

Francesca Lessa, PhD

Contact Information

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AT A GLANCE

Since completing her PhD, Dr Lessa has built a track record of *excellent research in human rights and transitional justice*. Dr Lessa has published one monograph, nine articles in peer-reviewed journals, nine book chapters, and three edited volumes. She regularly writes op-eds for *Al Jazeera*, *The Argentina Independent*, and *Puchero News*. Her research has been funded, among others, by the European Commission, the British Academy, the Leverhulme Trust, the Society for Latin American Studies, and the Economic and Social Research Council in the UK, as well as the Open Society Foundations' Human Rights Initiative. Dr Lessa has delivered presentations about her work at research, government and practitioners' institutions in *Europe*, the *US*, and *South America*, including at the UN, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, the International Center for Transitional Justice, the Chilean Ministry of Justice and Human Rights, the Universidad de Buenos Aires, the City University of New York, and the Pontificia Universidade Católica de Minas Gerais (Brazil). She regularly presents her research at key conferences in her field, such as the *Latin American Studies Association*, the *International Studies Association*, and the *Law and Society Association*. Finally, she has been interviewed by the BBC, the New York Times, CCTV America, Uruguayan national TV channels, *Canal10* and *Canal5*, and national radios, *Radio Uruguay*, *CX30* and *AM Libre*.

EDUCATION

- 09/2005 – 01/2010 *PhD*, Department of International Relations, **London School of Economics and Political Science**, United Kingdom
- 09/2002 – 12/2003 *Master of Arts in International Studies and Diplomacy* (awarded with Distinction), Centre for International Studies and Diplomacy, **School of Oriental and African Studies**, University of London, United Kingdom
- 09/1999 – 08/2002 *Bachelor of Arts in European Studies* (Second Upper Class 2:1), **Royal Holloway**, University of London, United Kingdom

CURRENT POSITION

- 08/2016 to present *Marie Skłodowska-Curie Research Fellow*
Project "Operation Condor: Accountability for Transnational Crimes in South America," **Latin American Centre**, Oxford School of Global and Area Studies, University of Oxford, United Kingdom
Brief description: I am conducting a three-year long project to study present-day accountability efforts to provide redress for the transnational crimes committed within the framework of Operation Condor. Operation Condor was a secret transnational network of intelligence and repressive operations set up in the mid-1970s by the dictatorships of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay, to persecute political opponents all across South America. The research focuses on criminal proceedings in domestic tribunals in Uruguay and Argentina, as well as archival documents and targeted interviews.

PREVIOUS POSITIONS

- 05/2015 to 07/2016 *Post-Doctoral Research Officer, Latin American Centre*, School of Interdisciplinary Area Studies, University of Oxford, United Kingdom
- 10/2014 – 07/2015 *Visiting Professor*, Department of Political Science and International Studies, **Universidad Torcuato Di Tella**, Buenos Aires, Argentina
- 04/2013 – 10/2014 *Principal Investigator, Latin American Centre*
- 11/2012 – 04/2015 *Post-Doctoral Research Officer and Associated Teaching Staff, Latin American Centre*
- 02/2011 – 04/2015 *International Country Specialist, Chr. Michelsen Institute*, Bergen, Norwegian Centre for Human Rights, University of Oslo and Universidad Diego Portales, Santiago
- 02/2011 – 10/2012 *Research Assistant and Associated Teaching Staff, Latin American Centre*
- 06/2010 – 01/2011 *Research Associate for the Latin America International Affairs Programme, IDEAS Centre, London School of Economics and Political Science*, United Kingdom
- 03/2010 – 06/2010 *Visiting Lecturer*, Faculty of Psychology, **Universidad de la República**, Uruguay
- 10/2006 – 06/2009 *Graduate Teaching Assistant*, Department of International Relations, **London School of Economics and Political Science**, United Kingdom

FELLOWSHIPS, GRANTS AND AWARDS

- 09/2018 to present *SCR Member and College Advisor*, St Antony's College, University of Oxford
- 08/2016 – 07/2019 *European Commission, Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions, Individual Fellowship (Global) (€224,962.20)*
- 04/2015 – 05/2016 *British Academy/Leverhulme Trust Small Research Grant (£10,000)*
- 05/2015 – 04/2016 *University of Oxford's ESRC Impact Acceleration (£45,270)*, with Dr Diego Sanchez-Ancochea
- 10/2014 – 12/2015 *Open Society Foundations (\$24,000)*, with Professor Leigh Payne
- 03/2013 *John Fell OUP Research Fund (£7,500)*, University of Oxford
- 10/2011 – 10/2014 *Junior Research Fellow*, St Anne's College, University of Oxford
- 05/2011 *Overseas Conference Grant (£200)*, British Academy
- 09/2007 – 06/2008 *RJ Vincent Scholarship (£1,000)*, Department of International Relations, London School of Economics and Political Science, United Kingdom; *Central Research Fund grant (£1,000)*, University of London; *Postgraduate Travel Grant (£600)*, UK Society for Latin American Studies

09/1999 – 06/2002 *Bedford Entrance Scholarship*, Royal Holloway, University of London, United Kingdom.

