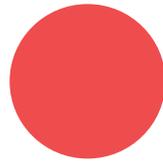




**IGARAPÉ INSTITUTE**  
a think and do tank



# THE CIVIC SPACE GPS

QUARTERLY BULLETIN 03

OCTOBER 2021



# THE CIVIC SPACE GPS

April-June 2021

Civic space – the sphere between business, the State, and family where citizens organize, debate and act to influence public policy and the general direction of the country – is under attack. The constant assaults on civic space threaten civil and political rights, hinder transparency and curtail the freedom of expression, assembly, and protest. Such attacks also clash directly with rights and freedoms guaranteed in the Brazilian Constitution as well as in countless international conventions and treaties, and represent a grave threat to democracy itself. The closure of civic space is not exclusive to Brazil but it is becoming troublingly common here.

This is why Igarapé Institute has launched “The Civic Space GPS.” The objective is to monitor attacks, institutional responses led by State institutions, as well as acts of resistance from civil society. These quarterly bulletins track and analyze such attacks as reported in multiple media outlets, including Folha de S. Paulo, G1, O Estado de S. Paulo, O Globo and UOL. The GPS also draws on articles published by BBC, Carta Capital, CNN, Conjur, Congresso em Foco, Correio Braziliense, Diário de Pernambuco, El País, Época, Extra, Farol da Bahia, Gazeta do Povo, IstoÉ, Jota, Marco Zero, Metrôpoles, Nexo, O Antagonista, Poder 360, Portal STF, the Senate, Tapajós Vivo

and Valor Econômico. Our researchers then organize and catalogue this data to classify the types of strategies and tactics employed to circumscribe civic space. This typology was published in the Igarapé Institute’s Strategic Paper 49, “[The ‘Agora’ is Under Attack: assessing the closure of civic space in Brazil and around the world](#),” and in the supporting Technical Note, “[A Typology to Understand Strategies and Tactics for Attacking the Civic Space](#)”, which updated the list of strategies and tactics.

In this edition, we identified **406 reported threats** to Brazil’s civic space between 1 April and 30 June 2021. During the same period, we also identified **327 institutional responses** to such attacks and **148 acts of resistance by civil society and other groups**. It is important to note that, while welcome and numerous, these reactions are still outnumbered by the multiplying assaults on civic space which corrode Brazilian democracy from within. We also identified **34 reported instances in which the government changed its position**, as reported by media outlets.

# The Threats

In the second quarter of 2021, we identified **406 threats to the civic space**. Nearly a quarter (**91**) were acts of **intimidation and harassment**. **Fake news and disinformation campaigns** were also prevalent, totaling **77 incidents**. The bulletin also registered frequent acts of **abuse of power (68 incidents)** as well as **violations of civil and political rights (43)**.

Episodes of **intimidation and harassment** involved [increasing attacks on journalists](#) and media, and the use of [the police and judiciary to intimidate critics and the opposition](#), often under the umbrella of the National Security Law (LSN). [Public servants](#) have also been frequent targets of institutional persecution and assault, enough so at times to obstruct efficient public policy.

As in prior editions, the bulletin flagged numerous instances of **fake news and disinformation campaigns**, especially those related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Defense of [unproven cures](#), dismissal of [lockdowns](#), spreading vaccine skepticism and public authorities promoting procedures [with no basis in science](#) were among the most commonly reported incidents. So were attempts to impugn the integrity of the electoral system through unfounded allegations of voter fraud, calls to revert to paper ballots, and a campaign to discredit electronic voting machines.

Constantly [hiring and firing of civil servants](#) also stood out as one of most frequently reported ways authorities **abuse power**, as reported by news outlets. Constant and selective turnover in the bureaucracy has effectively paralyzed key government agencies, thwarting their capacity to carry out their mandate and efficiently deliver public goods, the [Folha de S. Paulo](#) found. Several media groups, including O Globo, Valor Econômico and Folha de S. Paulo reported [incidents of inappropriate use of public funds](#) and the [appropriation of State resources](#) by private interests. Folha de S. Paulo also investigated

[alleged malfeasance in procurement of the Covaxin vaccine](#). According to the journal, the federal government asked for a US\$1 per dose kickback for vaccine purchases, and insisted on the deal even after warnings about irregularities, including [impending vaccine expiration dates](#), [breach of contract](#), and [padded prices](#).

**Civil and political rights violations** mainly threatened the most vulnerable groups, such as [indigenous peoples](#), the [LGTBQIA+ community](#), the [black population](#), and [women](#). Threats classified as **constitutional hardball** included bills to weaken [budgetary control](#) and [administrative integrity](#), and a draft resolution to change regulation of the Chamber of deputies to [silence minority voices in congress](#). Farol da Bahia and Folha de S. Paulo also reported attempts to [undermine the parliamentary](#) committee of inquiry investigating the government's handling of the public health emergency.

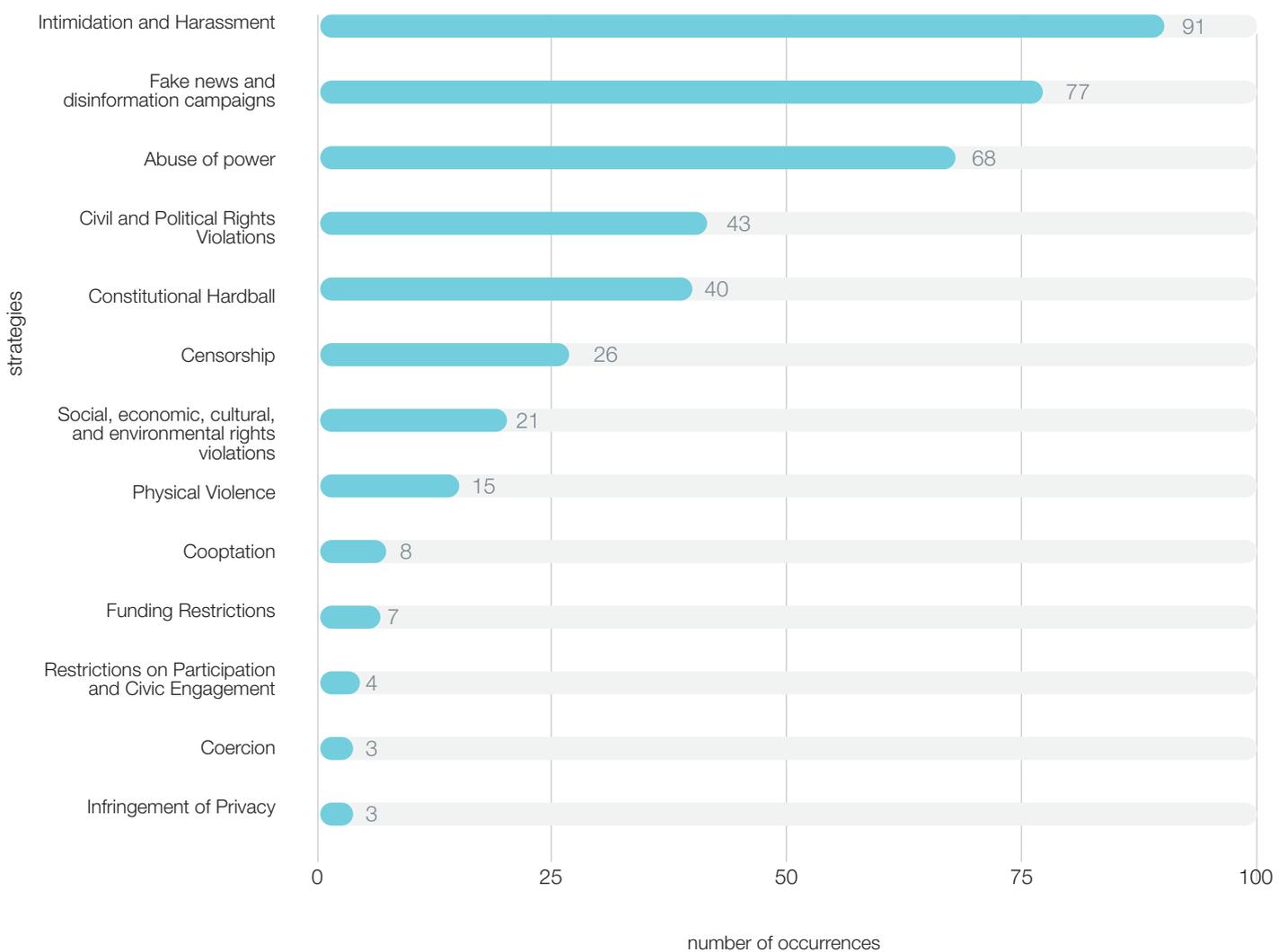
Still other articles exposed attempted **ensorship** by weaponizing the judiciary [to take down critical articles](#) from websites, [seal public documents deemed sensitive](#) without legitimate justification, and [obstruct the free press](#). **Social, economic, cultural, and environmental rights violations** also drew extensive media coverage, including official moves to [weaken environmental policies](#), with severe [consequences for Brazilian forests](#) and increasingly [vulnerable indigenous populations](#), traditional communities, and low-income groups.

