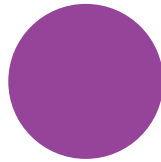




IGARAPÉ INSTITUTE
a think and do tank



THE CIVIC SPACE GPS

QUARTERLY BULLETIN 02

MAY 2021



THE CIVIC SPACE GPS

January-March 2021

The civic space — the sphere between the private sector, the state, and the family where citizens organize, debate, and influence public policy— is under attack. The constant assaults on civic space constitute a threat to transparency, to freedom of expression, assembly, and protest, and to civil and political rights. These assaults are in direct conflict with the rights and freedoms guaranteed by the Brazilian Constitution and by countless international conventions and treaties. And they are a grave threat to democracy itself. The restriction of civic space is not exclusive to Brazil. However, deliberate attempts to limit it are becoming increasingly common in the country.

This is why the Igarapé Institute has launched the **Civic Space GPS**. The bulletin's objective is to monitor attacks and acts of resistance led by state institutions, as well as reactions from civil society. The quarterly analyses are based on the systematic collection of information released in the press, more specifically by the outlets Folha de S. Paulo, Estado de S. Paulo, Globo, Isto é, Nexô, Piauí, UOL, BBC, CNN, Carta Capital, and O Antagonista. The information is organized in accordance with the sociological categories of a typology which defines the main strategies and tactics used to close the civic space. This typology was published in Strategic Paper 49: "[The 'Agora' is Under Attack: assessing the closure of civic space in Brazil and around the world](#)".

In this edition, we identified **289 threats** to the Brazilian civic space as monitored by media outlets between 1 January and 31

March 2021. On the other hand, in this same period we identified **395 reactions**, with **262 institutional responses** and **133 acts of resistance by civil society and other private groups**. It is important to note that, while these responses are heartening and numerous, they may not be enough to prevent the restriction of the civic space. In this edition, in order to allow for more detailed monitoring and analysis on the impact of the many public responses to attacks on civic spaces, we included instances in which the government changed its position as notified by the media outlets we studied.

The Threats

Of the **289 threats** to the civic space detected in this period, most (**89**) refer to **intimidation and harassment**. **Fake news and disinformation campaigns** add up to **88** instances, **abuse of power 41**, **civil and political rights violations 28**, and **constitutional hardball 21**.

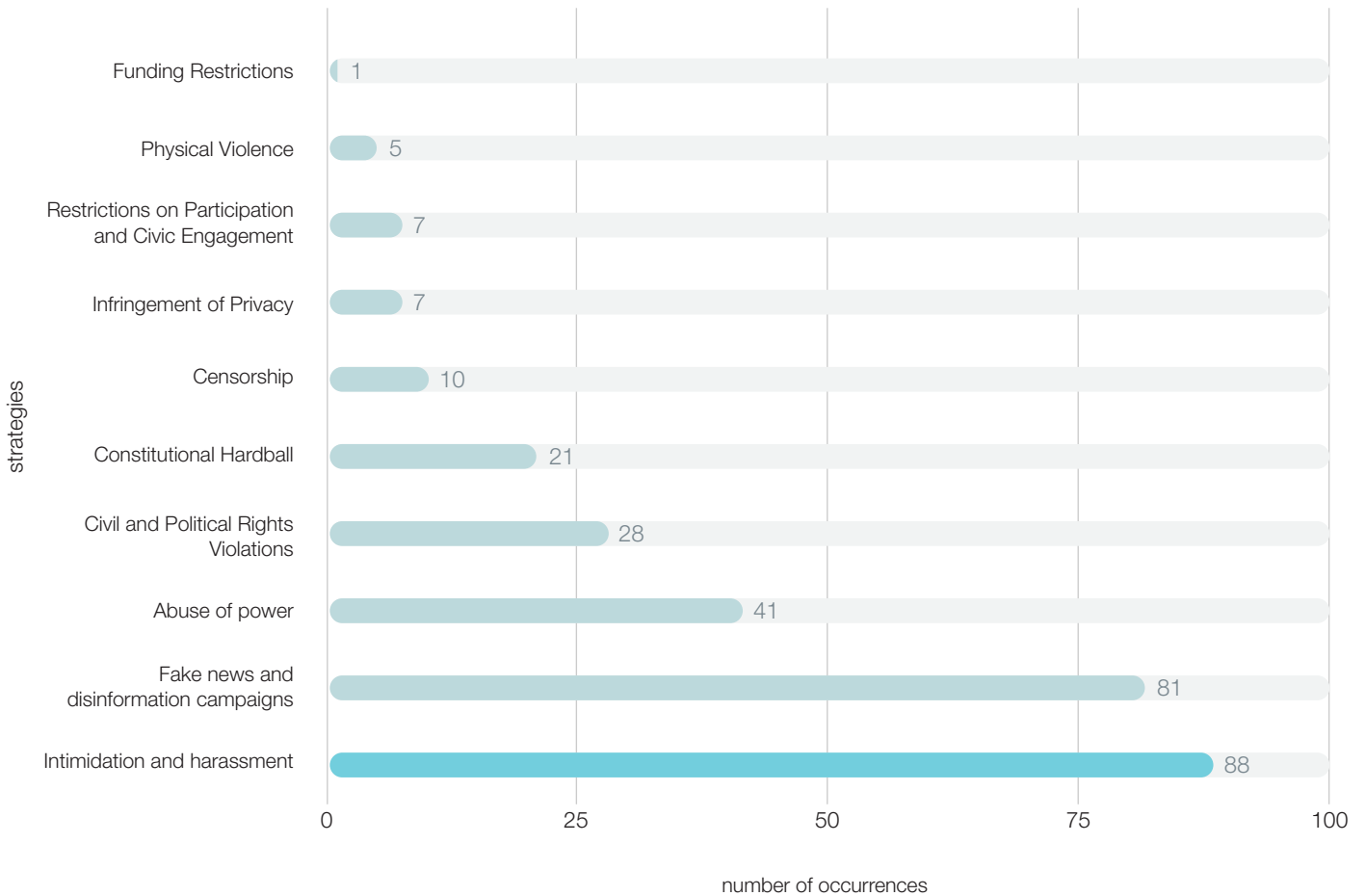
Threats related to **fake news and disinformation campaigns** were generally associated with [denialism](#) and [attacks on science](#) as well as the use of unproven COVID-19 cures. According to [Globo](#) and [CNN](#), the number of deaths in the country, the oxygen shortage in Manaus, and the new COVID-19 variant have made Brazil a threat to global health.

