

THIRTY YEARS OF COMBATING SLAVE LABOR IN BRAZIL: CHALLENGES TO THE EFFECTIVENESS OF INSPECTIONS AND THE PROTECTION OF LABOR RIGHTS.

Authors [Leite, Giovana Paula Ramos Silveira (1) (3); Lopes, Cristiane Maria Sbalqueiro (2) (3); Lino, André Rezende Soares (1) (3)]

Authors affiliation (1) Federal University of Minas Gerais, Brazil; (2) Labor Prosecutor's Office (MPT); (3) School of Higher Studies of the Federal Prosecution Service (ESMPU).

giovanaprsl@gmail.com

Paper prepared for presentation at the
“9th Conference of the Regulating for Decent Work Network”
on *Strengthening labour institutions and worker voice to*
deliver decent employment
at the International Labour Office Geneva, Switzerland
2-4 July 2025

Abstract

In 1995, the Mobile Inspection Special Group (GEFM) was established to combat contemporary slave labor in Brazil. However, thirty years later, this practice remains a harsh reality in the country, despite legislative advancements and institutional actions. In 2023 alone, more than 3,240 workers were rescued from such conditions (Brazil, 2024). This crime directly violates human dignity and requires a more robust and effective state response.

In this context, inspections conducted primarily by the Ministry of Labor and Employment and the Labor Prosecutor's Office play a crucial role in repressing these practices. Nevertheless, the challenge remains to ensure that, during and after inspections, existing legal norms translate into effective protection for workers. This research aims to address two key questions: What factors determine the effectiveness of actions to combat slave labor and human trafficking in Brazil today? What institutional and operational gaps hinder the effectiveness of labor regulation in these contexts?

The research adopts a mixed-methods approach (quantitative and qualitative), involving a review of the relevant literature and an analysis of reports from members of the Labor Prosecutor's Office and, potentially, other institutional partners participating in task forces conducted in the post-pandemic period (2022-2024). Data collection will include document analysis of the mobile group's action outcomes, followed by the application of standardized questionnaires and semi-structured interviews with those involved in the operations. The study will also consider the application of new artificial intelligence tools, where applicable, in the planning and execution of inspections.

Currently in the documentary review phase, this study expands the debate on the effectiveness of labor regulation in contexts of severe rights violations by analyzing how institutional factors, such as the coordination between different agencies and the quality of inspection instruments, influence the outcomes of enforcement actions. Thus, it contributes to public policy by proposing evidence-based recommendations for improving inspections.

The study aims to identify factors that influence the effectiveness of inspection actions, such as documentation standards, criteria for recognizing slave labor, and the causes of inspection failures. Practical recommendations will be provided to enhance the effectiveness of institutional actions, including proposals for improving regulations and leveraging technology for monitoring and planning actions. These insights will contribute to more efficient inspections and inspire the development of more robust regulatory models that are sensitive to social and economic vulnerability contexts.

Keywords: Brazil; Forced Labor; Labour Inspection; Labour Rights; Public Institutions

Copyright 2025 by author(s). All rights reserved. Readers may make verbatim copies of this document for non-commercial purposes by any means, provided that this copyright notice appears on all such copies.

1. Introduction

Contemporary slave labor, legally defined in Brazil as “work in conditions analogous to slavery” under Article 149 of the Brazilian Penal Code (as amended by Law No. 10,803/2003), remains a persistent and widespread violation of human rights in the country. From 1995, when the Mobile Inspection Special Group (GEFM) began operating with exclusive responsibility for investigating such cases, until 2024, a total of 65,598 individuals were officially rescued from these exploitative conditions (SmartLab, 2025).

Over the past three decades, Brazil has made considerable progress in addressing this issue. Key developments include the consolidation of an interinstitutional inspection structure, the creation of public registries of offending employers, and the enhancement of regulatory and enforcement tools. Nevertheless, the number of rescued workers remains high and has shown an upward trend. This persistence reflects both the enduring structural vulnerabilities rooted in Brazil’s history of colonization and slavery, and the increasing capacity and engagement of state institutions in addressing the crime.

This study aims to analyze the Brazilian public policy framework for combating contemporary slave labor and to reflect on the impacts of institutional action in eradicating such exploitation. It focuses on the role of each institution involved in the Mobile Inspection Special Group and its contributions to the enforcement and protection system.