The bulletin also called attention to escalating **physical violence**, especially clashes between [indigenous groups and illegal miners](#), as well [political disputes](#) and the excessive use of force by the [police](#). Official **cooptation** of interest groups also raised flags, including several instances of the federal government strategically ceding to the demands of [policemen](#), [truckers](#), and [evangelicals](#), as reported by O Estado de S. Paulo, Folha de S. Paulo and O Globo, respectively.

**Funding restriction** strategies were found when freezing and reducing government funds have seriously curtailed the functioning and maintenance of public learning and research institutions. **Restrictions on participation and civic engagement** occurred mainly through intimidation and outright [exclusion of civil society representatives](#) from public policymaking institutions. In one egregious example of **infringement of privacy** for

political ends, Folha de S. Paulo reported the preparation of a [dossier on the political leanings of public servants](#). In another, the Estado de S. Paulo wrote of government efforts to [collect the personal data of its supporters in order to construct a Bolsonaro-friendly digital network](#).

**Figure 1.** Attack strategies used (April-June 2021)



Source: Igarapé analysis based on news by 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 behavior that demeans, humiliates or embarrasses a citizen when expressing critical opinions.

Stories of intimidation and harassment involving attacks on journalists, [communications outlets](#), and public servants were frequently reported this quarter. Likewise, the frequent use of the National Security Law, remained indiscriminate, according to the [Folha de S. Paulo](#).

A study by the [National Federation of Brazilian Journalists \(FENAJ\)](#) found 428 attacks on the press, including verbal aggressions, threats, and attempts to discredit journalists. “[Idiot](#)”, “[bastard](#)”, “[quadruped](#)”, were just a few of the insults President Jair Bolonsaro directed at journalists, according to multiple reports by G1, Estado de S. Paulo, and Folha de S. Paulo, respectively. Public servants were frequently targets of intimidation and harassment. [O Globo](#) spoke of “ideological persecution” by the government, citing a study by the National Coordination of Public Careers for Sustainable Development (ARCA) which identified 650 episodes of institutional harassment over the last two years. The institute documented numerous episodes of intimidation by administrative and judicial processes, as well as outright dismissals of government critics. [UOL](#) broke the story on how special secretary of culture, Mário Frias, reportedly carried a gun to work, often shouting at and scaring his subordinates. [Folha de S. Paulo](#) also wrote about the harassment of Ministry of the Environment employees whose jobs included investigating alleged misdeeds, such as smuggling illicit forest products.

As in prior editions, the most recent **Civic Space GPS** found countless instances of judicial harassment against government critics and opponents. [The Intercept editor-in-chief Leandro Demori, for example, was subpoenaed by the Civil Police](#) to explain his social media posts on a violent police operation in Jacarezinho, a low income neighborhood in Rio de Janeiro. Attorney general Augusto Aras filed a criminal complaint against University of São Paulo law professor and columnist Conrado Hübner for calling Aras “Postmaster General,” the [Folha de S. Paulo](#) reported. An investigation against the popular YouTuber Felipe Neto, an outspoken government critic, was sent to Federal Court for supposed violations of the National Security Law (LSN). Neto’s “crime,” as [O Globo](#) put it: accusing Bolsonaro of committing “genocide” for his handling of the pandemic. Former São Paulo mayoral candidate Paulo Guilherme Boulos was also brought up under the LSN, apparently for a comment he posted on social media, according to [Folha de S. Paulo](#). “A reminder for Bolsonaro: Louis XIV’s dynasty ended with the guillotine”, [Boulos tweeted](#). Likewise, Federal Police also subpoenaed indigenous leader Sônia Guajajara for purportedly slandering the federal government in her web series “Maracá”, [O Globo](#) reported.

Another example of intimidation and harassment is the federal government’s quarrel with state governments over restrictive measures for containing COVID-19. According to [Folha de S. Paulo](#), Justice Minister Anderson Torres declared that “public security forces” would be deployed to guarantee the “peaceful freedom of movement.” Several police leaders sympathetic to the president have confronted COVID-19 containment measures ordered by governors who oppose the federal government, [O Globo](#) reported.

# 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. Disinformation is false information spread deliberately to cause public harm or for profit, going beyond fake news.

## Fake news and disinformation campaigns

championed [unproven cures](#) for COVID-19, [criticized restrictive health measures](#), and spread [anti-vaccine rhetoric](#).

In the midst of the parliamentary committee inquiry (CPI) on COVID, president Jair Bolsonaro insisted on defending [ineffective treatments](#) and opposed [social distancing](#) protocols, to the applause of his backers. Although it has long been discredited, and despite health minister Marcelo Queiroga's denials, use of chloroquine as a "preventive treatment" may still be found on the Ministry of Health's guidelines and the protocols of the national health system (SUS), [Folha de S. Paulo](#) reported. Government-friendly senators Eduardo Girão and Luis Carlos Heinze recently touted the same misinformation to the congressional investigating panel, citing inconclusive scientific studies, and erroneous data, while also omitting information, [Folha de S. Paulo](#) wrote. The former minister of health, Eduardo Pazuello, made at least ten misleading claims about chloroquine, tests, and vaccines during the CPI, [Estado de S. Paulo](#) found. [Anti-vaccine](#) rhetoric also flourished this quarter. Bolsonaro joined the chorus, claiming that catching COVID-19 is

a more [effective immunization strategy than vaccination](#), so invoking the herd immunity thesis, widely refuted by pathologists and other public health specialists. Days before Brazil surpassed 500 thousand COVID-19 deaths, the president stated the [Ministry of Health would no longer require masks](#) for anyone who has already been vaccinated or infected.

Attacks on the electoral system have also escalated. The president has repeatedly claimed he ought to have [won the election outright in the first round of balloting in 2018](#), without presenting any evidence of fraud, UOL reported. The defense of printed ballots gained strength in presidential speech and in the Chamber of deputies, where there is a Constitutional amendment bill on the theme, headed by deputy Bia Kicis. "[If there are no printed ballots, that means there will be no election](#)," Bolsonaro has said, signaling his apparent willingness to [double down on fraud allegations during the 2022 election](#). Bolsonaro also told supporters that the only way his main political rival, former president Lula, can win is if [the voting system](#) is rigged, as reported by [Estado de S. Paulo](#). It's worth noting that Bia Kicis, who sponsored the Constitutional Amendment on paper ballots, is also under scrutiny for hiring a company to spread disinformation to discredit electronic voting systems, according to [UOL](#). Nor would she admit any gradual implementation of a new voting system, arguing that the only way to make the 2022 elections trustworthy is with 100% paper ballots, according to [Folha de S. Paulo](#).

# 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 the public interest and institutional responsibilities.

Frequent political appointments and dismissals point to a troubling pattern of **abuse of power**, where jobs are reportedly awarded on political instead of technical criteria, often contrary to the public interest. This was especially the case at the Ministries of the [Environment](#), of [Education](#), and of [Culture](#).