Intimidation and harassment tactics have [targeted people who oppose the current administration](#). **Abuse of power** in this period was characterized by placing people with little or no technical knowledge in key positions. This also indicates the diversion of public resources and that the democratic rule of law in Brazil has been weakened.

According to [UOL](#), the increasingly frequent use of the National Security Law, which was passed during the dictatorship, aims to silence and intimidate critics. According to

the analyzed news, vulnerable groups such as women, blacks and indigenous peoples most suffered from **civil and political rights violations**. Among the most common tactics used to consolidate the current administration's agenda, **constitutional hardball**, must be mentioned. It occurs when political actors explore procedures, laws, and institutions in a manner contrary to the public interest. The practice violates pre-established norms and stretches the limits of legality, as evident in the numerous presidential decrees which loosen gun control laws.

Figure 1. Most used attack strategies (January-March, 2021)



Source: Own elaboration, based on systematic collection of information published in the press.

Intimidation and Harassment

Intimidation refers to direct or indirect actions against others to prevent them from continuing their work or to induce fear of an attack. Harassment is legal or physical actions or behaviors that demeans, humiliates or embarrasses a citizen when expressing critical opinions.

In this quarter, media outlets covered attacks on scientists, journalists, and on those who oppose the government. It is worth noting the abuse of the [National Security Law to investigate critics and intimidate the opposition](#), as in the cases of the [lawyer Marcelo Feller](#), [journalist Ruy Castro](#), and [YouTube influencer Felipe Neto](#), sometimes even leading to [arrests](#).

[UOL](#) and [other outlets](#) have shown that doctors received threats for not defending scientifically unproven cures. Attacks on researchers who [led studies on the new coronavirus](#), such as Pedro Hallal — the former dean of UFPAL university — were also covered. Bolsonaro is even reported to have reactivated the so-called “Cabinet of hatred”, [making declarations from his official residence, creating a Telegram channel to spread information, and taking aim at the opposition](#). Estado de S. Paulo also reported on the [verbal attacks the president](#) made against communications outlets and reporters who hold opinions different from his own.

It is worth noting the case of the pro-Bolsonaro federal deputy, Daniel Silveira, who is being investigated for anti-democratic actions. He [published a video on social networks in which he attacked the judges of the Supreme Federal Court](#) (STF), defending the oppressive AI-5

law passed during the dictatorship, and calling for the removal of the court’s judges. The precedent established by his [arrest](#), however, has been used to [repress citizens](#) who make political posts on social networks, as reported by Nexo.

Among the threats under the intimidation and harassment category, it is worth mentioning the frequently used authoritarian rhetoric and allusions to the dictatorship made by the president and members of his administration. According to Folha de S. Paulo, the president affirmed that [“the Armed Forces decide if people live in a democracy or a dictatorship”](#) and that, if it were up to him, [“we would not be living under this government regime,”](#) as reported by Carta Capital.

Conflicts between the federal government and state and municipal governments were also covered. They were related to the [restrictive measures adopted by state and municipal administrations](#) across the country in order to stave off a collapse of the health system. O Globo emphasized the president’s use of the expression, “state of emergency”, in defining curfews [imposed by governors](#), for example, while reminding them that it is [his prerogative to declare them](#). Folha de S. Paulo reported that [attacks and threats to governors had reached the Supreme Court](#). The conflict intensified with the death of a military policeman in Bahia, which could have encouraged a [mutiny against the governor carried out by the military police](#).

Fake News and Disinformation Campaigns

Fake news are false stories circulated on the news, social media, and spread on the internet, which resemble real news. Disinformation is false information spread deliberately for profit or to cause public harm, going beyond fake news.

Fake news and disinformation campaigns have found fertile ground during the [COVID-19 pandemic](#). Among the examples of untrue or false news and information used to misinform in this quarter are: the federal government and its [supporters' recommendations](#) to use [unproven cures](#); [denialist speeches](#); dissemination of [fake news about vaccines](#); [funding publicity for unproven preventive treatments](#); [discouraging the use of masks](#); and heavy criticism of [restrictive measures sanctioned by mayors and governors](#) in order to contain the spread, particularly regarding [lockdowns](#). Senator Flávio Bolsonaro even affirmed on his Twitter account that ["lockdowns kill", and Carlos Bolsonaro said "no to lockdowns"](#).

