



THE CIVIC *SPACE* IS OUR *SPACE*

AN AGENDA TO PROTECT

DEMOCRACY

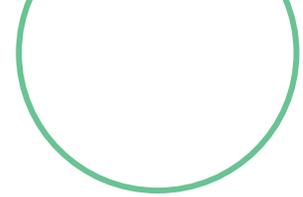


Realization



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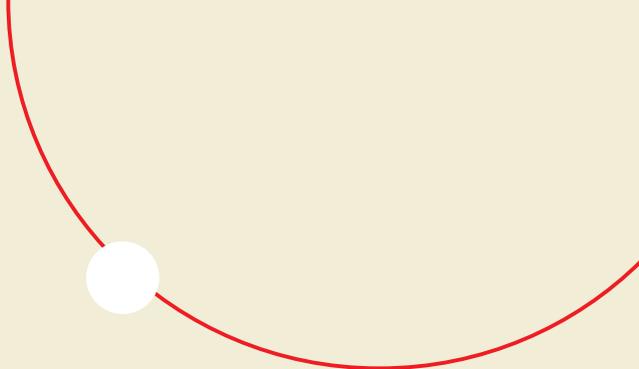




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THE CIVIC SPACE IS OUR SPACE

WHY WE ARE PROPOSING AN AGENDA TO PROTECT CIVIC SPACE AND DEFEND DEMOCRACY ¹

Civic space — the public sphere where citizens organize, debate, and act in order to influence public policy and the general direction of our country — is under attack. Populist and authoritarian governments in Brazil and elsewhere are closing down channels for civic participation and engagement, censoring public debate and persecuting academics, artists, activists, scientists, and journalists in order to silence them. Such actions threaten and restrict our fundamental rights and liberties, reducing transparency and the effectiveness of government actions, as well as betray the mission of public offices and institutions.

This is why the closing of the civic space is a direct attack on democracy. Democracy collapses with the end of dialogue, debate, and consensus-building. Democratic society requires channels of communication and transparency for monitoring the government. It also relies on the freedom to think, express, criticize, organize and act. Without these liberties, it is difficult to imagine that elected leaders will make the public interest and the population's true necessities their priority .

Building democracy is necessarily a work in progress, whereby fulfilling everyone's rights and duties is a never ending exercise. Defending democracy takes unrelenting commitment and vigilance. It is a daily and routine exercise. The recent rise of populist and authoritarian leaders — who once elected corroded democracy from within — has made that task all the harder. Hence the urgency of building an agenda for defending civic space. Democratic backsliding precedes the rise of authoritarian leaders in countries like Brazil, The Philippines, Hungary, Poland, and Turkey, the most recent examples. However, the assault on democracy does not necessarily end with the return of responsible elected

¹ The "The Civic Space is our space" agenda was written by many authors and counted on dozens of collaborators who contributed with ideas, criticisms, and editing which greatly improved its content. At the Igarapé Institute, it was drafted by Daniel Calarco, Ilona Szabó, Maria Eduarda Assis and Renata Avelar Giannini, as well as being carefully revised and edited by Dandara Tinoco and Melina Risso. The agenda was also the fruit of a process of constructing through meeting and consultations with various civil society organizations. We would like to recognize and acknowledge the contributions of: Aline Vioto, Ananda Endo, Bruna Rodrigues, Camila Asano, Flávia Pellegrino, Fé Império, Joana Amaral, Juliana Vieira Santos, Letícia Klein, Maitê Gautó, Márcio Black, Mariana Lyrio, Marina Rongo, Martha Ysis, Nicole Verillo, Paula Storto, Pedro Kelson, Rebecca Groterhorst, Rogenir Costa, Solange Helena, Thaise Kemer.

leaders. Consolidating a healthy democracy requires vigorous vigilance, which will only be possible through civic engagement and action. This is the context for, “The Civic Space is Our Space,” Igarapé Institute’s newest initiative dedicated to strengthening civil society under duress. Civic leaders from all sectors of society, the media, in addition to citizens, who should seek articulation with members of the three branches of the government, at the three levels of the Federation may draw upon the proposals outlined here to defend and promote civilizing values of civic space and of democracy itself.