One much commented example was [the Federal Police director-general's decision to summarily dismiss the head of the Amazonas agency](#), Alexandre Saraiva, who had ordered an investigation into then controversial Environment Minister Ricardo Salles. Then came the move by the national environmental authority, IBAMA, to sack the head of the agency's technical unit in Porto de Paranaguá, a major Brazilian export hub, Antonio Fabrício Vieira. A 26-year IBAMA veteran, Vieira had authorized the inspection of all native lumber shipments passing through his jurisdiction, according to [Folha de S. Paulo](#). The same fate befell the coordinator of the government's Green Economy initiative, [reportedly on Salles' orders](#). Many other environmental setbacks became news on Salles' watch, including the [relaxing of inspections after loggers met with Salles](#), the inappropriate intervention by one of Salles' advisors in [IBAMA's violations division](#), and [leaks of impending police operations](#) in the Amazon, UOL and Folha de S. Paulo reported.

The Ministry of Education's pick to preside over CAPES, the national post-graduate study program, coordinated a privately run master's course which, due to underperformance

in 2017, nearly lost CAPES accreditation, [G1](#) reported. Another federal directive [has stripped](#) a federal research institution, the Anísio Teixeira National Institute for Educational Studies and Research (INEP), of many of its attributes to the point of losing qualified employees. At the same time, the Education Ministry (MEC) overruled its technical advisors to empower a [permanent commission to purge the national university entrance exam \(ENEM\)](#) of purportedly objectionable "ideological" content. The draft of the INEP Ordinance speak of barring "[subjective questions](#)" and [emphasizing "moral values"](#).

Even the Ministry of Culture became a target, with government discontents led by the president himself seeking to discredit the Institute of National Historical and Artistic Heritage (IPHAN), tasked with preserving Brazil's cultural heritage. The Institute's initiatives have hit a 65-year low, as several high-level employees have been dismissed, [Folha de S. Paulo](#) found. In another shift the Rouanet Cultural Incentive Law, the country's most important mechanism for financing artistic productions, is now under the [command of a former Military Police officer](#), a Bolsonaro ally with no experience in the field.

The murky public bidding process for a surveillance tool started by the Ministry of Justice also drew attention, as reported by [UOL](#). That's because the public notice by passed the two government intelligence agencies — the Institutional Security Office (GSI) and the Brazilian Intelligence Agency (ABIN)— who would be directly benefited by the tool. Critics told reporters the oversight was deliberate, aimed at reducing military intelligence capacity.

The bulletin also flagged apparent misuse of State resources for private gain, such as when senator Flávio Bolsonaro, the president's eldest son, [invited a secretary of the Federal Revenue Department to his home](#) to discuss possible defenses in the case involving the former advisor parliamentarian Fabrício Queiroz. According to [Folha de S. Paulo](#), the Federal

tax authority also ordered an apparently preemptive system-wide sweep to identify ongoing investigations into the First Family's financial affairs, including the president, his three sons who are also politicians, his wife and two ex-wives. [Critics labelled](#) the moves attempts at legal damage control. According to [UOL](#), the Bolsonaro government inappropriately used the Special Secretariat for Social Communication (SECOM) to answer an unflattering news article.

Those were not the only reports of inappropriate use of public money. G1 has reported that [federal funds are being funneled to pro-Bolsonaro websites](#) accused of spreading disinformation, hate speech, and attacks on democratic stability. [Estado de S. Paulo](#) wrote of a 'parallel budget' of R\$3 billion, to purchase [overpriced tractors](#). The government has also spent aggressively to promote ineffective COVID-19 cures, according to [O Globo](#). [Folha de S. Paulo](#) reported that the Army spent vaccine funds on military hospitals, ineffective cures, and undisclosed expenses. The Federal Court of Accounts (TCU) found evidence pointing to possible inadequate use of R\$7.5 million in COVID-19 donations by First Lady Michelle Bolsonaro's volunteer organization. The Covaxin scandal also came to light this quarter, in which middlemen allegedly demanded [a U\\$1 per dose bribe](#) to sign the contract. According to the journal, the Bolsonaro administration maintained the contract although the buyer [had failed to honor its supply agreement and despite warnings of the vaccine's impending expiration date](#), while also ignoring counsel to [negotiate a more favorable price](#), according to the TCU.

## 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

disproportionately affect vulnerable groups, including the LGBTQIA+ community, indigenous peoples, the black population, and women.

The pandemic has hit indigenous peoples especially hard. According to [O Globo](#), the infection rate in the Amazon Basin is 136% higher than the national average, and the indigenous mortality rate is 110% higher than the Brazilian average. What's more, the number of indigenous deaths from COVID-19 was double the total announced by the government. Changes of command at the Special Indigenous Health Districts (DSEI), which was packed with political appointees, [military officials](#) and outsiders with little experience in indigenous health, made matters worse, [Folha de S. Paulo](#) found.

The [Ministry of Health distributed 265 thousand pills](#) of ineffective COVID-19 medication to indigenous populations, even as illegal miners received vaccines, allegedly [in exchange for gold](#), according to [G1](#). The

last quarter also saw an increase in disputes over indigenous land involving illegal mining, including a rise in violent clashes. At the same time, a bill that would make demarcating indigenous land more difficult [gained traction in the Chamber of Deputies](#). When indigenous groups gathered in Brasilia to protest, the Military Police answered with truculence, [O Globo](#) wrote.

The LGBTQIA+ community has been a frequent target. The first transexual congresswoman in the city of Niteroi, Benny Briolly, [fled the country after receiving threats](#). A bill prohibiting sexual diversity in children's ads has garnered increasing support in the Sao Paulo Legislative Assembly (ALESP), a red flag for LGBTQIA+ rights entities, according to [Folha de S. Paulo](#). At the federal level, conservative leaders bristled at the Ministry of Education campaigning in favor of [gender-neutral language](#). The presbyterian pastor who leads the Ministry stated that he had not produced the content and had [requested its correction](#). President Jair Bolsonaro and his supporters, according to [Folha de S. Paulo](#), were responsible for inciting homophobic attacks on the Sao Paulo and Rio Grande do Sul governors. Bolsonaro ridiculed senator Randolfe Rodrigues, who sits on the legislative inquest panel probing government mishandling of the pandemic, as ["prancing around,"](#) a homophobic dogwhistle. When a public authority speaks out against members of the LGBT community, persecution follows, according to the executive director of the NGO Rainbow Railroad, who argued that [Brazil is not a safe country for LGBT persons](#).

Police violence has disproportionately hit the black population. According to [G1](#), 78% of those killed by the Military and Civil Police in 2020 were black. Despite a Supreme Court (STF) ruling [restricting police operations in Rio de Janeiro favelas during the pandemic](#), the state security forces held their most deadly operation on record. Crime scenes were not preserved, hampering the investigation, [El País](#) reported. High court Justice Edson Fachin cited evidence that could point to

["arbitrary executions"](#). For his part, [Bolsonaro congratulated the Civil Police for the operation and criticized the "media" and the "left"](#) for treating the dead like "victims", while vice-president [Hamilton Mourão stated that the victims were "criminals" and "thugs"](#). The [Rio de Janeiro government allegedly failed to assist](#) family members of the victims, while according to [Folha](#), officers involved in the raid claimed they acted out of legitimate defense, a familiar refrain by police to explain violent confrontations. In another headline case, a [young man was fatally shot in his own home by policemen in Maranhão](#) and then buried without an autopsy. Reports tied the man's violent death to the "good luck" message he posted on social media for fugitive criminal Lazaro Barbosa, who was then the target of a police manhunt.

Nor was this quarter easy on women. Not a single female senator was chosen for the 18-member parliamentary inquiry into COVID-19. Congresswomen of the parliamentary Committee on the Constitution, Justice, and Citizenship (CCJ) were attacked by federal deputy Eduardo Bolsonaro, who posted a misogynist tweet: ["It may look like a coop of crazy women, but it's just people with vaginas... going wild"](#).

# Constitutional Hardball

Constitutional hardball consists of political actors exploiting procedures, laws, and institutions to obtain partisan gains while violating pre established norms and testing the limits of legality, which could undermine the shared understanding of democratic norms and the expectation that the other side will comply with them. The inappropriate use of institutional prerogatives in the interest of political groups and/or private or non-republican interests.

Cases of **constitutional hardball** this quarter were a particular source of concern. They include attempts to steamroller the so-called paper ballot bill, as well as partisan moves to weaken legislative guarantees of administrative integrity and budgetary control. The efforts of the Attorney General's Office (PGR) are also worth noting given the tension between the Judiciary and Executive branches.