O Estado de S. Paulo reported that the actress, Maria Flor, was [targeted by disinformation campaigns because she criticized](#) the government. The Brazilian electronic voting system has been another target of fake news. According to Estado de S. Paulo, in his first Facebook live stream of the year, the president affirmed that [maintaining this system represents a fraud carried out in order to harm him](#). Similarly, O Globo and Folha de S. Paulo reported that the president stated Brazil will have worse problems than the United States had in 2022 if there is no paper ballot.

Abuse of Power

Abuse of power is when political actors take advantage of their position for personal gain, preventing basic managerial responsibility and/or acting against public interest and public function.

Abuses of power in this quarter indicate that members of the administration used the State apparatus to [promote private interests](#), mainly by interfering in public entities. Inappropriate [appointments](#) and [dismissals were covered by the media outlets analyzed](#). These outlets also reported on the government's placement of allies with little or no technical expertise in [strategic committees within the Senate](#) and the [Chamber of Deputies](#).

The press reported on countless attacks on the environment. O Globo demonstrated the reduction of environmental agencies' capacities to face the environmental crisis. At the same time, IBAMA, headed by members of the military, allocated [19 million reais to the São Paulo Military Police](#), in a deal which decided to allocate fines to the institution. The withdrawal of [the troops](#) which provided security for the biggest seizure of illegal lumber in Brazil's history raised suspicion, according to Folha de S. Paulo.

Other instances of abuse of power refer to facts related to the pandemic, notably the political dispute regarding vaccination. According to UOL, the [federal government sought to confiscate 6 thousand CoronaVac doses](#), and later looked into ways to sue the Butantan Institute. The Ministry of Health's use of [Fiocruz to produce 4 million chloroquine tablets](#) was also widely reported. A [bidding process was also opened to procure medication](#) not proven to be effective against COVID-19, while vaccinations plodded ahead.

O Estado de S. Paulo heavily covered the dismissal of the former Minister of Defense, General Fernando Azevedo e Silva, and the allegation that he was let go because he refused to [politically align the Armed Forces](#) with the current government. Similarly, O Globo reported that the dismissal [of Attorney General, José Levi](#), was due to his refusal to back a lawsuit filed with the STF against the governors.

Constitutional Hardball

Constitutional hardball consists of political claims and practices that explore procedures, laws and institutions for partisan gain in ways that, although within the bounds of existing constitutional doctrine and practice, are in tension with pre-established norms. It pushes the bounds of legality, which can undermine shared understanding of democratic norms and the expectation that the other side will comply with them.

Among various instances of **constitutional hardball** during this quarter, it is worth highlighting the [decrees](#) which [loosened regulations related to firearms](#), ammunition, and other controlled products. The federal government made the decrees on the eve of Carnival. A bill which [removed governors' control over the police](#) was also written. Folha de S. Paulo and O Estado de S. Paulo also reported on Jair Bolsonaro's alleged interference in [elections in the Deputies Chamber](#), and [deputy Arthur Lira's attempt to favor allies](#). The radical discourse calling for attacks on institutions which led to Daniel Silveira's arrest also led to a [discussion](#)

[regarding a constitutional amendment on parliamentary immunity](#) and the limits of freedom of expression.

The pressure for impeaching the president and the opening of a parliamentary inquiry commission regarding the alleged poor management of the pandemic were also widely reported. The Prosecutor General, Augusto Aras, implied the possibility of a "[state of defense](#)," which would establish various coercive measures and suspend fundamental rights. Federal deputy Vitor Hugo, [leader of the PSL political party, attempted to introduce a bill which would have increased Bolsonaro's power during the pandemic](#).

Lastly, political interference in public university appointments were also reported. The most recent case was the refusal to appoint the candidate [who received the most votes to be UFSCar's dean, as reported by Folha de S. Paulo](#).

Civil and Political Rights Violations

Violations of political rights include denial of the right to a fair trial and due process; and rights of participation in civil society and politics such as freedom of association, the right to assemble, and the right to vote. Violations of civil rights include discrimination on grounds of race, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, color, age, political affiliation, ethnicity, religion, and social origin; and restrictions of individuals' freedom.

Civil and political rights violations covered in the press generally affected minorities and vulnerable groups such as women, [blacks](#) and indigenous peoples. At the UN, Minister

Dameres Alves said that Brazil “[continues to defend democracy, freedom, family, and life beginning at conception.](#)” In the Chamber of Deputies, [federal deputy Carla Zambelli \(PSL-SP\) introduced a bill](#) to require physical evidence of the crime before rape victims are allowed to carry out an abortion. In the Senate, the bill PL 5435/2020 (“Statute for Pregnant Women”), which [would eliminate the right to legal abortion and provide financial aid for the victim](#), is awaiting a vote.

Moreover, O Estado de S. Paulo reported that policies created to combat gender-based violence have been neglected, including the [SOS Mulher program](#) of Sao Paulo’s municipal legislative chamber, which also refused to provide security for [co-councilwomen who had been attacked, as reported by Folha de S. Paulo.](#)

A O Globo survey, using data from the Socioambiental Institute (ISA), showed that, during the Bolsonaro administration, [70% of indigenous land demarcation processes](#) have been frozen between FUNAI and the Ministry of Justice. At the same time, Folha de S. Paulo reported that illegal mining has increased on indigenous land, stimulated by the [president’s promises to legalize the activity.](#) A BBC News Brasil investigation revealed [the sale of protected land on Facebook](#), as covered by Folha de S. Paulo. The [criteria used to define who is indigenous were altered by FUNAI](#), which formerly accepted a simple declaration. According to Folha de S. Paulo, the federal government [launched the Titula Brasil application without including settlements](#), and admitted to the STF that [agrarian reform had been stopped](#). The vaccination of [indigenous peoples](#) and [residents of quilombos](#) was marked by delays, according to Nexa and Folha de S. Paulo.