WHY WE NEED TO DEFEND THE CIVIC SPACE?



Strengthening democratic culture



Democratic culture rests on a set of constitutionally guaranteed principles and practices, designed to strengthen popular participation and spread the idea that citizens have the power to transform their own society. A strong democratic culture helps protect civic space by encouraging dialogue and tolerance, as well as social collaboration. That means being open to disagreement and persuasion, and a commitment to building consensus among adversaries when facing common challenges.

And yet democratic convictions are weakening in many nations, Sivos Institute. According to a study by Instituto Sivos,² most Brazilians accept the relativization of democracy to a degree; 82.5% told surveyors that, in times of crisis, “it doesn’t matter if the government ignores the law, Congress or institutions when seeking to solve problems and improve the life of its population”.

Distrust of politicians is nothing new. A large segment of the population says politicians don’t represent them, while historically marginalized groups, including indigenous peoples, women, and the LGBTQI community, claim that even their basic rights and demands go unrecognized. Throw in the economic recession, corruption scandals, the widening gap between elected officials and their voters, and the troubled Brazilian democracy is no longer distinguishable from the severe crisis of representation now sweeping the rest of the globe.

² Instituto Sivos; Instituto Votorantim. Valores em Crise. Available at: <https://sivos.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/RelatorioValoresEmCrisePrimeiraOnda.pdf>.

In the midst of welling skepticism, populist and authoritarian leaders have surged into office in many countries, billing themselves as “outsiders,” while flaunting anti-democratic rhetoric and practices. The pandemic made things worse, as many governments used the health emergency as a pretext to overreach, centralizing power and weakening institutional checks and balances — so corroding democracy from within. Part of the assault taking place unseen. Indeed, this is not the stuff of traditional coups d’etat, with tanks and troops, but a steady weakening of institutions and the silencing of dissident voices.

If democracy languishes at the hands of elected populists and authoritarians, a robust democratic culture and civic action are the cure. Just as a vaccine enlists the immune system’s defenses against a virus, the entire population must be engaged to shield the body politic from the contagion of undemocratic practices.

Protecting fundamental liberties

Healthy democracies encourage the search for consensus when weighing decisions that may affect collective wellbeing. Broad, transparent debate is fundamental in reaching this consensus, and that only occurs when people can freely express their opinions, even when they criticize the government and public authority. Policymaking is strengthened through dialogue among all sectors of society, turning the public debate pluralistic, transparent, and inclusive.

Given this context, respecting the essential democratic freedoms — of expression, thought, assembly and association, as well as artistic and academic freedoms — is critical. Those who oppose the government cannot be treated as State enemies. Dissident voices cannot be silenced by censorship, intimidation or threats. Dissent is a vital part of the democratic game.

Authoritarian regimes, however, prevail by annihilating dissent. The autocrats wish is everyone else’s command. Democracies, by contrast, thrive on mutual tolerance, diversity and respect for different opinions.

Safeguarding the purpose of institutions and offices

Building a democracy requires strong, independent institutions which operate within the confines of ordinary laws and the constitution. It only works by promoting the common good and collective wellbeing.

Under populist authoritarians, State institutions are subverted and too often stripped of their elementary purpose: promoting the public interest. Government agencies fundamental to delivering public policy typically are handed off to cronies with little or no technical capacity, sometimes under explicit orders to thwart the purpose and mission of the institutions they command. In a clear betrayal of public purpose, bureaucrats are hired and fired to satisfy private or partisan interests, sometimes flouting democratic principles or the constitution itself.

Captured institutions become political weapons, wielded by those who control them for personal benefit at the expense of collective rights and the public interest. They also can be used to persecute the very citizens they ought to protect. This is the populist paradox: democratically-elected authoritarians use of democratic institutions to gradually smother democracy.

Only by strengthening our institutions, they will be able to resist democratic backsliding in moments of crisis.