The research presented here is part of the broader project “Slave Labor and Human Trafficking in the Records of the Mobile Task Force System of the Labor Prosecution Office (2022–2024),” initiated on January 28, 2025, and funded by the Federal Prosecutors’ School (Escola Superior do Ministério Público da União). The project spans two years and seeks to answer two core questions: What factors determine the effectiveness of current anti-slavery and anti-trafficking interventions in Brazil? And what institutional and operational gaps hinder effective labor regulation in these contexts?

This article corresponds to the first phase of the study. It presents a documentary analysis of the regulations and procedures adopted by the institutions involved in the fight against slave labor in Brazil: the Ministry of Labor and Employment (MTE), the Labor Prosecution Office (MPT), the Federal Public Defender’s Office (DPU), and the Federal Prosecution Office (MPF). Manuals, ordinances, normative instructions, and technical notes were examined to produce a critical systematization of the normative architecture currently guiding Brazil’s institutional actions to combat contemporary slavery.

2. Literature review

Contemporary slave labor in Brazil is legally defined under Article 149 of the Brazilian Penal Code, which outlines four specific forms of conduct that constitute the crime: forced labor, exhausting working hours, degrading working conditions, and debt bondage (BRASIL, 2003)¹. This definition represents a significant departure from the classical notion of slavery, which was historically associated solely with the physical restriction of freedom. Instead, it incorporates structural violations that compromise human dignity.

As Livia Miraglia (2008) emphasizes, slave-like labor should be understood as a direct violation of the principle of human dignity, transcending mere physical restraint and encompassing situations that undermine the worker's ability to lead a dignified existence, such as degrading working conditions, exhausting work hours, and debt bondage (MIRAGLIA, 2008, p. 151).

The interpretation of this criminal offense within the labor law domain is supported by administrative regulations that guide the activities of labor inspection agencies. One of the most important of these is Ordinance No. 1,293/2017 of the Ministry of Labor and Employment, which provides detailed guidelines for identifying situations that configure contemporary slave labor.

Ordinance No. 1,293/2017 establishes specific criteria for characterizing work in conditions analogous to slavery, grounded in the provisions of International Labour Organization Convention No. 29, the American Convention on Human Rights, and Article 149 of the Brazilian Penal Code. According to the Ordinance, slave labor includes situations involving forced labor, exhausting working hours, degrading working conditions, restrictions on freedom of movement due to debt, and the retention of workers at the worksite through restrictions on transportation, overt surveillance, or the confiscation of personal documents. The regulation explicitly defines degrading working conditions as any form of violation of human dignity, particularly regarding health, safety, and hygiene standards. These parameters

¹ Article 149 – Reduction of a Person to a Condition Analogous to Slavery

Reducing someone to a condition analogous to slavery, whether by subjecting them to forced labor, to exhausting workdays, to degrading working conditions, or by restricting, through any means, their freedom of movement due to debt contracted with the employer or their representative:

Penalty – Imprisonment from two to eight years and a fine, in addition to the penalty corresponding to any violence committed.

Paragraph 1 – The same penalties shall apply to anyone who:

I – Restricts the worker's use of any means of transportation, with the intent of retaining them at the workplace;

II – Maintains overt surveillance at the workplace or seizes personal documents or belongings of the worker, with the intent of retaining them at the workplace.

Paragraph 2 – The penalty is increased by half if the crime is committed:

I – Against a child or adolescent;

II – Motivated by prejudice based on race, color, ethnicity, religion, or national origin.

are mandatory for labor inspectors when evaluating and characterizing labor situations during inspections (BRASIL, 2017).

Contemporary slave labor in Brazil is legally defined under Article 149 of the Brazilian Penal Code, which outlines four specific forms of conduct that constitute the crime: forced labor, exhausting working hours, degrading working conditions, and debt bondage (BRASIL, 2003). This definition represents a significant departure from the classical notion of slavery, which was historically associated solely with the physical restriction of freedom. Instead, it incorporates structural violations that compromise human dignity.