PUBLICATIONS

Journal Articles

- Lessa, Francesca. “Operation Condor on Trial: Justice for Transnational Human Rights Crimes in South America” *Journal of Latin American Studies* available on First View at <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/journal-of-latin-american-studies/article/operation-condor-on-trial-justice-for-transnational-human-rights-crimes-in-south-america/C2A765BAB0E45A1260053E1E8DC0AE82>;
- Lessa, Francesca. 2015. “Justice beyond Borders: The Operation Condor Trial and Accountability for Transnational Crimes in South America”. *International Journal of Transitional Justice* 9(3): 494-506;
- Payne, Leigh, Francesca Lessa and Gabriel Pereira. 2015. “Overcoming Barriers to Justice in the Age of Human Rights Accountability”. *Human Rights Quarterly* 37(3): 728–754
- Lessa, Francesca and Cara Levey. 2015. “From Blanket Impunity to Judicial Opening(s): H.I.J.O.S. and Memory Making in Postdictatorship Argentina (2005–2012)”. *Latin America Perspectives* 42(3): 207-225;
- Lessa, Francesca. 2014. “Elusive Justice, Changing Memories and the Recent Past of Dictatorship and Violence in Uruguay: An Analysis of the 2012 Public Act in the Gelman case”. *International Journal of Conflict and Violence* 8(1): 75-90;
- Lessa, Francesca, Tricia D. Olsen, Leigh A. Payne, Gabriel Pereira and Andrew G. Reiter. 2014. “Overcoming Impunity: Pathways to Accountability in Latin America”. *International Journal of Transitional Justice* 8(1): 75-98;
- -----, 2014. “Persistent or Eroding Impunity? The Divergent Effects of Legal Challenges to Amnesty Laws for Past Human Rights Violations”. *Israel Law Review* 47(1): 105-131;
- Burt, Jo-Marie, Gabriela Fried Amilivia and Francesca Lessa. 2013. “Civil Society and the Resurgent Struggle against Impunity in Uruguay (1986–2012)”. *International Journal of Transitional Justice* 7(2): 306-327;
- Lessa, Francesca. 2011. “Beyond Transitional Justice: Exploring Continuities in Human Rights Abuses in Argentina between 1976 and 2010”. *Journal of Human Rights Practice* 3(1): 25-48.

Books and Edited Books

- Lessa, Francesca. 2014. *¿Justicia o impunidad? Cuentas pendientes en el Uruguay post-dictadura*. Montevideo: Penguin Random House Uruguay;
- Lessa, Francesca. 2013. *Memory and Transitional Justice in Argentina and Uruguay: Against Impunity*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan (paperback edition December 2014). Shortlisted for the Latin American Studies Association “Best Recent History and Memory Book Contest;”
- Lessa, Francesca and Leigh A. Payne (eds.), 2012. *Amnesty in the Age of Human Rights Accountability: Comparative and International Perspectives*. Cambridge University Press;
- Fried, Gabriela and Francesca Lessa (eds.), 2011. *Luchas contra la impunidad: Uruguay 1985-2011* [Struggles against Impunity: Uruguay 1985-2011]. Montevideo: Trilce;
- Lessa, Francesca and Vincent Druliolle (eds.), 2011. *The Memory of State Terrorism in the Southern Cone: Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Book Chapters

- Lessa, Francesca and Cara Levey. 2018. “Human Rights Activists and Advocacy in South America.” In *Handbook of South American Governance*, edited by Pía Riggiorozzi and Christopher Wylde. London and New York: Routledge, 286-295;
- Lessa, Francesca and Elin Skaar. 2016. “Uruguay: Halfway Towards Accountability.” In *Transitional Justice in Latin America: The Uneven Road from Impunity towards Accountability*, edited by Elin Skaar, Jemima Garcia-Godos, Cath Collins. Abidgon: Routledge, 77-102;