MAIN PROPOSALS AND PILLARS OF THE AGENDA

“THE CIVIC SPACE IS OUR SPACE”

Pillar I: Participation of civil society

Civic participation and engagement in matters of public interest are fundamental ingredients for fostering inclusive and effective public policy. By contrast, restricting citizen participation or suppressing information, beliefs, and opinions on public issues contradicts the most basic precepts of a healthy democracy.

Proposals:

01

Reestablish participatory councils functions and civil society’s inclusive participation in them and in other spaces for civic dialogue, and strengthen institutional mechanisms for social participation and control of public policy;

Closing the civic space by suppressing social participation is ongoing. After the executive branch issued Decree 9.759, on 11 April 2019,³ forums created to allow citizen participation and oversight of public policy were dissolved. Those arenas were essential to guaranteeing society a voice in the elaboration of public policy grounded in scientific data and evidence. Civil society’s contribution to policymaking must be guaranteed through dialogue with the three branches of government. The right to assemble, to free expression and the liberty to act within the bounds of the law must be protected.

³ Decreto nº 9759, of 11 April 2019. Available at: https://www.in.gov.br/materia/-/asset_publisher/Kujrw0TZC2Mb/content/id/71137350.

Integrating society into public policymaking is the benchmark for participatory democracy and crucial to ensuring that citizens help shape the decisions which affect them. That calls not only for reestablishing participatory citizen councils, but also institutional spaces and mechanisms to build bridges between civil society and government, whether through public consultation and congressional hearings, or interactive forums, such as national or regional conferences.

02

Bar any attempt to control or limit civil society's actions through legislation, executive orders or unconstitutional measures;

Restricting civic participation is a symptom of authoritarianism and a direct affront to democracy. Imposing barriers on civil society jeopardizes public policy, reduces institutional transparency and constrains the decision-making process.

We cannot allow such restrictions on civic involvement to persist, lest they imperil one of the most elementary bastions of our democracy: free and plural participation in the public policy debate. This is why any proposed legislation, executive orders or official measures which effectively criminalize social movements, persecute or surveil activists or even attempt to control civil society actions must be rejected by lawmakers or overturned by the Judiciary.

03

Identify and resist actions which restrict civil society's capacity to access funding;

Any measures which, even indirectly, impede civil society from carrying out its activities by limiting access to domestic or international aid, or public and private funds, must be blocked. So should all attempts to smother civic activity, whether by tying up social organizations in red tape — such as obstacles to obtaining licenses and fundraising —, or through constricting access to international aid. These constraints reduce the institutional capacities of various organizations and diminish their participation in the civic space.

A healthy, democratic relationship between State and society depends on recognizing the relevance of civil society organizations, fostering mutual trust and ensuring legal security for all participants. Actions which circumscribe citizen organizations should be considered anti-democratic just as all measures that strengthen these institutions and their civic role should be encouraged. Instead of attempting to control and monitor these entities, the State should strengthen them and facilitate their access to funding to help them carry out their public mission.

Pillar II: Access to information and the free movement of ideas

Access to information is fundamental for evaluating and monitoring public policy. It allows the media, civic groups, and the private sector to accompany government actions and demand effective and inclusive strategies. Indeed, transparency is vital to the exercise of citizenship, providing society the means to monitor policy and ensure that the population's interests are served. The free movement of ideas is a bastion of the civic space. It requires an environment of mutual respect, in which dissenting opinions can be freely expressed, without fear of censorship, persecution, or intimidation.

It is also important to heed the voices of those disproportionately affected by social exclusion and marginalization, ensuring them a seat at the table in the public debate. Suppressing the expression of ideas and opinions has serious implications for effective, inclusive public policy, never mind fundamental liberties, and civil and political rights.

Proposals:

04

Protect and guarantee compliance with the Access to Information Law, and reproach measures which restrict access to data and information except in cases allowed by the law;

In a democracy, confidentiality is the exception and public access to data, the rule. Despite this, public transparency has suffered serious setbacks under the current administration, with countless attempts to bend or alter related legislation. Beyond numerous attempts to tamper with the Access to Information Law, the government accepted barely half (53.7%) of legally backed information requests in 2020.⁴

The Access to Information Law (LAI) represents an essential paradigm for implementing a culture of transparency in the Federal Administration. The current norm allows for publishing information, while shielding personal data. In this sense, the law is perfectly aligned with the General Data Protection Law (LGPD), which seeks to maintain transparency while protecting personal data and safeguarding citizen privacy.