Censorship

Censorship refers to “the policy of restricting the public expression of ideas, opinions, conceptions and impulses which have or are believed to have the capacity to undermine the governing authority or the social and moral order which that authority considers itself bound to protect”.

In this quarter, we identified various cases of potential open or veiled censorship used to halt access to information as well as undermine the free circulation of ideas. These include the [alterations in the system which registers COVID-19 deaths](#), leading to an artificial drop in cases, and [APEX’s removal of books by authors critical of the government from their website](#). The press also suffered various setbacks in this quarter. As reported by Folha de S. Paulo, [a journalist was fired for asking a question that displeased the president](#). Arthur Lira’s [removal of the press area in the Chamber of Deputies was also widely reported](#). In the areas of culture and education, the press reported on the removal of criteria for choosing works related to violence against women, racism, and regional prejudice in the [bidding process for the National Textbook Program](#). There is also the Folha de S. Paulo report on the shelving of a [theater project on the dictatorship](#).

Restrictions on Participation and Civic Engagement

Restrictions to any forms of individual or collective work to solve community problems and to address issues of public concern (civic participation) as well as any forms of following, having knowledge, beliefs, opinions and attitudes on public issues (civic engagement), especially when contributing and interacting with policy design, monitoring and/or decision-making process.

Stories regarding **restrictions on participation and civic engagement** focused on the lack of transparency and obstacles to the right to participation as enshrined in the Constitution. [The creation of a special committee to push through a bill which would alter the antiterrorism law](#) was widely reported on. According to [UOL](#), the bill could present new modalities of controlling civil society, such as public agents' unfettered access to the private data of suspects and the use of infiltration tactics, which can end up criminalizing social leaders and movements by making it impossible to differentiate between terrorist acts and common crimes.

[Ceasing the operations of ICMBio](#) through a work group which did not include specialists was also widely reported. Similarly, [Minister Damares Alves](#) signed a decree calling for a [work group without any participation from civil society](#), with the objective of altering the National Policy of Human Rights. [Only seven of the 19 seats for civil society on the National Council for the Promotion of Racial Equality were filled](#), only one of which is held by an association from the black rights movement.

Another widely-covered issue involves the federal government's "[Ferrogrão](#)" project, which affects 48 indigenous groups whose land is located along the railway's path, which can also be classified as a civil and political rights violation. [O Globo](#) reported that the strategy was to undermine the participation of indigenous people and communities in the discussion, thereby disrespecting Convention 169 of the International Labour Organization (ILO).

On the municipal level, actions which restrict civic engagement and participation were also covered. One example of this is a legislative [procedure called "submarino"](#), in which bills are altered in Sao Paulo without information, justification, or debate with civil society, as reported by [Folha de S. Paulo](#).

Infringement of Privacy

Infringement of privacy refers to the violation of the fundamental human right to privacy, which underlines that "no one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honor and reputation." (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948). This includes State Surveillance, which is the collection of information, including the monitoring, tracking, and identification, to the administration of subject populations, supervised by officials and administrators, hinged to some specific purpose. It usually inhabits a shadowy realm of public affairs.

In January, [O Estado de S. Paulo](#) reported on a [massive data leak](#) at an unprecedented level in Brazil. The leak was identified by PSafe, which warned that over 220 million people had their personal data exposed. According

to the media outlet, the leak even affected the personal information of authorities including [the president and all of the members of the STF](#). The following month, a new data leak involved [information from over 100 cell phone accounts, according to Folha de S. Paulo](#).

According to the typology used in this bulletin, infringement of privacy also relates to State surveillance and control of the population. Folha de S. Paulo covered the release of a [report warning about the Brazilian government's proliferation of measures](#) which use technology to increase its capacity for monitoring and for constructing registries related to various aspects of Brazilian citizens' lives. This represents a real danger of sharing personal data for unauthorized reasons, the abusive use of information, and rights violations.

Physical Violence

Physical violence is the intentional and direct infliction of harm on people, from physical suffering or bodily harm to violent death. In the context of this research, acts of physical violence can be perpetrated by state or non-state agents, including paramilitary, militia, gangs, private security and others emboldened by the hate rhetoric of political figures to get rid of opposition.

Cases of **physical violence** in this quarter involved conflicts related to restrictive measures and other COVID-19 policies. [Infectious disease specialist Eduardo Panini](#) informed O Globo that he was kicked and punched for defending the lockdown and warning about the risks involved at a critical moment in the pandemic in the state of Paraná. Refusal to put on masks led to [the death of a businessman who asked clients to put them on in Santa Catarina according to](#)

[Folha de S. Paulo](#), and, in Goiás, [a woman took out a knife and bit a policeman to avoid using a mask](#), as reported by UOL.

A [photographer was also harassed and assaulted by Bolsonaro supporters in Minas Gerais](#) during a protest, as covered by Estado de Minas Gerais.