Consider the “Tractor” scandal, in which tractors were bought for exorbitant prices using public funds. [Estado de S. Paulo](#) reported that the Bolsonaro administration used the tractor scheme, tapping into a secret, R\$3 billion slush fund, to win strategic legislative support. [O Estado de São Paulo](#) found a strong correlation between such budget perks and congressional support: Federal legislators who benefitted from the secret budget [supported 87.6%](#) of government sponsored bills and agenda items. The implications are troubling. With little transparency and reduced capacity to track public funds, strategic allocation of government funds has strengthened the administration's influence over [Congress](#), according to UOL. This also has led to heightened tensions and suspicions, according to [O Globo](#). After the

secret budget came to light, the government issued an ordinance to make such perks permanent, formally allocating billions of reais from the 2021 budget to Congress, [O Estado de S. Paulo](#) reported. Even before the budget was approved, the federal administration extended the deadline for senators and deputies to send public funds for their electoral bases through special transfers, a maneuver critics said amounted to a budgetary “[blank check](#)”, [O Globo](#) wrote. Under the new rule, legislators would no longer have to account for where they spent the money, nor would federal oversight agencies have any say in the matter. It remains to be seen if the Supreme Court will condone this executive measure.

The COVID parliamentary inquiry (CPI) set the stage for various threats. [Government allies in Congress](#) attempted to prevent the panel from convening, according to Folha de S. Paulo. When that effort failed, critics took aim at the group of independent senators heading the panel, pushing to swap them out for government loyalists through a number of [legal maneuvers](#). In one ploy, committee contrarians sought to shape the proceedings by inviting [nine governors to testify](#), giving into pressure from the [president and his allies in Congress](#). Later, the maneuver was stopped by the STF.

It is important to emphasize that controversial initiatives with the potential to alter and distort Brazil's democratic process have [advanced quickly through Congress](#). Government allies pressed the paper ballot amendment, [raising concerns about possible risks of fraud and vulnerabilities in the process of voting, if the model is adopted in the upcoming elections](#). Scholars, legislators, Electoral Court magistrates – led by chief electoral court justice Luís Roberto Barroso – dismissed [the measure as a “regression.”](#)

That was not the only rule-bending proposal on the agenda. Despite the evident risks, both the [Senate leader](#) and the [president](#) are pushing for immediate changes to the electoral law that would rewrite the script for the 2022 elections, Valor Econômico reported. According to Farol da Bahia, senators are bent on sponsoring bills loaded with clauses from controversial executive

decrees—to expand access to firearms and weaken arms controls—which had already been rejected by high court Justice Rosa Weber.

There was also concern over questionable changes to [congressional procedures](#) which opposition leaders said amounted to a “gag law”, as well as [bills currently under consideration by the constitution and justice committee which critics say could circumscribe the STF](#). The court has lost favor with government supporters due to its rulings against president Bolsonaro, as reported by Correio Braziliense. Prosecutor General Augusto Aras has also drawn frequent press attention for a number of decisions, including petitioning the Supreme Court to quash motions [to remove former environment minister Ricardo Salles](#), G1 wrote. [Aras also asked the high court to allow the prosecution of government critics for accusing Bolsonaro of committing “genocide,”](#) on grounds that there is no “[blatant illegality](#)” in the inquiries. The attorney general also [refused to authorize an investigation](#) into apparently irregular deposits in the First Lady’s bank account, and asked the Supreme Court president to hand over to Justice Kassio Nunes - Bolsonaro’s recent nominee recent nominee to the court – the [lawsuit to defy state social distancing laws and allow in-person church services](#) mid pandemic.

Another concern is the weakening of military discipline, which is fundamental to safeguarding the rule of law and the boundaries of political and military institutions. Start with [former Minister of Health Eduardo Pazuello, a three-star army general, who broke military protocols by participating in a political rally](#), as reported on by Globo. The crisis deepened when [Bolsonaro asked the Army not to punish Pazuello](#), according to Folha de S. Paulo. By looking the other way, Brazil’s army commander raised alarms among [specialists and members of the military](#), who warned of the perils of politicizing the Armed Forces and the police. Another leader might have sought to defuse the crisis. Bolsonaro doubled down: instead of barring soldiers from political jobs, he ruled that certain civilian positions would become de facto militarized when held by active members of the Armed Forces. He went on to recast the [statutes to allow members of the military to hold civilian position for indefinite lengths of time](#).

## Censorship

Censorship refers to the “policy of restricting/suppressing the public expression of any ideas, opinions, conceptions, and impulses which have or are believed to have the capacity to undermine the governing authority or social and moral order which that authority considers itself bound to protect.” (Laswell, 1930)

In this quarter, various cases of potential censorship were logged. Both open and veiled, including ordering the withdrawal of critical or politically controversial articles, questionably sealing sensitive and possibly compromising information as confidential, and obstructing the press by creating [unreasonable obstacles](#).

According to [Crusoé](#), the current administration has invoked confidentiality to deny access to information at triple the historical rate. At the COVID CPI, the Bolsonaro administration dispatched [countless “confidential” documents](#), to the displeasure of committee members. In response to a Access to Information request, the Army denied access to its administrative process examining Pazuello’s participation in a Bolsonaro political rally [for the next 100 years](#), O Globo reported. Likewise, the Civil Police ruled that any information related to police operations will be [confidential for five years](#), including the lethal raid of Jacarezinho. Following the “Tractor” scandal, the [Minister of Regional Development admitted](#) that details of how politicians used the secret budget were not for public disclosure. A group of senators even invoked [“national security” and “the risk to his and his family’s honor”](#) as motives for refusing to reveal how the funds were spent.

The second quarter of 2021 also tracked how legal maneuvers were deployed to justify

taking down media content critical of the government and its supporters. An IstoÉ article [portraying Bolsonaro ally Olavo de Carvalho as a “court jester” was removed from the web](#) by the Sao Paulo Court, which also [ordered the Aos Fatos fact-checking agency to withdraw a piece](#) on disinformation published by Oeste magazine regarding fires in the Amazon and preventive COVID “cures”.

Protests, opinions and even artistic endeavors that fall into official disfavor also were met with censorship. The president of the Palmares Foundation announced that any documents on [“that useless Marighella”](#), referring to writer and communist guerilla-fighter Carlos Marighella, would be removed from the institution’s archives. [Folha de S. Paulo](#) branded the decision censorship, deeply ideological and demoralizing. An article published by national education research institute (INEP) showing that literacy rates had improved under the Workers’ Party (PT) was deleted by the Bolsonaro administration. Censorship also flourished offline, such as when the National Department of Transportation Infrastructure’s (DNIT) dismantled various billboards and banners along the federal highway BR-405 [protesting the president](#).

## Social, economic, cultural, and environmental rights violations

Economic, social, and cultural rights are human rights which guarantee the development and dignity of individuals and communities. They are fundamental for engagement in the civic space. Violations of these rights include the failure to respect, protect, and guarantee adequate nutrition and housing, education, work, health, social security, participation in cultural life, water, and sanitation. In terms of the environment and its essential place in human rights, the State’s duty to prevent, avoid, mitigate, and cooperate when it comes to environmental conservation.

This quarter, the bulletin also logged multiplied threats to the environment. They included a number of legislative initiatives that setback the preservation of forests and indigenous rights. One such menace was the [emergency vote on a bill to build a “road and park” through the Iguazu National Park](#). Another was the constitution and justice committee’s endorsement of the text of a bill which proposed to overhaul the Indigenous Statute and make demarcation of indigenous land more difficult, [G1](#) reported. During Ricardo Salles’s tenure at the environment ministry, several protocols and procedures designed to prevent illegal lumber exports were [significantly weakened](#), according to data presented by Estado de S. Paulo. The minister eventually [resigned amid a Supreme Court-ordered investigation](#) into his alleged role in [facilitating](#)

[bootleg lumber transport and sale](#). State and local environmental protection were also curtailed. A bill signed by the governor of Roraima, for example, confers a [98% discount and official sanction to land grabbers who illegally settled land in conservation areas](#).