Nonetheless, some administrators and public officials have invoked the General Data Protection Law to deny access to perfectly legitimate freedom of information petitions. Hence, in order to protect transparency, institutions and public authorities must ensure the implementation of both laws while reinforcing respect for democratic practices and values.

⁴ The Army's Transparency Index Plummets with the Freedom of Information Law. O Globo. 14 August 2020. Available at: <https://oglobo.globo.com/epoca/guilherme-amado/despenca-indice-de-transparencia-do-exercito-na-lei-de-acesso-informacao-24584499>.

05

Bar any laws and inhibit the use of legal instruments to persecute critics, limit the freedoms of expression, of the press, of debate, as well as academic freedoms, or legally intimidate and harass adversaries;

Consensus-building is essential to democracy. That calls for a society in which everyone has the liberty to express their own views and so influence the general opinion. Dissent is only natural and indeed salutary in a democracy. However, we have observed a creeping unwarranted official use of public security forces and the courts to persecute government critics. Dissent voices are silenced through intimidation and legal harassment. Attacks — virtual or physical — on news media, individual journalists, academics, and dissenting politicians, are also escalating.

These threats have already taken an alarming toll on press freedom and free speech in general. In order to avoid democratic regression and guarantee the safety of those who dissent, inhibiting intimidation and outright violence against journalists and academics is essential. Nor is there any place in a democracy for singling out government critics for public disparagement and stigmatization.

Officially orchestrated or condoned disinformation campaigns by public agents must also be stopped. So do all attempts to create or maintain legal instruments that can to legitimize the intimidation or judicial harassment of political adversaries and critics in general.

06

Stop the proliferation of government measures which use technology to increase control and surveillance of the population in order to safeguard citizen privacy and the free movement of ideas.

Authoritarian governments routinely use the State apparatus and its intelligence agencies to monitor, investigate and eventually punish citizens. Such state overreach infringes upon the right to individual privacy in the name of order and control. These violations generally target specific individuals or groups seen as “threats” by the State, which may go so far as to compile secret dossiers on their critics’ political leanings. Surveillance measures typically begin with veiled censorship, whereby those who oppose the government find themselves being watched and may curb their opinions or fall silent altogether.

On the other hand, we have the General Data Protection Law, signed into law in 2020, which is an essential democratic barrier against these threats. The law shields private citizens from official controls by limiting the State’s power to indiscriminately share personal data and regulating the use of citizen data for public and national security purposes, in a discriminated manner. Protecting individual privacy from surveillance is no trivial matter. Fortunately, the legal framework for citizen protection is in place. Nonetheless, making the law stick depends on complementary legislation which is pending in the Chamber of Deputies. Until the bill advances, all barriers to State surveillance depend on the vagaries of the Judiciary.

Pillar III: The fight against disinformation and stigmatizing discourse

The proliferation of hate speech and stigmatizing discourse inciting violence, defamation and slander have serious consequences for democracy. The dissemination of fake news and disinformation to sway public opinion are also a direct threat to the plurality of ideas, occasionally with catastrophic effect, as illustrated by the spread of false cures and pseudo scientific opinion, during the novel coronavirus pandemic in Brazil and worldwide.

Proposals:

07

Hold public authorities responsible⁵ for the dissemination of fake news and disinformation campaigns, observing the power of social media as instrumental for constructing public opinion;

Public authorities with various ideological leanings have repeatedly weaponized fake news and disinformation campaigns, often spreading their screed on social media. The role of public figures in such toxic media campaigns is especially concerning, not least because, elected or not, they often use their public positions, to disinform and recruit partisan loyalists.