As Livia Miraglia (2008) emphasizes, slave-like labor should be understood as a direct violation of the principle of human dignity, transcending mere physical restraint and encompassing situations that undermine the worker's ability to lead a dignified existence, such as degrading working conditions, exhausting work hours, and debt bondage (MIRAGLIA, 2008, p. 151).

The interpretation of this criminal offense within the labor law domain is supported by administrative regulations that guide the activities of labor inspection agencies. One of the most important of these is Ordinance No. 1,293/2017 of the Ministry of Labor and Employment, which provides detailed guidelines for identifying situations that configure contemporary slave labor.

Ordinance No. 1,293/2017 establishes specific criteria for characterizing work in conditions analogous to slavery, grounded in the provisions of International Labour Organization Convention No. 29, the American Convention on Human Rights, and Article 149 of the Brazilian Penal Code. According to the Ordinance, slave labor includes situations involving forced labor, exhausting working hours, degrading working conditions, restrictions on freedom of movement due to debt, and the retention of workers at the worksite through restrictions on transportation, overt surveillance, or the confiscation of personal documents. The regulation explicitly defines degrading working conditions as any form of violation of human dignity, particularly regarding health, safety, and hygiene standards. These parameters are mandatory for labor inspectors when evaluating and characterizing labor situations during inspections (BRASIL, 2017).

3. Data and methods

This research adopts a qualitative approach, focusing exclusively on the documentary analysis of legal instruments, internal guidelines, institutional manuals, and other official documents produced by the institutions responsible for combating slave labor in Brazil. The objective is to examine how institutional structures, regulatory frameworks, and operational

procedures have been constructed and organized in recent decades to address this serious human rights violation.

Primary sources included key normative documents and institutional tools issued by the Ministry of Labor and Employment (MTE), the Labor Prosecution Office (MPT), the Federal Public Defender's Office (DPU), and the Federal Prosecution Office (MPF). Among the documents analyzed are Normative Instruction MTP No. 2/2021 and the Manual for Combating Work in Conditions Analogous to Slavery, both under the Secretariat of Labor Inspection (SIT/MTE); the Internal Regulations of the National Coordinating Body for the Eradication of Slave Labor (CONAETE), institutional guidelines, and standardized task force reports from the MPT; Ordinance No. 320/2022 and the operational framework of the Specialized Group for Assistance to Rescued Workers (GETRAE) from the DPU; and various ordinances and internal regulations of the Executive Committee for Combating Slave Labor and Human Trafficking within the MPF.

The analysis focused on institutional mandates, inter-agency coordination mechanisms, standardized operational procedures, and legal strategies aimed at preventing and repressing contemporary slavery. The study also considers recent innovations in inspection tools, such as the adoption of new technologies and digital information systems.

Although the overall research project focuses on the post-pandemic period (2022–2024), earlier documents that remain in force or are relevant to understanding the current institutional framework were also examined. In total, 55 documents were analyzed², as listed in the following table:

Analyzed Documents – Classification by Institution

No.	Document	Responsible Institution	Classification
1	Technical Note No. 01/2018	MPT / CONAETE	Technical Note
2	Technical Note No. 09/2020	MPT / CONAETE/COORDIG UALDADE/GT Migrants	Technical Note
3	Technical Note No. 03/2020	MPT / CONAETE	Technical Note
4	Technical Note No. 02/2020	MPT / CONAETE/GT Migrants	Technical Note
5	Technical Note No. 01/2022	MPT / CONAETE	Technical Note
6	Technical Note No. 02/2022	MPT / CONAETE	Technical Note
7	Technical Note No. 18/2024	MPT / CONAETE	Technical Note

² The number “8” in the table is a group of 22 documents.