In regions throughout Brazil, the State's failure to act has resulted in extreme cases of social rights violations for vulnerable groups such as indigenous peoples, Afro-Brazilian communities known as Quilombolas, and agrarian reform and settlers. According to Folha de S. Paulo, [courts in Bahia state, defying a Supreme Court ruling, authorized the repossession of land inhabited by indigenous people](#). The federal Chamber of Deputies approved a bill to expel agrarian reform activists, indigenous communities and Quilombola residents from their settlements, according to [G1](#). Despite increasing tension and clashes between indigenous peoples and illegal miners in the Amazon region, the [Ministry of Defense suspended its planned backup for a Federal Police operation targeting illegal miners in the state of Pará](#). The pullout order remained in effect despite the Attorney General's Office's [statement to the Supreme Court](#) that the Army's withdrawal from the so-called Operation Mundurukânia risked a "serious deficiency in the capacity to maintain order" in the area, as well as "concrete examples of damage" to indigenous groups. The invasion of a Tapajós village and the arson attack on the home of indigenous leader Maria Leusa Cosme Kaba Munduruku were two recent examples.

Threats to public health have also surged during the pandemic. These include reports that, even with COVID-19 infections and fatalities spiking, [the federal government failed to respond to 10 emails in a single month from Pfizer offering vaccines](#). Despite record deaths and a majority of the population still awaiting vaccination, [Bolsonaro reportedly wanted to decrease public media adverts warning about COVID-19](#), according to UOL.

## 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** identified this quarter include disputes between illegal miners and indigenous groups, aggression motivated by political differences, and episodes of the police abusing the use of force.

In an attack reported by [UOL](#), a group of armed illegal miners opened fire on a Yanomami indigenous community. According to reports, two children were drowned during the ensuing panic as villagers fled. For over a month, [illegal miners had been terrorizing the Yanomami people with firearms and bombs](#), according to the journal.

Violence has also spilled into politics. In the state of Espírito Santo, Bolsonaro supporters cornered and [verbally attacked](#) a young woman at the airport, forcefully seizing the sign she was carrying, bearing the number of COVID-19 deaths.

Excessive force by the police was also in evidence this quarter, including the deadly Civil Police operation in Jacarezinho which left 28 dead. According to [G1](#), several people arrested in the operation later told the court that police had punched, kicked and struck them with their rifles. In Rio de Janeiro, Military Police assaulted a lawyer after she protested what she considered to be an arbitrary arrest,

[Folha de S. Paulo](#) reported. In May, during protests against the current administration, [two men were left partially blind by rubber bullets](#) fired by police. According to [Folha de S. Paulo](#), a peaceful protest in the city of Recife turned violent when a Military Police garrison blocked the street and launched tear gas into the crowd, provoking a stampede. Violence also struck the Amazonian town of Tabatinga, where [military police retaliated the murder of a police sergeant](#), slaying at least seven people, invading and vandalizing homes, threatening families and ordering a curfew, according to [Folha de S. Paulo](#).

## Cooptation

Cooptation is the process of garnering or strong-arming political support by offering privileges or advantages, generally to manage the opposition and attend to the demands and interests of allied groups or potential supporters, thus maintaining the group's power and stability.

Various efforts by the current administration to elicit support for the official agenda through **cooptation** were identified in the media. [Police](#), the Armed Forces, [truckers](#), and [Evangelicals](#) were among the prime groups targeted for cooptation.

Most of such efforts this quarter centered around promoting the government policy agenda by rewarding allied groups. As reported by [Estado de S. Paulo](#), [Bolsonaro sweetened a controversial Administrative Reform bill by conferring "career" status to police, hence assuring them job stability and other constitutionally guaranteed civil service perks](#). With his eye on reelection, Bolsonaro also offered military police, a key constituency,

a "[package of kindness](#)," including accessible home loans, and sponsoring a bill to weaken control by governors, with whom he has frequently clashed. At the same time, Bolsonaro has sought to renew his political alliance with the Armed Forces, offering them key cabinet jobs, stepping up his opposition to the left, and vowing to continue to honor the military's loyalty as one of his government's earliest supporters. Under Bolsonaro, the Army, known for its conservative political views, has become the [dominant voice in the Ministry of Defense, generating an unprecedented imbalance between the three branches of the Armed Forces](#), according to [Estado de S. Paulo](#).

Other select social sectors supportive of the government have won official blessings. According to [O Globo](#), Bolsonaro, who actively courts evangelical voters, mobilized top aides and diplomats to [help the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God](#), even as the Brazilian religious order fell under legal scrutiny for alleged illicit activities in Angola. Facing [political headwinds](#), Bolsonaro also signed a generous package of benefits for truckers, who nearly brought the country to a standstill in a 2018 strike, [Folha de S. Paulo](#) reported.

## Funding Restrictions

Restrictions on the capacity for civil society and technological-scientific research institutions, public or private, to access public funding, whether national or foreign, through laws, administrative measures, and extralegal activities coordinated by the government. Restriction can also be applied through the action of omission of the Government as a means to complicate, limit, or preclude public funding.

This quarter, research institutes and educational institutions were hit with record budget cuts, whether through State action or omission.

[Budget cuts are threatening public health research, scholarships, and in-person classes return at federal universities.](#) Federal educational institutions, technical schools, CEFET technology schools, and Pedro II High School in Rio de Janeiro were [especially affected, with some institutions facing possible shut downs.](#)

Even mid pandemic, research on COVID-19 was affected, including reduced funding for vaccine production, according to [G1](#). Such cuts to signature research and development programs risk pushing Brazil toward [authoritarianism by censoring projects “through the purse”](#), theoretically allowing authorities to grant or deny funding purely through ideological lenses, [Folha de S. Paulo](#) warned.

Budget reductions for education are at a record high, an especially troubling trend at a time when many classrooms and still shuttered and social distancing measures to combat the pandemic impose extra burdens on [poorer families](#), according to [O Globo](#). [Cuts to the National Institute for Space Research \(INPE\) are also troubling, given the agency’s central role](#) in gathering and consolidating scientific knowledge, technology, and innovation in the study of space and the terrestrial ecosystem.

## 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.

**Restrictions on participation and civic engagement** include exclusion of civil society from institutional spaces of debate and implementation. One example from last quarter: The Ministry of Women, Family, and Human Rights [created a work group](#) on children and indigenous youth without including representatives from indigenous communities. Such exclusion reportedly stoked fears among indigenous leaders that minister Damares Alves would again brand their communities as criminals, as she once did by associating indigenous communities with infanticide, according to [Folha de S. Paulo](#).

Decrees to relax gun control have drawn attention for the speed of its processing in the Executive. Not least because the only groups consulted before the new rules were handed down were gun collectors, sport shooters, and hunters (known in legal shorthand as CACs), [Folha de S. Paulo](#) found. By excluding all but gun-friendly groups from the process, the decree triggered concerns of greater risks for society.

Cultural initiatives have also suffered setbacks. Two and half years into his mandate, the Bolsonaro administration has yet to constitute the Culture Ministry’s National Committee for

Cultural Incentives, by which representatives from civil society are tasked with evaluating projects seeking fiscal incentive under the Rouanet Cultural Incentive Law.

## Infringement of Privacy

Infringement of Privacy refers to the violations 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.” 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. It usually inhabits a shadowy realm of public affairs.

**Infringement of privacy** this quarter mainly consisted of the unauthorized collection of personal data and the monitoring of those who oppose the government. As reported by [Folha de S. Paulo](#), radical rightwing groups, reportedly at the behest of the government’s communications secretariat, wrote up a dossier on the political leanings of public employees. In another incident, business executives took advantage of a pro-Bolsonaro motorcycle rally to collect data on his supporters, apparently for use in future political acts, [O Estado de S. Paulo](#) reported. The executives told reporters that registering for the event was “mandatory” and that the data-gathering was a recommendation by the government’s institutional security cabinet, GSI.

## Coercion

Coercion is the use of threats to influence another’s behavior by limiting choice.