Rhetoric ventilated over social media can be a powerful influence, especially coming from public authorities, whose standing gives them disproportionate reach to inspire confidence and flog their points of view. This deceitful speech and posturing causes concrete damage to the collective conversation and should be denounced.

⁵ We are aware of the imperative need to more deeply debate the relation between the limits of the freedom of expression regarding fake news and disinformation campaigns disseminated by actors from all sectors of society. However, as the objective of this Agenda is to direct questions at representatives from the three branches, in this document, we will limit the discussion to public authorities.

08

Reject stigmatizing discourse which incites violence against minorities and threatens other government branches while also valuing the full functioning of democratic institutions, and making institutions hold authors of these attacks responsible through legal measures;

The growing attacks on free speech by public leaders and authorities has destabilized institutions and rallied extremists. It is important to differentiate freedom of expression from stigmatization, which incites hate and violence against the press, institutions, and the opposition. Extremists themselves have helped themselves to digital liberty to game the political process through mass manipulation technology. They have made social networks their main tool for disseminating hate speech and inciting the persecution of political opponents. Ethnic and racial minorities, as well as other vulnerable groups, have also become choice targets, with grave consequences to their civil and political rights.

Any act that encourages federal agents to disobey orders, disrespect other government branches, and spread hate speech should be immediately punished by any institutional authority concerned with safeguarding democracy.

09

Demand active government transparency in authorizing access to data, including data on public spending, in order to guarantee society's capacity to monitor State actions on behalf of the public interest;

Making data publicly available is essential for allowing the effective social oversight of the government. Ready access to government information turns the relationship between the State and civil society more democratic and transparent. By contrast, official opacity on, State spending, or thwarting general oversight of public revenues, invites uncontrolled management of public money.

That is why it is important to remain vigilant when authorities illegitimately invoke the veil of confidentiality and hide behind censorship or obfuscation, so that we can demand that public authorities protect our right to information, especially in regards to human rights.

Pillar IV: Regaining the democratic purpose of institutions and safeguarding the public interest

Protecting the institutional prerogatives and responsibilities of key public agencies is crucial. Using the State apparatus for private gain or packing key government offices with cronies with no technical capacity can be characterized as betraying the public purpose. The separation between the three government branches is fundamental to the system of checks and balances. Any attempt to inflate the power of one branch to the detriment of others is a direct assault on democracy.

Proposals:

10

Guarantee that offices and institutions fulfill their public purpose, and investigate inappropriate nominations which betray the public interest;

Populist and authoritarian leaders gradually weaken institutions and undermine the key agencies which are fundamental to guaranteeing rights and liberties. This leads to the persecution of public employees, who will will protectively self-censor, so diminishing their capacity to work for the public interest. The results is the degradation of the quality and transparency of public policies in such vital areas as health, education, public security, the environment, foreign policy, and human rights.

Political actors should never take advantage of their position for personal gain. This undermines managerial responsibility, works against public interest, and leads to the abuse of power. Political interference in nominations and dismissals for dubious reasons must be halted and reprimanded.

11

Reaffirm the importance of the separation of powers, and reject constitutional hardball in order to guarantee the full functioning of the system of checks and balances;

When political actors begin to exploit institutional prerogatives, testing the limits of legality, we have what legal expert Mark Tushnet calls “constitutional hardball”. This is a dangerous game for democracy and calls for institutional reserve — civic minded public servants exercising institutional checks and balances to discipline the prerogatives of office. This impedes actions which, although technically within legal boundaries, nonetheless go against the spirit of the law.

History has taught us that presidents who lack restraint can pack court, control Congress, and govern by decree. Such overbearing political control, designed to defeat adversaries, erodes the system of checks and balances, thereby increasing the chances of government abuse while undermining resistance from the other branches. This is why institutional reserve is essential for maintaining the balance between powers and, consequently, for democracy, itself.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO RECOVER THE CIVIC SPACE AND DEFEND DEMOCRACY?

“The Civic Space is Our Space” agenda includes basic principles, as well as proposals for reclaiming and strengthening the civic space, where fundamental guarantees are respected, thereby promoting a healthy democracy.