8	Guidelines No. 01 to 22	MPT / CONAETE	Internal Guidelines
9	Task Force Report (standard model)	MPT / CONAETE	Operational Report Model
10	Internal Regulations of CONAETE	MPT / CONAETE	Internal Regulation
11	Manual for Combating Work in Conditions Analogous to Slavery (2011)	MTE / SIT	Technical Manual
12	Normative Instruction MTP No. 2, November 8, 2021	MTE / SIT	Normative Instruction
13	Ordinance MTE No. 550/1995	MTE	Ordinance (Creation of GEFM)
14	Ordinance MTE No. 1.293/2017	MTE	Ordinance (Employer Registry)
15	Decree No. 6.481/2008	MTE / Federal Government	Decree (Worst Forms of Child Labor)
16	ILO Conventions No. 29 and No. 105	ILO (ratified by Brazil)	International Norms
17	American Convention on Human Rights (Pact of San José)	OAS / Brazil	International Treaty
18	DPU Ordinance No. 320, March 31, 2022	DPU	Ordinance (Creation of GETRAE)
19	PGR/MPF Ordinance No. 20, February 21, 2022	MPF	Ordinance (Executive Commission)
20	PGR/MPF Ordinance No. 638, July 9, 2018	MPF	Ordinance (Slave Labor Project)
21	Normative Instruction SG/MPF No. 6, April 11, 2018	MPF	Normative Instruction
22	PGR/MPF Ordinance No. 648, August 18, 2015	MPF	Ordinance (Promotion of Citizenship)
23	Service Instruction No. 4, September 25, 2017	MPF	Service Instruction
24	Resolution CSMPF/RSU No. 42, August 6, 2019	MPF	Resolution (Criminal Attribution)

4. Empirical findings of the study: institutional frameworks and roles in combating slave labor in Brazil

4.1.1 Ministry of Labor and Employment (MTE)

The Ministry of Labor and Employment (MTE), by virtue of its authority as the federal executive body responsible for labor policy, plays a central role in executing inspection actions aimed at identifying and suppressing labor in conditions analogous to slavery in Brazil. The structure responsible for this activity is the Labor Inspection Secretariat (SIT), whose national coordination is carried out by the General Coordination for the Eradication of Labor in Conditions Analogous to Slavery and Human Trafficking (CGTRAE), formerly the Division for the Eradication of Slave Labor (DETRAE).

CGTRAE is the unit in charge of screening and processing reports received through the Ipê System, an electronic platform that enables the classification and prioritization of cases based on the level of risk and urgency of the reported situations. After screening, complaints are forwarded to the units responsible for executing inspection actions—primarily the Mobile Inspection Special Group (GEFM) or the Regional Labor Superintendencies (SRTs), depending on the location and nature of the case.

Established by Ordinance No. 550/1995, the GEFM represents a milestone in the institutionalization of Brazil's public policy to combat contemporary forms of slavery. Its operations are characterized by national reach and flexible team composition, which allow for rapid and coordinated responses to the most serious complaints. GEFM operations are planned based on preliminary assessments and situational diagnostics, including information gathering, site mapping, and analysis of data regarding the economic activity and the employer's history.

The most recent regulatory development that systematizes inspection procedures is Normative Instruction MTP No. 2/2021. This regulation establishes the technical and administrative criteria for the work of Labor Inspectors (AFTs), consolidating objective indicators for identifying situations of labor in conditions analogous to slavery in accordance with Article 149 of the Brazilian Penal Code. Additionally, IN No. 2/2021 defines the stages of inspection, documentation procedures, and the requirement for police accompaniment in

certain situations (Brasil, 2021), a measure adopted following institutional security recommendations after the Unaí Massacre³.

Another important reference tool for labor inspection is the Manual for Combating Work in Conditions Analogous to Slavery, published in 2011. This document consolidates over a decade of inspection practices and guides auditors in identifying elements that characterize contemporary slave labor, as well as the appropriate operational procedures for its detection and suppression (Brasil, 2011).

In recent years, there has been a notable incorporation of technology to improve the efficiency and intelligence of inspection actions. Highlights include the use of georeferencing tools, the integration of databases containing territorial and socioeconomic information, and the implementation of systems such as the Labor Inspection Intelligence Dashboard and “SIT Radar,” the latter being a transparency portal with inspection data. These tools allow for cross-referencing of complaints, risk areas, and recurrence of violations, supporting the selection of targets and the strategic planning of field operations.

Through the work of SIT and CGTRAE, the MTE provides the foundational pillars of the public policy to combat slave labor in Brazil, forming the structural basis for all state-led actions against modern slavery. It can be said that the MTE shares leadership in the fight against labor exploitation—in all its forms, but especially in relation to slave-like labor—with the Labor Prosecution Service (MPT). The MTE is primarily responsible for administrative and inspection functions, while the MPT is tasked with accountability and legal enforcement, mainly through judicial means.