- Lessa, Francesca. 2013. “Investigative Commission on the Kidnapping and Assassination of Former National Representatives Zelmar Michelini and Héctor Gutiérrez-Ruiz (Uruguay),” “Parliamentary Investigative Commission on the Situation of Disappeared Persons and its Causes (Uruguay)” and “Peace Commission (Uruguay)”. In *Encyclopedia of Transitional Justice*, edited by Lavinia Stan and Nadya Nedelsky. New York: Cambridge University Press, Volume 3: 255-260; 353-357 and 361-366;
- Lessa, Francesca. 2012. “Barriers to Justice: The *Ley de Caducidad* and Impunity in Uruguay.” In *Amnesty in the Age of Human Rights Accountability: Comparative and International Perspectives*, edited by Francesca Lessa and Leigh A. Payne. Cambridge University Press: 123-151;
- Lessa, Francesca and Gabriela Fried. 2011. “Las múltiples máscaras de la impunidad: la Ley de Caducidad desde el Sí Rosado hasta los desarrollos recientes.” In *Luchas contra la impunidad: Uruguay 1985-2011*, edited by Gabriela Fried and Francesca Lessa. Montevideo Trilce: 31-44;
- Lessa, Francesca. 2011. “*No hay que tener los ojos en la nuca*: The Memory of Violence in Uruguay, 1973–2010.” In *The Memory of State Terrorism in the Southern Cone: Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay*, edited by Francesca Lessa and Vincent Druliolle, New York: Palgrave Macmillan: 179-208.

Articles, Op-Eds and Media Engagement

- Lessa, Francesca. “In the Footprints of Operation Condor,” *JusticeInfo*, December 20, 2018, <https://www.justiceinfo.net/en/justiceinfo-comment-and-debate/opinion/39815-in-the-footprints-of-operation-condor.html>
- *15 convicted in 'Operation Condor' trial in Argentina*, CCTV America, May 28, 2016 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ruXvuBszXU0>
- *Argentine Court Confirms a Deadly Legacy of Dictatorships*, The New York Times, May 28, 2016, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/29/world/americas/argentine-court-confirms-a-deadly-legacy-of-dictatorships.html>
- *Operation Condor: Landmark human rights trial reaches finale and Historic Operation Condor trial verdict expected*, BBC News, May 27, 2016, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-36394820>
- *Timing of US president's Argentina visit criticised*, BBC News, March 23, 2016, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/world-latin-america-35882469/timing-of-us-president-s-argentina-visit-criticised>
- Lessa, Francesca. Several notes in 2015 and 2016 in Spanish for *Puchero News* portal, <http://www.pucheronews.com/category/zoom/juicio-al-condor/>
- Lessa, Francesca. “Justicia más allá de las fronteras,” *La Diaria*, May 19, 2015, <http://ladiaria.com.uy/articulo/2015/5/justicia-mas-alla-de-las-fronteras>
- Lessa, Francesca and Pierre-Louis Le Goff. “Justice Beyond Borders,” *Al Jazeera*, March 27, 2013, <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2013/03/201332511255428515.html>

INVITED AND CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS (last four years)

- 23-26/06/2018 - **XXXVI International Congress of the Latin American Studies Association**, Barcelona, Spain;
- 12/04/2018 - **Inter-American Commission on Human Rights**, Washington DC, “*Justicia más allá de las fronteras: Los crímenes transnacionales de la Operación Cóndor*,”
- 10/04/2018 - **Washington Office on Latin America**, Washington DC, “*Operation Condor on Trial: Accountability for Transnational Crimes in South America*,”
- 04-08/04/2018 - **59th Annual Conference of the International Studies Association**, San Francisco, USA;
- 20-23/06/2017 - **Annual Congress of the Law and Society Association**, Mexico City, Mexico;
- 29/04/2017 - **XXXV International Congress of the Latin American Studies Association**, Lima, Peru;

- 22/11/2016 - **Universidad Alberto Hurtado**, Santiago, Chile, Interdisciplinary Research Programme on Memory and Human Rights, “*Justicia más allá de las fronteras: La judicialización de los crímenes de Plan Cóndor*”;
- 27-30/05/2016 - **XXXIV International Congress of the Latin American Studies Association**, New York, USA;
- 15/06/2015 **Instituto Gino Germani, Universidad de Buenos Aires**, Argentina “*¿Justicia o impunidad? La sociedad civil y las cuentas pendientes en el Uruguay post-dictadura*”;
- 27-30/05-2015 - **XXXIII International Congress of the Latin American Studies Association**, Puerto Rico;
- 18-21/02/2015 - **56th Annual Conference of the International Studies Association**, New Orleans, USA;
- 12-13/02/2015 - **International Center for Transitional Justice and UNDP Mediation Support Unit**, New York, “*New Insights into Transitional Justice: Policy Implications*” with Leigh Payne and Gabriel Pereira.