The tables below present suggestions of concrete actions which can be carried out by citizens, civic leaders, and organizations in various sectors, who are aligned with the principles and proposals described in this agenda.

It is worth noting that the proposals drawn up in the following table specifically consider Brazilian politics, and therefore are not directly applicable to other global contexts and realities.

Table 1 - Actions directed at individuals

Types of action	Description	Example
Seek out information before forming an opinion	Information is essential for forming an opinion, which is why it is important for every citizen to stay informed through proven facts and credible studies on relevant themes. It is important to choose sources well and be doubly cautious about sharing fake news.	Seek out information from more than one outlet. Consult fact-checking agencies.
Disseminate quality content	After researching, every citizen should increase access to studies and research of public interest by spreading the content on their networks and within their community.	Sharing relevant information on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter or Whatsapp. Share the work of outlets and/or researchers who produce quality content on social networks and in social circles.
Active participation in the public debate	Any and every citizen can actively participate in the public debate respectfully and constructively, fostering it in all their everyday spaces and circles. It is important to find agreement between different perspectives and to understand that respectful disagreement is normal. This helps to remove polarization and radicalization from the debate.	Foster healthy debate and communicate without violence. Learn to listen to different opinions and seek to understand them. Do not respond in kind when aggressively confronted on social networks.
Choose representatives responsibly	Responsibly voting for representatives requires understanding the proposals and actions of candidates and authorities. Monitoring them throughout their terms keeps authorities who betray the public interest from being reelected. Accompanying the proposals of each candidate can help citizens choose leaders with relevant, republican objectives.	Study all the candidates' proposals and evaluate their validity. Accompany congressional votes to know which congresspeople voted for and against projects related to the public interest. Analyze the history of political candidates.

Types of action	Description	Example
<p>Support committed leaders</p>	<p>Supporting leaders who are committed to the public interest and cutting-edge knowledge contributes to the spread of honest, responsible campaigns and strengthens leaders who are truly engaged. Societal support is essential for a more democratic, participative environment and for ensuring that candidates that are not heavily financed are also considered. It is also important to withdraw support for ideas and proposals that contradict legal guarantees and constitutional rights, and to be suspicious of magical, populist solutions. Political saviors do not exist.</p>	<p>Share the profiles of committed leaders on social networks.</p> <p>Donate to their campaigns.</p> <p>Remain cautious about ideas and proposals which infringe upon legal guarantees and constitutional rights, such as those which discriminate against social groups.</p>
<p>Constant monitoring and oversight of public authorities</p>	<p>Monitoring officeholders and demanding results is important for councilmembers, state and federal deputies, senators, mayors, governors, and the president. It is essential to pay attention to the roles and responsibilities of every level of government. The oversight of public authorities is essential for avoiding the reelection of bad administrators, and for holding them responsible when they betray the public trust.</p>	<p>Accompany the work of organizations which analyze and defend evidence-based public policy.</p> <p>Write to elected representatives and demand specific actions. Remember campaign proposals and demand their fulfillment during the course of a politician's term.</p>

Table 2. Actions directed at organizations

Types of action	Description	Example
Research	<p>Technical knowledge on relevant themes will strengthen all other strategic actions. The more citizens and organizations learn about important subjects, the more legitimacy they gain when participating in debates relevant to the public interest, when influencing decision-makers, and when diagnosing key problems as well as potential solutions.</p>	<p>Produce primary data, and carry out studies using secondary sources.</p> <p>Formulate evidence-based arguments.</p> <p>Carry out comparative research with other countries.</p> <p>Analyze legislative proposals and identify possible risks.</p> <p>Threat mapping.</p> <p>Identify promising practices.</p>
Accompany the Legislature	<p>Advocate for strategic communication with legislators who are proposing bills and/or head committees of bills or legislative decrees which directly affect the actions of civil society.</p>	<p>Meetings.</p> <p>Provide technical input.</p> <p>Participate in public hearings.</p> <p>Encourage legislative responses to threats carried out by other branches.</p>