4.1.2 Labor Prosecution Service (MPT)

The Labor Prosecution Service (Ministério Público do Trabalho – MPT) plays a strategic institutional role in addressing contemporary slave labor in Brazil. Its mandate includes the promotion and defense of workers’ fundamental rights and the accountability of employers who subject individuals to degrading conditions or illicit forms of labor exploitation.

The organizational structure that centralizes and coordinates MPT’s actions on this matter is the National Coordination for the Eradication of Slave Labor (CONAETE). CONAETE’s Internal Regulations detail its responsibilities, which include the execution and evaluation of National Strategic Projects, engagement with external bodies and institutions,

³ National Union of Labor Inspectors (SINAIT). (no date) Unaí Massacre – 20 years without justice and counting. Available at: <https://unai.sinait.org.br/> (Accessed: 26 June 2025).

the drafting of internal guidelines and technical notes, and the organization of task forces. These task forces are one of the main operational tools used by the MPT to combat slave labor, enabling coordinated and emergency action in situations of serious rights violations. Their format fosters integration with other public bodies, such as the Ministry of Labor and Employment, the Federal Public Defender's Office, the Federal Police, and the Federal Highway Police (Brasil, 2021).

As a methodological instrument to support field operations, CONAETE developed a standardized task force report model. This document guides MPT officials in systematizing the information collected during operations, including the identification of employers, the description of the working conditions found, workers' testimonies, identified irregularities, and actions taken. It also compiles data on social and legal protection measures provided to victims, strengthening the quality and consistency of the information that will support future judicial and extrajudicial actions (Brasil, 2024).

CONAETE's normative activity is further reflected in the publication of Technical Notes that guide the conduct of MPT members in complex or nationally significant cases. Among the most recent documents, Technical Note No. 01/2022 stands out for addressing the illegality of agreements that aim to remove employers from the "dirty list" of slave labor. The note reaffirms the MPT's authority and the need for transparency and social control over registries of violators (Brasil, 2022). Another example is Technical Note No. 02/2022, which establishes the non-applicability of statutes of limitation to labor claims related to modern slavery, based on international human rights instruments and the jurisprudence of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (Brasil, 2022).

In addition to Technical Notes, CONAETE issues internal guidelines to standardize prosecutors' actions in cases of slave labor and human trafficking. These guidelines cover the procedures for registering and submitting reports, criteria for identifying conditions analogous to slavery, and specific measures to safeguard the rights of migrant workers and those in situations of extreme vulnerability. Also noteworthy are the directives regarding collective legal actions, the drafting of Conduct Adjustment Agreements (TACs), and engagement with the judiciary and other oversight and protection agencies.

CONAETE's work thus serves as a reference in building an institutional model to combat slave labor, one that is based on strategic planning, normative production, procedural standardization, and interinstitutional coordination—elements that have contributed significantly to improving public policies aimed at eradicating this form of labor exploitation in Brazil.

4.1.3 Federal Public Defender's Office (DPU)

The Federal Public Defender's Office (Defensoria Pública da União – DPU) began to play a more structured and active institutional role in the fight against contemporary slave labor following the issuance of Administrative Rule No. 320, dated March 31, 2022. This regulation established guidelines for the extraordinary engagement of DPU public defenders in legal assistance cases involving workers rescued from conditions analogous to slavery, marking a significant step toward the consolidation of a comprehensive and coordinated state response to the protection of victims.

One of the main instruments created by the regulation was the Specialized Group for Assistance to Workers Rescued from Slavery-Like Situations (GETRAE), composed of federal public defenders selected through a specific call for applications. GETRAE's mission is to provide comprehensive legal assistance to victims, surpassing the previous institutional limitations that restricted the DPU's engagement in labor-related matters. Accordingly, Rule No. 320/2022 established that the restrictions ordinarily imposed on the DPU in labor matters do not apply to GETRAE, allowing it to address all legal demands arising from slave labor situations.

GETRAE's assistance is wide-ranging and includes referring victims to the social protection network, in addition to legal support in areas such as social security, welfare benefits, immigration regularization, and documentation. Even in cases where the situation identified by the task forces does not formally constitute slave labor, the rule ensures that comprehensive legal assistance is extended to all socioeconomically vulnerable workers found during inspections.