ORGANISATION OF SCIENTIFIC MEETINGS

- 05/2018 Organiser of two panels entitled *45 Years After the Military Coups in Chile and Uruguay: The Enduring Struggle for Truth and Justice in South America* at the XXXVI International Congress of the Latin American Studies Association, May 23, Barcelona (Spain);
- 05/2018 Organiser of the workshop entitled *Investigating Crimes against Humanity in South America: Present and Future Challenges*, organised with Argentina’s Prosecutor’s Office for Crimes against Humanity, May 8 and 9, Buenos Aires, Argentina;
- 06/2016 Organiser of the conference and workshop entitled *Forty years on from Operation Condor: Comparative Experiences in the Southern Cone and Brazil*, organised with Uruguay’s Observatorio Luz Ibarburu, June 22 to 24, Montevideo, Uruguay;
- 05/2016 Co-organiser of two panels entitled *Juicio y Castigo: New Research on Human Rights Trials and the Struggle against Impunity in Latin America I and II* at the XXXIV International Congress of the Latin American Studies Association, May 30, New York (USA);
- 12/2015 Organiser of the conference and workshop entitled *Forty years on from Operation Condor*, organised with Chile’s Ministry of Justice and Human Rights, December 18 and 19, Santiago, Chile;

SUPERVISION OF GRADUATE STUDENTS

- 10/2018 – 06/2019 *Supervisor of one student for the Master of Science* in Latin American Studies (1-year programme and 10,000-word extended essay), **Latin American Centre**
- 10/2012 – 06/2014 *Supervisor of one student for the Master of Philosophy* in Latin American Studies (2-year programme and 30,000-word thesis), **Latin American Centre**, School of Interdisciplinary Area Studies, University of Oxford, United Kingdom
- 10/2013 – 06/2014 *Supervisor of one student for the Master of Science* in Latin American Studies (1-year programme and 10,000-word extended essay), **Latin American Centre**

01/2012 – 06/2012 *Co-supervisor of one student for the Master of Science in Latin American Studies (1-year programme and 10,000-word extended essay), **Latin American Centre***

TEACHING ACTIVITIES

12/2018 Invited Professor, Learning Unit on Transitional Justice, **Blanquerna University**, Barcelona, Spain.

06/2017 Instructor, Raphael Lemkin Seminars for Genocide Prevention (Latin American Edition), **Auschwitz Institute for Peace and Reconciliation**, Oświęcim, Poland.

07/2016 Instructor, Raphael Lemkin Seminars for Genocide Prevention (Latin American Edition), **Auschwitz Institute for Peace and Reconciliation**, Montevideo, Uruguay.

10/2011 – 06/2014 Associated Teaching Staff for the course *Human Rights in Latin America*, **Latin American Centre**, University of Oxford, United Kingdom

03/2010 – 06/2010 Visiting Lecturer for the course *Memory, Human Rights and Transitional Justice in Uruguay (1973-2010)*, Faculty of Psychology, **Universidad de la República**, Uruguay

10/2007 – 06/2009 Graduate Teaching Assistant for the course *Sovereignty, Rights and Justice: Issues in International Political Theory*, Department of International Relations, **London School of Economics and Political Science**, United Kingdom

10/2006 – 06/2007 Graduate Teaching Assistant for the course *The Structure of International Society*, Department of International Relations, **London School of Economics and Political Science**, United Kingdom

INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

10/2013 to present *International Consultant*, Observatorio Luz Ibarburu (that keeps tracks of criminal proceedings for past human rights violations), Uruguay

01/2014 – 03/2014 *Co-convenor of the Latin American Centre Seminars*, Hilary Term 2014, Latin American Centre, University of Oxford, United Kingdom

02/2011 – 10/2014 *Member of the Latin American Centre Teaching Committee and Management Committee*, Latin American Centre, University of Oxford, United Kingdom

COMMISSIONS OF TRUST

2008 *Member of the Editorial Board, Millennium Journal of International Studies* Department of International Relations, London School of Economics and Political Science, United Kingdom

MEMBERSHIPS

2015 to present *Affiliate Member*, Latin American Transitional Justice Network

2013 to present *International Consultant*, Observatorio Luz Ibarburu (Uruguay)

2011 to present *Co-Founder*, Uruguay Research Network

10/2011 – 06/2013 *General Editor and Committee Member, Oxford Transitional Justice Research*
01/2012 – 12/2017 *Member, Latin American Studies Association*
10/2007 – 09/2018 *Member, International Studies Association*

OTHER

Languages: Italian, English, and Spanish (fluent/advanced); and Brazilian Portuguese (intermediate);

Reviewer of journal articles and book manuscripts for the *Journal of Latin American Studies*, *Political and Legal Anthropology Review*, *International Journal of Transitional Justice*, *The Latin Americanist*, *Revista Uruguaya de Ciencia Política*, *Law & Society Review*, *Palgrave Macmillan*, *University of Pittsburg Press*, *Rutgers University Press*, and *Cambridge University Press*.