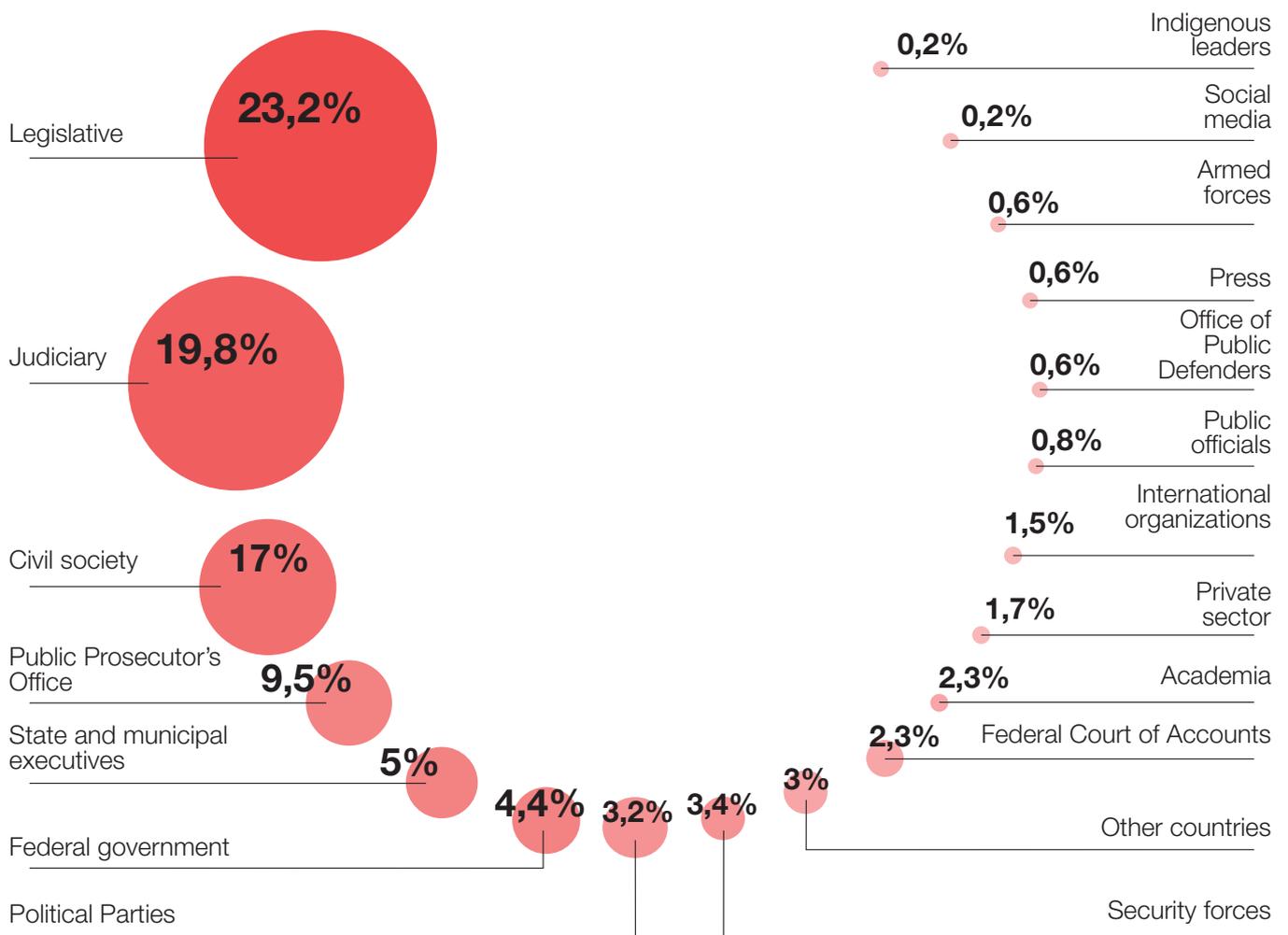
Cases of **coercion** vary from pressure on social networks and informal strategies to institutional retaliation. In one instance, the Ministry of Women, Family, and Human Rights removed from its website a letter of solidarity to the victims of the Jacarezinho operations after suffering attacks from radical Bolsonaro supporters, according to [Folha de S. Paulo](#). The journal also reported that the Army refused to punish General Pazuello for participating in a political rally with the president, “[due to pressure and interference by Jair Bolsonaro](#).” Another form of coercion identified by UOL was the administration’s use of funding cuts to retaliate against senators from Amazonas state, which became a pandemic hotspot late last year, on the COVID parliamentary inquiry committee.

# Reactions

The unfettered functioning of the three branches of government — Judicial, Legislative, and Executive — is vital for the system of checks and balances which is the pillars of any democracy. Along these lines, any action taken by one of more of these branches to impede the closing of civic space is fundamental. Hence the bulletin’s commitment to review all initiatives and points of view — official or not — in defense of civic space. Such defenders may include legislators, political parties or caucuses, and the Federal Court of Accounts. Civil society organizations, private groups, universities, and other entities that may offer an important source of civic resistance to these attacks are also taken into account.

This quarter, we detected **475 reactions**. Of these, **327 were institutional responses**, that is, they referred to actions taken by State institutions themselves; **148 others were carried out by members of civil society, the academic community, political parties, the press, and other private actors**.

**Figure 2.** Source of Reactions



Source: Igarapé analysis based on news by the press.

# Institutional Responses

The Legislative (23.2%) and Judicial (19.8%) branches and the Public Prosecutor's Office (9.5%) led the institutional response to attacks on Brazil's civic space. Responses coming from the Legislative Branch were mostly led by the Chamber of Deputies (58.2%). One headline response was the so-called "[super impeachment](#)" initiative, uniting the authors of the more than 100 presidential impeachment petitions already on file in Congress, along with demands to investigate 23 crimes which the president allegedly committed. Another worthy effort was Congress's move to [override the presidential veto of a landmark anti-crime package](#), which raised the penalty for crimes committed while using illegal firearms. Legislators also [mobilized to bar active military from political positions](#), and [approved a provisional measure to strengthen protection of indigenous communities](#) from COVID-19. [Caucuses](#) and [individual congresspeople](#) worked together to bar the purchase of a potentially invasive "spy tool" for the Ministry of Justice. Lastly, the leaders of 11 parties joined together to oppose implementing paper ballots, according to [Estado de S. Paulo](#).

Although representatives from the Chamber of Deputies reacted in greater numbers, the Senate also took the lead in key institutional responses (30%) to threats on civic space, starting with the [COVID CPI](#), which has driven the national news cycle for weeks. Taking testimony from authorities, administration officials, and specialists, as well as poring over public and confidential documents, the committee focused national attention on the failings of public health management. Delays in [international coordination and negotiations](#) for vaccines (notably [Pfizer's](#)), the promotion of [unproven treatments](#) (such as [chloroquine](#)), insistence on "natural" [herd immunity](#), ineffective or outright obstructionist [government's actions](#) to contain the pandemic are some of examples that the Covid CPI

members put into light. As more and more misdeeds came to light, the committee reclassified [14 witnesses as defendants](#), [O Globo](#) reported. In response to the administration's repeated efforts to revoke state lockdown and distancing policies, the committee chairman promised to turn over its evidence [to the Supreme Court](#), the only bench that can hear a case against the president, [Folha de S. Paulo](#) noted. More recently, the [irregular purchase of the Covaxin vaccine](#) raised suspicions of corruption and a number of red flags for oversight and regulatory agencies. Hence, Supreme Court Justice [Rosa Weber's decision to authorize an inquiry to investigate Bolsonaro for alleged prevarication](#).

Judicial decisions were also essential for the CPI to do its job, [Folha de S. Paulo](#) wrote. In fact, the Supreme Court alone accounted for 58,9% of the judiciary's institutional responses to assaults on civic space. The STF overruled attempts by government advocates to unseat the panel's elected [chairman](#), granted witnesses the [right to remain silent](#), upheld the [legality of searches](#) of authorities' property, and blocked government allies' apparent attempts to muddy the investigation by calling [governors and mayors](#) to testify. Indeed, the CPI might not have happened at all had Justice Luís Roberto Barroso not [ordered](#) the Senate to install it, as [Folha de S. Paulo](#) reported. His fellow justice Ricardo Lewandowski [gave the ruling](#) to maintain the panel's chairman against protests by Bolsonaro allies. The high court's decisions also helped settle several political conflicts and [upheld orders to search financial and phone records of key government aides, such as former foreign minister Ernesto Araujo, the health minister Pazuello](#) and the so-called "Chloroquine Captain", Mayra Pinheiro.

