activities this researcher will no longer be allowed to engage in until the administrative procedures concerning him are concluded. The suspension must consider the protection of doctoral students and researchers, subordinate to this Professor.
3. Immediately initiate proper administrative procedures to **investigate the extent of other researchers' involvement in practices of covering up acts of harassment and abuse of power**. Ensure that sanctions are applied to all individuals involved, according to the degree of responsibility and participation and per the severity of the acts.
4. Ensure that **no individual directly involved in practices of abuse of power and harassment identified by the IC, has their employment contract renewed by CES**.
5. **Ensure transparency, access to information, and public distribution** of all administrative procedures and disciplinary processes resulting from the complaints and the IC's report, with particular emphasis on ensuring the victims' right to information.
6. Ensure **the Ethics Commission immediately acts on the cases of intellectual extractivism and labour rights violations**, which were not analysed by the CI. To this end, the Ethics Commission should meet with the IC to be informed about what the Commission received and investigated and establish secure mechanisms to receive further complaints and information about these violations.

7. **Send the version of IC's Report that includes proper identification of the accused individuals to the Public Prosecutor's Office**, requesting that it investigate criminal conduct. Additionally, particular attention is given to cases that still fall within the statute of limitation, such as the crime of abuse of power committed by individuals who held positions in the CES's social bodies, project management, and doctoral program coordination.
8. Issue a **public acknowledgment/apology** that: a) **condemns the defamation processes** faced by the women who reported the culture of harassment at CES, corrects misinformation, and condemns acts of retaliation and censorship against reports of harassment and abuse of power; b) **pledges a firm commitment to women facing various forms of discrimination**, particularly those originating from the Global South and Indigenous women.
9. CES **publicly affirms the importance of academic freedom**, particularly in situations of harassment and gender-based violence in university environments, distancing itself from positions that validated the censorship of the publication that analysed the culture of harassment at CES.
10. Promptly organise meetings between the CES Directorate and the victims willing to **discuss restorative measures for each individual**.

TO THE UNIVERSITY OF COIMBRA

1. Issue a **public statement** acknowledging the pattern of harassment, sexual abuse, and abuse of power at the Center for Social Studies, recognising the failures and the responsibility of the University of Coimbra in ensuring effective protection and reporting mechanisms to safeguard the rights of victims.

TO THE PORTUGUESE LEGAL AUTHORITIES

1. **Immediately dismiss any ongoing defamation proceedings against whistleblowers** who denounced patterns of harassment and abuse of power at the Centre for Social Studies.

2. Proceed with the investigation of the facts outlined in the report to ascertain criminal conduct, especially for **the Portuguese Public Prosecutor's Office, which should request the information compiled by the Independent Commission to investigate criminal conduct that is not yet statute-barred.**

IV. MEASURES TO AVOID FUTURE OCCURRENCES

We request that measures and concrete proposals for action be taken to ensure that harassment (sexual and moral) and abuse of power never happen again.

FOR CES, THIS INVOLVES:

1. In the short term, publish an **action plan** that includes a schedule for implementing all measures the IC recommended in its report.
2. **Creating consultation methods in discussion with the public** that will be implemented to ensure the participation of students and researchers, especially those in vulnerable positions, in implementing institutional changes and recommendations from the Independent Commission.
3. Develop mechanisms for prevention, response, and confrontation of situations of moral, sexual, and labour abuse. Ensure the necessary training and capacity-building to prevent moral, sexual, and labour abuses. This will serve as a guide for the entire CES community, enabling researchers and staff to detect, manage, and prevent abuse in its multiple dimensions (protocol of action), ensuring a safe channel for victims to report, and providing support services for victims (psychological support, legal guidance, etc.).
4. **Periodically publish disaggregated data on harassment complaints** received and the outcomes of investigations into these complaints, with ongoing review of established mechanisms addressing harassment and abuse of power.

FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF COIMBRA:

1. **Immediately review reporting procedures and establish protocols for reporting** cases of harassment and abuse of power against students and researchers. Ensure protection for whistleblowers, with particular attention to students and researchers in vulnerable

positions, including foreign, Indigenous, and temporally affiliated students and researchers with the university.

2. **Ensure the participation of students and researchers in the review of protocols and procedures for reporting** cases of harassment and abuse of power, as well as measures to protect the victims.

3. **Periodically publish disaggregated data** on harassment complaints at the University of Coimbra and the outcomes of the investigations conducted by the competent bodies, with ongoing review of procedures and protocols to overcome the overall impunity in cases of harassment and abuses of power.

FOR PORTUGUESE REPUBLIC ASSEMBLY AND POLITICAL PARTIES:

1. **Review and propose legislative changes relative to the statute of limitation** that currently prevent sexual crimes, practices of sexual harassment and moral harassment, and abuse of power from being reported. Only through legislative changes can those responsible be held accountable and brought to justice.

V. FINAL REFLECTION:

WILL CES HAVE THE ABILITY TO SEIZE THIS HISTORICAL MOMENT OF CULTURAL CHANGE?

Harassment and abuse of power existed at CES. Specific individuals suffered harm and had their lives, careers, and reputations severely impacted. The complaints were neither vague nor unnamed. We reported specific individuals who committed abusive acts, covered them up, or facilitated them. The IC's report must have consequences. The conditions for institutional and cultural change are in place.

We are fully aware of the historical importance of this process. The conclusions of the IC's report represent a significant achievement for those on the front lines in the fight against harassment. Our struggle continues not only for our perpetrators to be held accountable but for this process of pain and struggle to hold social value and contribute to challenging the dominant patriarchal and colonial logic that, for centuries, has been perpetuated in educational and research institutions. CES has the opportunity to lead a process of truth, justice, reparation, and

non-repetition that can allow it to reinvent itself as an institution committed to transforming social reality and, thus, setting an example for other institutions that are also reinventing themselves in the face of frequent reports of violence and abusive practices. In the hope that our efforts will result in cultural, political, and institutional change (legislation in different countries, university statutes, regulations, etc.), we present below our names, lifting our anonymity and publicly committing to this agenda.

Persons who wish to contact us and women who want to join our collective to discuss strategies for obtaining reparations may contact the lawyer representing the collective. Her contact information is shared at the end of this letter.

Copies of this letter were sent to the University of Coimbra, the Directorate and Ombudsman of the Centre for Social Studies, the Public Prosecutor's Office, and the Ministry of Science, Technology, and Higher Education of Portugal.

The Signatories of this Letter:

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