In the area of professional development, the DPU has invested in the continuous training of its personnel for specialized action in this field. The Office of Institutional Articulation (SGAI), in coordination with the Personnel Management Department and the Working Group on Slave Labor (GTTE), leads these efforts in partnership with the National School of the Federal Public Defender's Office (ENADPU). Together, they offer an annual National Course on Combating Contemporary Slave Labor. In addition to this course, other periodic training sessions are promoted to enhance and deepen public defenders' knowledge of the legal, social, and operational aspects related to the protection of rescued workers.

The institutionalization of GETRAE and the strengthening of capacity-building initiatives reflect the expansion of DPU's role in Brazil's public policy framework for combating slave labor, consolidating its function as a key institution in ensuring access to justice and the full protection of victims.

4.1.4 Federal Prosecution Service (MPF)

The role of the Federal Prosecution Service (Ministério Público Federal – MPF) in combating contemporary forms of slavery and human trafficking was institutionally strengthened by Administrative Rule PGR/MPU No. 20, issued on February 21, 2022. This regulation established an executive committee tasked with analyzing national policies and actions related to these issues, as well as monitoring ongoing criminal and labor-related complaints and investigations. The committee is responsible for proposing and implementing concrete measures aimed at the prevention and repression of such practices, thereby enhancing the MPF's institutional capacity to fulfill its constitutional mandate (Brasil, 2022).

The consolidation of this regulatory framework is the result of a gradual institutional process to reinforce the MPF's role in this area, initiated through earlier normative acts. Notably, Administrative Rule PGR/MPF No. 648, dated August 18, 2015, introduced measures to promote the citizenship rights of individuals rescued from conditions analogous to slavery. This rule reflected the institution's concern with ensuring both social and legal assistance to victims, in coordination with other entities within the protection network (Brasil, 2015).

Another important milestone was Internal Norm SG/MPF No. 6, dated April 11, 2018, which established internal procedures for processing documents and initiating proceedings related to slave labor cases, thereby creating more systematic workflows for handling information arising from labor inspections. In addition, Administrative Rule PGR/MPF No. 638, dated July 9, 2018, approved the project "Slave Labor: Outcomes of the MPF's Actions," aimed at institutional data systematization and evaluation of the agency's previous actions (Brasil, 2018).

Furthermore, Service Instruction No. 4, dated September 25, 2017, issued specific guidelines for the registration of proceedings related to documents submitted to the MPF's 2nd Coordination and Review Chamber, when associated with the possible occurrence of the crime of reducing a person to a condition analogous to slavery. This provision aims to ensure the proper handling and monitoring of related criminal investigations (Brasil, 2017).

Lastly, Resolution CSMPF/RSU No. 42, dated August 6, 2019, assigned jurisdiction over the crime of reduction to a condition analogous to slavery to all public prosecutors within the general criminal area, thereby expanding the institutional reach and the prosecution of such cases (Brasil, 2019).

Taken together, these regulatory instruments demonstrate the MPF's institutional efforts to improve its investigative, prosecutorial, and policy-making mechanisms in the fight against slave labor and human trafficking, with a focus on unit integration and strengthening

interagency collaboration within the justice and social protection systems. Nevertheless, Brazil still faces high levels of impunity regarding criminal accountability for such practices.⁴

4.1.5 Interinstitutional Coordination

Interinstitutional coordination among the entities examined is a central element in Brazil's strategy to combat contemporary forms of slavery. The complexity of inspection operations and the diversity of measures required to ensure comprehensive victim protection demand coordinated action among various public bodies, each with specific competencies and responsibilities, but all sharing the common goal of ensuring the effectiveness of fundamental labor rights.

Task forces, the main operational structure of this coordination, are composed of representatives from the Labor Inspection Secretariat (SIT), the Labor Prosecution Service (MPT), the Federal Public Defender's Office (DPU), the Federal Prosecution Service (MPF), and law enforcement agencies such as the Federal Police and the Federal Highway Police. Operational planning is carried out jointly, through preparatory meetings among the involved agencies to define strategies, responsibilities, priorities, and operational protocols, as set out by the National Coordination for the Eradication of Slave Labor (CONAETE).