Funding Restrictions

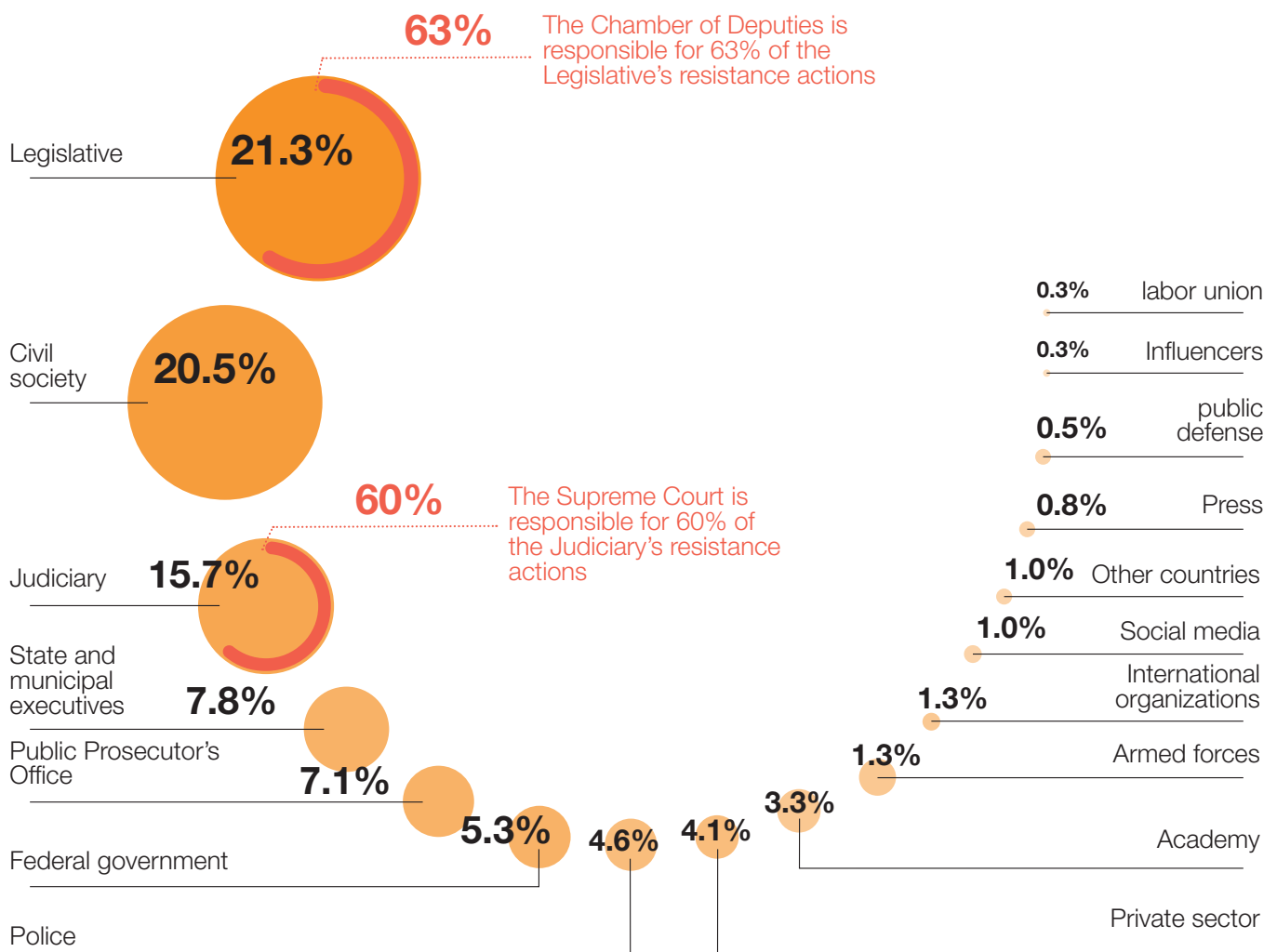
Restrictions on civil society's ability to access foreign funding through laws that limit or prohibit external support, requirements that include governmental approval, measures against international organizations that provide CSOs support, as well as administrative practices or extralegal measures coordinated by governments against independent CSOs. Restrictions can also apply for national, public, or private funds.

For the first time in ten years, [the annual plan for the Vladimir Herzog Institute was denied by the federal government's Special Secretary for Culture](#), which did not present any study showing a legal foundation for the decision, following Folha de S. Paulo's reporting. According to secretary [Mario Frias](#), the project was denied because the Cultural Incentive Law (formerly called the Rouanet Law) only funds cultural activities or annual plans from cultural institutions, while the Institute carries out journalistic activities as well as cultural ones.

Reaction

The functioning of the State’s three branches — Judicial, Legislative, and Executive — is fundamental for a democracy’s system of checks and balances. Along these lines, it is worth noting the actions taken by one or more of these branches to impede the closing of civic space. Responses from specific institutions that managed to oppose the closing of the civic space will also be analyzed. At the same time, there was a series of actions taken on by civil society, private groups, universities, and others who represent an important source of resistance to these attacks and are also worth noting.

Over this quarter, **395 acts of resistance** were detected, **262 of which were institutional responses**, coming from the State apparatus itself, while the other **133 came from civil society, the academic community, political parties, the press, and other actors**.



Source: Own elaboration, based on systematic collection of information published in the press.