Types of action	Description	Example
<p>Strategic litigation</p>	<p>Litigation involves lawsuits and cooperative action with the Judicial Branch. When we refer to strategic litigation, we have broadened the term to include general advocacy and communication which seeks to promote public policy that ensures rights and creates precedents which can be applied to similar cases. This tool is increasingly necessary for ensuring rights and containing democratic backsliding.</p>	<p>Propose civil lawsuits.</p> <p>File constitutional lawsuits focused on the public interest through tools such as <i>amicus curiae</i>,⁶ in order to offer the Court technical input, as well as non-legal knowledge in which the organization specializes.</p> <p>Hold meetings with judges in order to discuss paradigmatic cases related to the public interest.</p> <p>Publish technical input for informed decision-making.</p> <p>Dialogue with competent figures, such as Public Prosecutors and Public Defenders, who can legitimately represent the collective, for filing specific suits. Political parties are also important, especially when filing constitutional lawsuits.</p>
<p>Communication</p>	<p>In order to inform and direct public opinion and influence administrators and decision-makers, a broad communication strategy which includes campaigns, articles, reports, and other social media posts can be quite effective.</p>	<p>Pressure campaigns, including sending emails to authorities.</p> <p>Take strong positions in the media (opinion articles, suggestions for reporters, newspaper, radio, TV and social media interviews).</p> <p>Social media campaigns.</p> <p>Petitions.</p> <p>Open letters.</p> <p>Fact checking.</p> <p>Public acts.</p>
<p>Participation in national and international advocacy networks</p>	<p>Participating in networks contributes to cooperative work. It also helps to broaden channels of communication, exchange knowledge, and divulge content.</p>	<p>Make reports to and demand action from the UN, the International Criminal Court (ICC), the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, and other national, regional, and international organizations.</p>

⁶ *Amicus curiae*, or friend of the court, refers to an institution which seeks to provide input on legal decisions, offering a better basis for deciding on relevant and far-reaching issues.

Table 2 continued

Types of action	Description	Example
Encourage transparency	Civic participation is only possible when the general population can monitor and oversee government practices. Encouraging transparency means aiding the spread of information relevant to the society as a whole, making society the main guardian of the res publica.	<p>Make requests through the Access to information law (LAI).</p> <p>Organize, publish, and disseminate data on various themes.</p> <p>Critically analyze State declarations of confidentiality.</p>
Maintain presence in institutionalized spaces for participation	Institutionalized spaces for participation are fundamentally important for conveying demands, technical input, and other issues to administrators and decision makers through a formal channel of communication, thus making civic engagement viable.	Participation in public policy councils.
Offline and online engagement	Involving groups of people, communities, and movements to organize and coordinate around a common objective, make collective decisions, and uniquely promote the community's interest, whether occasionally or consistently. Online mobilization has the potential to strengthen counternarratives to hateful and stigmatizing discourse which targets minorities. It promotes digital citizenship, accessibility, training, and qualification.	<p>Engage civil society organization networks, which work together on activities and commitments.</p> <p>Encourage, support, and stimulate civic engagement from all people and at all levels.</p> <p>Share knowledge, train, and support the engagement of new leaders and activists.</p>

Types of action	Description	Example
<p>Create and strengthen spaces for debate</p>	<p>Foster broad, grounded, respectful, and plural debate on issues related to the public interest, including the participation of actors from various sectors of society. Dialogue enriches discussion, allows for cooperative efforts toward the common good, and strengthens the democratic environment while giving visibility to vulnerable groups</p>	<p>Create networks and working groups.</p> <p>Provide technical or financial support for collectives and movements.</p>

Find out more about our platform to protect the civic space at:

igarape.org.br/civic-space



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a think and do tank

The Igarapé Institute is an independent think and do tank focused on public, climate and digital security and their consequences for democracy. Its objective is to propose solutions and partnerships for global challenges through research, new technologies, communication and influence on public policymaking. The Institute works with governments, the private sector and civil society to design data-based solutions. Prospect Magazine named Igarapé Institute the best Human Rights NGO in 2018 and the best think tank on social policy in 2019.

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