The Supreme Court also revoked decrees to [loosen gun controls](#). It stood up for the rights of vulnerable groups, ordering the [Federal Police to take immediate measures](#) to protect indigenous Munduruku land. The Court also set a deadline for the Bolsonaro administration to [vaccinate Quilombolas](#) and [empanel a](#)

[working group within the National Justice Council \(CNJ\) on the LGBTQIA+ population.](#) The [STF contradicted the government ordering it to carry out the 2021 Census.](#) In response to the Jacarezinho massacre, [Justice Fachin ruled that the Rio de Janeiro government and the State Public Prosecutor's Office must account for why they sealed data on police operations in favelas.](#)

With the president's backers boosting paper ballots, the [Superior Electoral Court \(TSE\) launched a campaign in defense of the integrity of the electronic voting system.](#) The Public Prosecutor's Office (MPF) worked alongside the attorney general's office on a motion for the [Supreme Court to uphold state COVID protocols that Bolsonaro sought to block.](#) The state Prosecutor's Office of Ceará charged [35 Military Police officers with mutiny,](#) and the [Public Prosecutor's Electoral Office \(MPE\) recommended that Bolsonaro be fined for violating electoral laws by using a public event for a political campaign.](#) UOL reported. The MPF also took an important role in investigating the secret budget, while the Prosecutor General [pressed the government](#) for more information on the funds and [joined federal auditors](#) in calling for an [investigation into businesses](#) benefitting from the arrangement. The National Court of Accounts (TCU) is also investigating the Bolsonaro administration for blocking science and technology funds, and has been asked to look into the reportedly shady [Covaxin vaccine deal.](#) Meantime, the court's [chief justice has asked the Federal Police to investigate a federal auditor who created a "parallel report" on the pandemic.](#)

## Resistance

Civil society's vigilance is fundamental to the defense of the Civic Space, whether in decrying violations, resisting threats, or mobilizing to resolve social challenges. Recognizing these efforts is important, and between April and June, the GPS logged 136 acts of resistance by various groups representing civil society (17%), the academic community (2.3%) and international organizations (1.5%).

One of civil society's frontline strategies is to work through legal channels and the [civil suit brought against the purchase of a spy tool](#) is a prime example. Another is the [lawsuit brought to the TCU by human rights organizations.](#) Likewise, the Coalizão Negra por Direitos (Black Coalition for Rights) [took the Palmares Cultural Foundation to court for removing historical archives from its files.](#) A number of other civic organizations have filed amicus curiae briefs before the Supreme Federal Court to support keynote cases with technical information and document social damage wrought by federal actions.

Another strategy includes enlisting international organizations for support in legal actions – say, to protect the environment or ensure a more inclusive COVID-19 recovery – in line with [recommendations by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development \(OECD\).](#) Several countries also banded together to [prevent Damares Alves,](#) a evangelical pastor who serves as Bolsonaro's Minister for Women, Family and Human Rights, from naming partisan evangelical lawyers as United Nations consultants. Brazilian civic groups turned to the international watchdog group Human Rights Watch [to help call out the Brazilian government's mishandling](#) of the pandemic, while others sought international pressure to [block arms sales to Brazil amid government moves to weaken gun control.](#)

Social groups [protesting the federal government's pandemic response across the country](#) drew ample media coverage, as did the public backlash against government attempts to scrap mask mandates. Indigenous groups camped out in front of the National Congress in an attempt to block the 490 bill, which threatens their rights as well as the environment. They were met with police violence, [Folha de S. Paulo](#) reported. Some 164 organizations [signed a letter to Congressional Speaker Arthur Lira](#) against the bill, with a number of high profile intellectuals slamming the bill as a [step backward for the environment](#). News from the Covid CPI, corruption [scandals](#), and the [super impeachment](#) movement only amplified the discontent.

University students and academics also mobilized for a broad range of public interests, from public health to social inequality. According to G1, researchers [asked the CPI to hold the government accountable](#). Law school alumni of the Federal University of Pernambuco went on record [in favor of impeaching](#) Bolsonaro. The [Getulio Vargas Foundation](#), a business school, asked the electoral court to mandate proportionate representation of black candidates in public campaign advertisements. The [Brazilian Academy of Sciences \(ABC\) and the National Academy of Medicine \(ANM\) both weighed against the federal government and in favor of maintaining mask mandate](#). The [Association of COVID-19 Victims and Relatives of Victims filed suit against Bolsonaro](#), and demanded he be held accountable for his mismanaging the pandemic.

The private sector also suspended [Copa América sponsorships](#) as a pandemic safeguard, and [withdrew advertising after one television host called the LGBTQIA+ a "deplorable breed"](#).

## Changes of Position

The bulletin monitored the government's positions over time to measure the impact of social pressures, civic reactions, and institutional responses. Occasionally, the Executive Branch backed down of its own accord as a preemptive defense against civic, legislative or judicial backlash. This usually occurs when public disapproval over official hardline positions spikes, or to anticipate pushback from the media, the courts or another branch of government.

A significant proportion of these strategic shifts were reactions to the government's [pandemic policy](#), which is currently under investigation by the COVID CPI. Bolsonaro's new minister of Health (his fourth in just over two years) quickly sacked a number of military advisors and "[controversial Pazuello appointees](#)," according to [Folha de S. Paulo](#). Minister Marcelo Queiroga also dialed back on his predecessor's prescription, admitting that [medications like chloroquine are not proven to be effective against COVID](#). Brazil's soaring pandemic death toll (the world's second highest) forced the Ministry of Communications to alter its publicity campaign from touting economic recovery to a defense of vaccines, [O Globo](#) noted. Even the president's rhetoric has cooled: "[if they think I should get vaccinated, I'll get vaccinated, no problem](#)," he recently allowed.

Strong public reaction to earlier blunders also hastened the official pivot. After months of snubbing vaccine offers by Pfizer, [Bolsonaro has since asked the company to accelerate deliveries](#). Amid the growing clamor of reported vaccine bribes and overpricing, the federal government [canceled the Covaxin supply contract](#), [O Estado de S. Paulo](#) reported. The Prosecutor General, who at first cautioned against hasty legal action on the sketchy

vaccine deal, also changed his position [after pressure from the STF to publicly support opening an investigation into Bolsonaro](#), Folha de S. Paulo wrote.

Another telling move was the shakeup at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The new minister, [Carlos França, wasted no time in declaring his support for the environment](#), and made a point in his inauguration speech to defend [the “diplomacy of health” and sustainable development](#).

Economic, business-related, political, and global pressures in defense of the Amazon have trickled down into national affairs. Before resigning from the Ministry of the Environment, Ricardo Salles attempted to show that he had a plan to combat deforestation in the Amazon, according to [Estado de S. Paulo](#). In a letter to US President Joe Biden, [Bolsonaro promised to end illegal deforestation by 2030](#) and, [at the Climate Summit, committed to doubling public funding for environmental law enforcement](#).

Lastly, Congress played a part in the government’s changes in position. Fearing that the Senate would turn down his cabinet picks, Bolsonaro withdrew five nominees for high-level positions in regulatory agencies, according to [O Globo](#).