Institutional Responses

The Legislative branch (21.3%), Judiciary (15.7%), state and municipal executives (7.85%) and Public Prosecutor's Office (7%) are the state entities which most responded to attacks on the Brazilian civic space.

Most responses from the legislative branch came from members of the Chamber of Deputies (63.1%) and mainly focused on [the response to the COVID-19 pandemic](#), questioning the federal government's role in the [crisis in Manaus](#), and the speed of the [National Vaccination Program](#), as well as overturning [Bolsonaro's gun regulation decrees](#) and [canceling the decree suspending Rouanet funding](#) in areas where a lockdown has been instated. Other recurring themes which included attacks and responses from federal deputies were attempts to guarantee a [space for journalists in the Chamber of Deputies](#) and the vote which [sustained Daniel Silveira's imprisonment](#). The Senate (22.5%) mainly focused on [responses to the pandemic](#), as did the state-level Legislative assemblies (4.1%).

In the judicial branch, the Supreme Federal Court (STF) was responsible for 67% of responses, generally regarding the federal government's role in the pandemic, especially in relation to the [crisis in Manaus and science denialism](#). It is worth noting that [Rosa Weber judged that Bolsonaro's defense of chloroquine could constitute a crime](#), and the Court [authorized governors to declare restrictive measures](#). Moreover, questions regarding the monitoring of [journalists](#) and members of congress, actions against [gun regulation decrees](#) and hate speech—which resulted in the arrest of Daniel Silveira—were debated by the Court. The state Superior Courts of Justice were involved in charging Bolsonaro supporters with various offenses, including [federal deputy Eduardo Bolsonaro's attacks on journalist Patricia Campos Mello](#), and [Bolsonaro supporter Otoni de Paula's attacks on STF judge Alexandre de Moraes](#).

Nearly all reactions by state and municipal executives concern the pandemic, from [criticizing the use of chloroquine](#) as a preventive treatment, [strengthening social isolation measures and the use of masks](#), to [questioning the role of former minister Eduardo Pazuello](#) in responding to the pandemic. They also established a mayor's consortium [to purchase vaccines](#).

Lastly, it is worth noting that, in reaction to the dismissal of the minister of defense, [for the first time in Brazilian history, all three commanders of the Armed Forces jointly resigned](#), allegedly for disagreeing with the president.

Acts of Resistance

133 acts of resistance were carried out by various civil society groups (20.5% of the total), as well as the academic community (3.3%), and the private sector (4%). Among other acts carried out by civil society and the academic community, there were a series of protests from former students, professors, doctors, and legal experts demanding [Bolsonaro's impeachment](#) as well as accountability for the worsening pandemic in Brazil. There was also the Arns Commission and Conectas' accusation of the Brazilian president in the UN for the "[devastating human tragedy](#)" during the pandemic; [Chief Raoni's claim against environmental crimes filed in The Hague](#); and NGOs together with the STF and the UN denounced the administration's [regression in arms control](#). The private sector [focused mainly on vaccination, questioning the administration's intervention in Petrobras](#), and in [investigating environmental crimes](#). An important initiative called "[Cala Boca Já Morreu](#)" was created to push back against judicial harassment from the abuse of the National Security Law.

Changes of Position

In this section, we include changes in the government's position as a way of monitoring the impact of some of the reactions listed above. In this quarter, changes in position were mainly motivated by the negative repercussions of specific government actions. Foremost among these reactions were responses to management of the pandemic, which was the subject of severe criticism by civil society and the press, including threats of legal action against the federal government.

The Ministry of Health changed its discourse relating to the “preventive treatment” of COVID-19. [It began saying that it recommended “preventive medical care”](#) and not specifically the use of chloroquine and other unproven preventive treatment. It also [removed a cell phone application](#) which explicitly recommended ineffective preventive treatment, including the use of chloroquine. Jair Bolsonaro, after strongly rejecting CoronaVac, affirmed that [the vaccine belongs to Brazil, and not to a governor](#), criticizing governor João Doria, who had begun vaccinations in São Paulo. As impeachment pressure increased and the government's response to the pandemic led to [protests and](#)

[plummeting popularity](#), the federal government launched a [campaign defending the vaccines](#), announced an [anti-COVID committee](#), and, after speaking of the “last little bits of the pandemic”, admitted that it's [“here to stay”](#). Soon after former president Lula's speech supporting health measures to contain COVID-19, Bolsonaro [attended a ceremony wearing a mask and signed a law making it easier to buy vaccines](#). In turn, Flávio Bolsonaro asked his followers to share the message [“the vaccine is our weapon”](#).

The Ministry of Education also backtracked and withdrew a decree asking federal universities to [“punish political and partisan acts”](#). There were also changes in position in the legislative branch. Less than 24 hours after removing the opposition from leadership positions in the Chamber of Deputies, Arthur Lira [backtracked, conceding some of his positions](#). He also changed his posture in his attempt to [transfer journalists to a windowless room](#), although he still kept them far from the Chamber. There were some apologies: one from the deputy who [broke a plaque commemorating Black Awareness Day](#) in the Chamber, and one from federal deputy Daniel Silveira, who [admitted that he had gone too far in attacking the STF](#).