Within the scope of labor inspection, the General Coordination for the Eradication of Labor in Conditions Analogous to Slavery and Human Trafficking (CGTRAE) is responsible for centralizing the screening of complaints received through the Ipê System and coordinating the logistical aspects of operations, engaging partner agencies according to the nature and severity of the cases.

The participation of the Labor Prosecution Service is guided by specific CONAETE directives, which establish, for instance, the obligation to prepare detailed reports at the conclusion of each operation, the need for coordinated action with other institutional partners, and the observance of standardized procedures for characterizing cases of slave labor and human trafficking.

The Federal Public Defender's Office, through the Specialized Group for Assistance to Rescued Workers (GETRAE), ensures comprehensive legal assistance to victims, including referrals to the social protection network and support for social security, welfare, and migration-related matters. Moreover, the DPU, in coordination with its National School (ENADPU), the General Secretariat for Institutional Coordination (SGAI), and the Working Group on Slave Labor

⁴ Read: **Haddad, C.H.B., Miraglia, L.M.M. and Silva, B.F.A. da** (2020) *Slave labour in the balance of justice*. 1st ed. Belo Horizonte: Carlos H. B. Haddad. E-book. Available at: https://e675222a-38ae-46f0-9270-e03d059b1ecd.filesusr.com/ugd/635046_7d1b3705960c46da8419f4b2ed5bdf39.pdf (Accessed: 23 May 2025).

(GTTE), provides ongoing training to enhance the qualifications of its members for participation in task forces.

Within the Federal Prosecution Service, the executive committee established by Administrative Rule PGR/MPU No. 20/2022 reinforces institutional integration by monitoring public policies related to combating slave labor and human trafficking, in addition to overseeing the related criminal investigations.

In conclusion, the interinstitutional coordination structure enables a faster and more effective response to reports of slave labor, integrating enforcement, protection, and rights-promotion actions. Nevertheless, the next steps in this study aim to conduct an empirical analysis of interinstitutional performance, with a focus on the MPT, in order to assess the effectiveness of this coordination, which depends on factors such as the clarity of institutional responsibilities and the logistical and operational capacities of the agencies involved.

5. Conclusions

This study has shown that Brazil has developed a complex and comprehensive legal and institutional framework to combat contemporary forms of slavery. The documentary analysis of instruments produced by the Ministry of Labor and Employment (MTE), the Labor Prosecution Service (MPT), the Federal Public Defender's Office (DPU), and the Federal Prosecution Service (MPF) reveals a relatively consolidated interinstitutional structure, marked by clearly defined mandates, standardized procedural flows, and specific tools for diagnosis and intervention.

The articulation among these institutions, particularly through the use of joint task forces, demonstrates the existence of a coordinated public policy approach that integrates inspection, legal accountability, and victim protection. Each institution contributes in a complementary manner, with the MTE assuming a central role in inspection and administrative action; the MPT leading in legal enforcement and institutional coordination; the DPU trying to ensure access to justice for rescued workers; and the MPF contributing through the criminal investigation and prosecution of exploitative practices.

However, despite the existence of this robust normative and institutional architecture, several challenges remain. Persistent levels of impunity, logistical and operational constraints, and gaps in long-term support for victims continue to limit the effectiveness of state responses. Therefore, future research must focus on empirical assessments of the actual implementation of these mechanisms, particularly regarding the effectiveness of interinstitutional coordination and the concrete outcomes for workers rescued from conditions analogous to slavery.

By identifying institutional strengths and weaknesses through evidence-based analysis, it is possible to propose improvements that strengthen Brazil's efforts to eradicate labor exploitation and uphold fundamental rights. Addressing the structural and operational bottlenecks in the current system is essential to ensure that the legal framework translates into effective protection and justice for vulnerable workers.

Referências

Brasil (1995) *Ordinance No. 550, of 15 October 1995*. Establishes the Special Mobile Inspection Group (GEFM). Brasília: Ministry of Labor and Employment.

Brasil (2008) *Decree No. 6.481, of 12 June 2008*. Regulates Article 3 of Convention No. 182 of the ILO and lists the worst forms of child labor. Brasília: Federal Government.

