The National Security Archive

*Access to Information and Human Rights in the Americas*

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**About the Client:**

The National Security Archive is a non-governmental, non-profit research institute and advocacy organization that campaigns for the citizen’s right to know. The Evidence Project works with human rights groups, truth commissions, and prosecutors in Latin America to obtain government records from secret archives that shed light on state violence and human rights abuses.

**Project Overview:**

The objective of this Capstone project is to produce an analysis of the implementation and impact of current Freedom of Information laws on efforts to uncover information about human rights crimes. The project will examine case studies Mexico, Brazil, and Uruguay to evaluate the extent to which human rights organizations have obtained official documentation in support of their investigations into human rights violations and how these laws have been used to access records to bring cases and address past human rights abuses.

The project relies on background research on each country’s individual legislation and human rights history. In addition, it relies on in-person interviews with lawyers, human rights activists, researchers, journalists, government officials, and other experts in the field. These are critical to understand the challenges and successes that people within each country that use the law for different purposes are having. These interviews will cover specific cases of individual experiences as well as broader information about how different stakeholders view the law. The final report will be compiled summarizing our research, describing how freedom of information laws are currently being used in each country to redress human rights violations, and analyze similarities and differences across the countries.