Annex 1 - Typology of legal, illegal, and extralegal strategies and tactics used to close civic space

Strategies	Description	Examples of Tactics / Actions
I. Cooptation	Cooptation is the process of absorbing members who seek change to work with elites, demobilizing the opposition (Selznick 1948, Piven and Cloward 1977).	Offer of privileged relationship, including access to public contracts and funding, if given unrestricted support.
II. Coercion	Coercion is the use of threats to influence another's behavior by limiting choice (Schelling 1966).	<p>Veiled or open threat to dismiss or disempower public servants and political appointees if they don't adhere to government's false narratives or wrongdoings.</p> <p>Veiled or open threat to suspend ongoing partnerships and/or public funding in light of public criticism.</p>
III. Fake News and Disinformation Campaigns	Fake news are false stories circulated on the news, social media, and spread on the internet, which try to appear as real news. There are six types: news satire, news parody, fabrication, manipulation, advertising, and propaganda (Tandoc, Lim, and Ling 2007). Disinformation is false information spread deliberately to cause public harm or for profit, going beyond fake news (EC 2018).	<p>Mass production and dissemination of false content to earn political influence.</p> <p>Hiring bloggers, using fake profiles, bots and other digital tools to create and spread false stories using public money or resources from supporting groups.</p> <p>Deliberate spread of disinformation campaigns to distract or deceive.</p> <p>Attacks against facts and science.</p>
IV. Censorship (veiled or overt)	Censorship refers to "the policy of restricting the public expression of ideas, opinions, conceptions and impulses which have or are believed to have the capacity to undermine the governing authority or the social and moral order which that authority considers itself bound to protect." (Laswell, 1930)	<p>Intent to provoke self-censorship of individuals that are targeted online or offline.</p> <p>Creation of obstacles to access public information.</p> <p>Classification or restriction of publications and documents.</p> <p>Direct intents to disqualify research results.</p> <p>Defunding of cultural projects not aligned with government's views.</p> <p>Filtered content or close down of internet.</p> <p>Vastly enforced censorship of media, research, cultural manifestations and debate.</p>
V. Intimidation and Harassment	Intimidation refers to direct or indirect actions against others to prevent them from continuing their work or to induce fear of an attack (CIVICUS 2019). Harassment is legal or physical actions or behaviors that demeans, humiliates or embarrasses a citizen when expressing critical opinions (CIVICUS 2018).	<p>Use of state security forces and intelligence apparatus to intimidate opponents.</p> <p>Persecution and intimidation of activists, artists, civic leaders, journalists, and scientists.</p> <p>Blackmail.</p> <p>Public targeting / harassment of institutions by high-level authorities.</p> <p>Public targeting / harassment of activists, artists, civic leaders, journalists, and scientists by high level authorities.</p> <p>Misogynist attacks towards women with public profile.</p> <p>Dehumanizing / defaming / delegitimization campaigns against individuals, groups or institutions (direct or indirect action).</p> <p>Online organized attacks and campaigns against individuals, groups or institutions (bots and digital mob mobilization)</p> <p>Threats to cancel public concessions of independent media channels.</p> <p>Pressure and threats to private companies to stop advertising on non-aligned media channels</p>

continuation

Strategies	Description	Examples of Tactics / Actions
VI. Infringement of Privacy (State Surveillance)	Infringement of Privacy refers to the violation of the fundamental human right to privacy, which underlines that “no one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honor and reputation.” (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948). State Surveillance is the collection of information, including the monitoring, tracking, and identification, to the administration of subject populations, supervised by officials and administrators, hinged to some specific purpose (Giddens 1984, Lyon 1994). It usually inhabits a shadowy realm of public affairs (Starr et al).	<p>Illegal tapping.</p> <p>Digital media monitoring for profiling, harassment and intimidation.</p> <p>Closure of accounts, websites, servers.</p> <p>Hacking profiles to intimidate or harass, or to use private profiles in digital mob campaigns.</p> <p>Misuse of private citizens' data on micro-targeting disinformation campaigns, and other digital actions without permission.</p> <p>Illegal monitoring of opposition, including protest organizers.</p>
VII. Civil and political rights violations	Violations of political rights include denial of the right to a fair trial and due process; and rights of participation in civil society and politics such as freedom of association, the right to assemble, and the right to vote (Dahl 2005). Violations of civil rights include discrimination on grounds of race, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, color, age, political affiliation, ethnicity, religion, and social origin; and restrictions of individuals' freedom. (ICCPR 1976).	<p>Restrictions or ban on public protests / demonstrations.</p> <p>Constraints for the incorporation, registration, operation and lifecycle of CSOs.</p> <p>Shut down of CSOs who resist to conform to authoritarian or draconian rules.</p> <p>De-registration or cancellation of licenses of operation for CSOs who comply with the law.</p> <p>Invasion / destruction of CSOs offices.</p> <p>Seizure of property.</p> <p>Expulsion and prohibition to operate at a certain country.</p> <p>Travel bans.</p> <p>Illegitimate legal investigations.</p> <p>Fomenting discrimination and infringements of the rights of minorities and vulnerable groups</p> <p>Fomenting religious intolerance.</p>
VIII. Restrictions on Civic Engagement and Participation	Restrictions to any forms of individual or collective work to solve community problems and to address issues of public concern (civic participation) as well as any forms of following, having knowledge, beliefs, opinions and attitudes on public issues (civic engagement) (Barrett and Brunton-Smith 2014), especially when contributing and interacting with policy design, monitoring and/or decision-making process.	<p>Exclusion of language on civil society participation in national and international resolutions.</p> <p>Hardening of rules to allow for civil-society access to National Congress.</p> <p>De-authorization of state institutions to work with NGOS.</p> <p>Penalization of public officers who disobey instructions of cutting access to civil society.</p> <p>Shut down of participatory councils and participatory mechanisms.</p>