Brasil (2011) *Manual for Combating Work in Conditions Analogous to Slavery*. Brasília: Ministry of Labor and Employment (SIT). Available at: https://www.gov.br/trabalho-e-emprego/pt-br/assuntos/inspecao/arquivos/manual_trabalho_analogo_2011.pdf (Accessed: 25 May 2025).

Brasil (2015) *PGR/MPF Ordinance No. 648, of 18 August 2015*. Brasília: Federal Prosecution Service (MPF). Available at: <https://www.mpf.mp.br> (Accessed: 25 May 2025).

Brasil (2017) *Ordinance No. 1.293, of 28 December 2017*. Regulates the Employer Registry ("Dirty List"). Brasília: Ministry of Labor and Employment (MTE). Available at: <https://www.gov.br/trabalho-e-emprego> (Accessed: 25 May 2025).

Brasil (2017b) *Service Instruction No. 4, of 25 September 2017*. Brasília: Federal Prosecution Service (MPF).

Brasil (2018) *PGR/MPF Ordinance No. 638, of 9 July 2018*. Approves the Project "Slave Labor: MPF's Action Results". Brasília: MPF.

Brasil (2018b) *Normative Instruction SG/MPF No. 6, of 11 April 2018*. Brasília: MPF.

Brasil (2019) *Resolution CSMPF/RSU No. 42, of 6 August 2019*. Defines criminal attribution of slavery-related offenses. Brasília: MPF.

Brasil (2021) *Normative Instruction MTP No. 2, of 8 November 2021*. Brasília: Ministry of Labor and Employment. Available at: <https://www.in.gov.br/en/web/dou/-/instrucao-normativa-n-2-de-3-de-dezembro-de-2021-364261170> (Accessed: 25 May 2025).

Brasil (2022a) *PGR/MPU Ordinance No. 20, of 21 February 2022*. Brasília: MPF.

Brasil (2022b) *DPU Ordinance No. 320, of 31 March 2022*. Establishes GETRAE. Brasília: Federal Public Defender's Office (DPU).

Brasil (2022c) *Technical Note CONAETE No. 01/2022*. Brasília: Labor Prosecution Service (MPT).

Brasil (2022d) *Technical Note CONAETE No. 02/2022*. Brasília: Labor Prosecution Service (MPT).

Brasil (2024) *Task Force Report – Standardized Model*. Brasília: MPT / CONAETE.

HADDAD, C.H.B., MIRAGLIA, L.M.M. and SILVA, B.F.A. da (2020) *Trabalho Escravo na Balança da Justiça*. 1st edn. Belo Horizonte: Carlos H. B. Haddad. Available at: https://e675222a-38ae-46f0-9270-e03d059b1ecd.filesusr.com/ugd/635046_7d1b3705960c46da8419f4b2ed5bdf39.pdf (Accessed: 23 May 2025).

International Labour Organization (1930) *Convention No. 29 on Forced Labour*. Geneva: ILO.

International Labour Organization (1957) *Convention No. 105 on the Abolition of Forced Labour*. Geneva: ILO.

MPT / CONAETE (2018) *Technical Note No. 01/2018*. Brasília: Labor Prosecution Service.

MPT / CONAETE (2020a) *Technical Note No. 02/2020*. Brasília: Labor Prosecution Service.

MPT / CONAETE (2020b) *Technical Note No. 03/2020*. Brasília: Labor Prosecution Service.

MPT / CONAETE (2020c) *Technical Note No. 09/2020*. Brasília: Labor Prosecution Service.

MPT / CONAETE (2024) *Technical Note No. 18/2024*. Brasília: Labor Prosecution Service.

MPT / CONAETE (n.d.) *Internal Regulations of CONAETE*. Brasília: Labor Prosecution Service.

MPT / CONAETE (n.d.-b) *Guidelines No. 01 to 22*. Brasília: Labor Prosecution Service.

Radar SIT (n.d.) *Labor Inspection Intelligence Dashboard (Radar SIT)*. Available at: <https://sit.trabalho.gov.br/radar/> (Accessed: 25 May 2025).

SINAIT (2024) *Chacina de Unaí: 20 anos*. Available at: <https://unai.sinait.org.br/> (Accessed: 25 May 2025).