Strategies	Description	Examples of Tactics / Actions
<p>VI. Infringement of Privacy (State Surveillance)</p>	<p>Infringement of Privacy refers to the violation of the fundamental human right to privacy, which underlines that “no one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honor and reputation.” (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948). State Surveillance is the collection of information, including the monitoring, tracking, and identification, to the administration of subject populations, supervised by officials and administrators, hinged to some specific purpose (Giddens 1984, Lyon 1994). It usually inhabits a shadowy realm of public affairs (Starr et al).</p>	<p>Illegal tapping.</p>
		<p>Digital media monitoring for profiling, harassment and intimidation.</p>
		<p>Closure of accounts, websites, servers.</p>
		<p>Hacking profiles to intimidate or harass, or to use private profiles in digital mob campaigns.</p>
		<p>Misuse of private citizens’ data on micro-targeting disinformation campaigns, and other digital actions without permission.</p>
		<p>Illegal monitoring of opposition, including protest organizers.</p>
<p>VII. Civil and political rights violations</p>	<p>Violations of political rights include denial of the right to a fair trial and due process; and rights of participation in civil society and politics such as freedom of association, the right to assemble, and the right to vote (Dahl 2005). Violations of civil rights include discrimination on grounds of race, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, color, age, political affiliation, ethnicity, religion, and social origin; and restrictions of individuals’ freedom. (ICCPR 1976).</p>	<p>Restrictions or ban on public protests / demonstrations.</p>
		<p>Constraints for the incorporation, registration, operation and lifecycle of CSOs.</p>
		<p>Shut down of CSOs who resist to conform to authoritarian or draconian rules.</p>
		<p>De-registration or cancellation of licenses of operation for CSOs who comply with the law.</p>
		<p>Invasion / destruction of CSOs offices.</p>
		<p>Seizure of property.</p>
		<p>Expulsion and prohibition to operate at a certain country.</p>
		<p>Travel bans.</p>
		<p>Illegitimate legal investigations.</p>
		<p>Fomenting discrimination and infringements of the rights of minorities and vulnerable groups</p>
<p>Fomenting religious intolerance.</p>		
<p>VIII. Restrictions on Civic Engagement and Participation</p>	<p>Restrictions to any forms of individual or collective work to solve community problems and to address issues of public concern (civic participation) as well as any forms of following, having knowledge, beliefs, opinions and attitudes on public issues (civic engagement) (Barrett and Brunton-Smith 2014), especially when contributing and interacting with policy design, monitoring and/or decision-making process.</p>	<p>Exclusion of language on civil society participation in national and international resolutions.</p>
		<p>Hardening of rules to allow for civil-society access to National Congress.</p>
		<p>De-authorization of state institutions to work with NGOS.</p>
		<p>Penalization of public officers who disobey instructions of cutting access to civil society.</p>
		<p>Shut down of participatory councils and participatory mechanisms.</p>

continuation

Strategies	Description	Examples of Tactics / Actions
XII. Abuse of Power	Abuse of power is when political actors take advantage of their position for personal gain, preventing basic managerial responsibility (Sankowsky 1995).	Political interference in ordinances from the Armed Forces that violate laws and/or the Constitution.
		Political interference in the public administration with nominations and dismissals of public servants to favor private interests.
		Political interference in nominations of public universities, research centers and participatory councils to impose censorship.
		Political interference in procedures and nomination of leadership of law enforcement and other independent public agencies to protect private interests.
*Even though most of the tactics used on the constitutional hardball and abuse of power categories are not directly infringed against the civic space agents, these tactics diminish accountability, can undermine the separation of powers and the checks and balances that could prevent the tactics described in the other categories to be implemented.		
Sources for the tactics: off-the-record interviews with civic leaders; Buyse 2018; Civicus 2017, 2018, 2019; ICNL; Levitsky and Ziblatt 2018; OHCHR; Rutzen, 2015; WEF 2017; World Movement for Democracy		

Learn more

For more information of the typology used and for academic reference, read the strategic paper, “The ‘Agora’ is under attack: assessing the closure of civic space in Brazil and around the world”.

Access: <https://igarape.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/2020-10-23-The-Closure-of-Civic-Space-in-Brazil.pdf>



IGARAPÉ INSTITUTE a think and do tank

The Igarape Institute is an independent think and do tank focused on the areas of public, climate and digital security and its consequences for democracy. Its objective is to propose solutions and partnerships for global challenges through research, new technologies, communication and influence on public policies.

The Institute works with governments, the private sector and civil society to design data-based solutions. We were awarded the best Human Rights NGO in 2018 and the best think tank on social policy by Prospect Magazine in 2019.

We are a non-profit, independent and non-partisan institution, headquartered in Rio de Janeiro. Our operation, however, transcends local, national and regional boundaries. The Igarape Institute has professionals in cities in all regions of Brazil and in Canada, Colombia, the United States and the United Kingdom. We have partnerships and projects in over 20 countries.

Igarapé Institute

Rio de Janeiro - RJ - Brasil
Tel/Fax: +55 (21) 3496-2114
contato@igarape.org.br
facebook.com/institutoigarape
twitter.com/igarape_org
instagram.com/igarape_org/

www.igarape.org.br