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

<i>Strategies</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Examples of tactics / actions</i>
<b><i>I. Cooptation</i></b>	<b>Cooptation</b> is the process of garnering or strong-arming political support by offering privileges or advantages, generally to manage the opposition and attend to the demands and interests of allied groups or potential supporters, thus maintaining the group's power and stability. (Selznick, 1948; Piven and Cloward, 1977).	<p>Offer of privileged relationship, including access to public contracts and funding, if given unrestricted support.</p> <p>Public incentives, subsidies, and actions allocated specifically for the support, funding, and strengthening of allied groups, as a concession of excessive privilege in order to maintain loyalty and unconditional support from the allied base.</p>
<b><i>II. Coercion</i></b>	<b>Coercion</b> 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 threats to suspend ongoing partnerships and/or public funding in light of public criticism.</p>
<b><i>III. Fake News and disinformation campaigns</i></b>	<p><b>Fake news</b> 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, Ling, 2007).</p> <p><b>Disinformation</b> is false information spread deliberately to cause public harm or for profit, going beyond fake news (EC, 2018).</p>	<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>
<b><i>IV. Censorship (overt or veiled)</i></b>	<b>Censorship</b> 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 intent to disqualify research results.</p> <p>Defunding of cultural projects not aligned with the government's views.</p> <p>Filtered content or close down of the internet.</p> <p>Vastly enforced censorship of media, research, cultural manifestations and debate.</p>

Strategies	Description	Examples of tactics / actions
<p><b>V. Intimidation and Harassment</b></p>	<p><b>Intimidation</b> refers to direct or indirect actions against others to prevent them from continuing their work or to induce fear of an attack (CIVICUS, 2019).</p> <p><b>Harassment</b> is legal or physical actions or behavior 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.
		Persecution and intimidation of activists, artists, civic leaders, journalists, and scientists.
		Blackmail.
		Harassment or attack of institutions by authorities.
		Public targeting / harassment of activists, artists, civic leaders, journalists, and scientists by high level authorities.
		Misogynist attacks against women with a public profile.
		Dehumanization / defamation / delegitimization campaigns against individuals, groups or institutions (direct or indirect action).
		Organized, online attacks and campaigns against individuals, groups or institutions (bots and digital mob mobilization).
		Threats to cancel public concessions of independent media channels.
<p><b>VI. Infringement of Privacy (State surveillance)</b></p>	<p><b>Infringement of Privacy</b> refers to the violations 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.” (Declaration of Human Rights, 1948).</p> <p><b>State Surveillance</b> 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 wiretapping.
		Digital media monitoring for profiling, harassment, and intimidation.
		Closure of accounts, websites, servers.
		Hacking profiles to intimidate or harass, or to use private profiles in digital mob campaigns.
		Misuse of private citizens’ data on micro-targeting disinformation campaigns and other digital actions without permission.
		Illegal monitoring of opposition, including protest organizers.

continuation

Strategies	Description	Examples of tactics / actions
<b>VII. Civil and Political Rights Violations</b>	<p><b>Violations of political rights</b> 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).</p> <p><b>Violations of civil rights</b> 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 bans on public protests / demonstrations.
		Constraints for the incorporation, registration, operation and lifecycle of CSOs.
		Shutting down CSOs which resist conforming to authoritarian or draconian rules.
		De-registration or cancellation of licenses of operation for CSOs who comply with the law.
		Invasion / destruction of CSO offices.
		Seizure of property.
		Expulsion from or prohibition to operate in a determined country.
		Travel bans.
		Illegitimate legal investigations.
		Fomenting discrimination and infringing on the rights of minorities and vulnerable groups.
Fomenting religious intolerance.		
<b>VIII. Restrictions on Civic Participation and Engagement</b>	<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>	Exclusion of language on civil society participation in national and international resolutions.
		Hardening of rules which allow civil society access to the National Congress.
		De-authorizing State institutions' work with NGOs.
		Penalization of public officers who disobey instructions of cutting access to civil society.
		Shutting down participatory councils and mechanisms.

<i>Strategies</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Examples of tactics / actions</i>
<b>IX. Funding Restrictions</b>	Restrictions on the capacity for civil society and technological-scientific research institutions, public or private, to access public funding, whether national or foreign, through laws, administrative measures, and extralegal activities coordinated by the government (Wolff and Poppe, 2015). Restriction can also be applied through the action of omission of the Government as a means to complicate, limit, or preclude public funding.	Governmental institutions stop granting authorization for CSOs to participate in projects and receive funds from international cooperation donors or from public programs which subsidize, give incentives, and provide financial support to civil society.
		Overly broad application of anti-money laundering and counterterrorism measures.
		Using defamation, treason, and other laws to bring criminal charges against recipients of international funding.
		Restrictions for domestic and international funding and/or prohibition of specific donors.
		Requirement of advance government approval and/or international funds routed through government-controlled entities.
		Capping the amount of international funding per CSO.
		Restriction of activities undertaken with international funding, including content-based restrictions (e.g. ban on human rights work or 'political activity').
		Taxation of international funds.
		Categorizing CSOs that receive international funding as 'foreign agents', adopting specific treatment of these organizing or imposing a burden on their work.
		Burdensome procedural requirements.
		Freezing or seizure of funds targeted toward funding civil society.
		Prohibition from receiving international funding and public budgets allocations.
		Shrinking public universities through excessive budget cuts.
Cutting fiscal benefits for scientific research and academic development.		

continuation

Strategies	Description	Examples of tactics / actions
<b>X. Physical Violence</b>	<b>Physical Violence</b> is the intentional and direct infliction of harm on people, from physical suffering or bodily harm to violent death (Kalyvas 2006). 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.	<p>Violent responses to protests by the State.</p> <p>Refusal to protect those who are threatened.</p> <p>Violent attacks on minorities and vulnerable groups.</p> <p>Threats of physical violence by State and non-State actors.</p> <p>Illegal imprisonment of civil leaders.</p> <p>Tortures / maltreatment.</p> <p>Forced disappearance.</p> <p>Taxation of international funds.</p> <p>Assassination / extrajudicial killing of human rights defenders, civil leaders, and journalists.</p>
<b>XI. Constitutional Hardball*</b>	<b>Constitutional hardball</b> consists of political actors exploiting procedures, laws, and institutions to obtain partisan gains while violating pre established norms and testing the limits of legality, which could undermine the shared understanding of democratic norms and the expectation that the other side will comply with them (Tushnet 2004, Levitsky and Ziblitz 2018). The inappropriate use of institutional prerogatives in the interest of political groups and/or private or non-republican interests.	<p>Excessive use of executive and infralegal measures to govern, ignoring Congress, principals, and constitutional guarantees.</p> <p>Issuing of norms and decrees that contradict the Constitution.</p> <p>Nonconforming with non-written norms that serve to respect the separation of State Powers.</p> <p>Executive decisions which reduce budgets, structure, and alter the functioning of public agencies created to audit, inspect, and supervise the Executive Branch.</p> <p>Reducing the power of opposition parties in Congress, restricting broader debate on votes.</p>
<b>XII. Abuse of Power</b>	<b>Abuse of power</b> is when political actors take advantage of their position for personal gain, preventing basic managerial responsibility and/or acting against the public interest and institutional responsibilities (Sankowsky, 1995).	<p>Political interference in ordinances from the Armed Forces that violate laws and/or the Constitution.</p> <p>Political interference in the public administration with nominations and dismissals of public servants to favor private interests.</p> <p>Political interference in nominations of public universities, research centers and participatory councils to impose censorship.</p> <p>Political interference in procedures and nomination of leadership of law enforcement and other independent public agencies to protect private interests.</p> <p>Nominations geared toward controlling agencies for political means or for satisfying private interests while clearly violating an institution's prerogatives, in a manner contrary to the public interest.</p>

Strategies	Description	Examples of tactics / actions
<p><b>XIII. Violation of social, economic, cultural, and environmental rights.</b></p>	<p>Social, economic, and cultural rights (PIDESC, 1966) are human rights which guarantee the development and dignity of individuals and communities. They are fundamental for engagement in the civic space. Violations of these rights include the failure to respect, protect, and guarantee (Eide, 2001) adequate nutrition and housing, education, work, health, social security, participation in cultural life, water, and sanitation. In terms of the environment and its essential place in human rights (OC-23/17, CIDH), it is the State's duty to prevent, avoid, mitigate, and cooperate when it comes to environmental conservation.</p>	<p>The failure to elaborate or adopt plans for environmental disasters or emergencies, including safety measures and mitigating actions.</p>
		<p>Block, hamper, or preclude access to information relative to possible environmental interference.</p>
		<p>Promoting environmental destruction.</p>
		<p>The failure to consult or negotiate with populations and communities affected by environmental impacts and damages.</p>
		<p>Adopting measures which directly or indirectly discriminate against segments of the population.</p>
<p>* Even though most tactics which fall under the category “constitutional hardball” and “abuse of power” do not directly target agents in the civic space, these tactics diminish transparency, can undermine the separation of powers, as well as the checks and balances which can keep the tactics described in other categories from being implemented.</p>		
<p>Sources for these tactics: off the record interviews with civic leaders; Buyse 2018; Civicus 2017, 2018, 2019; ICNL; Levitsky and Ziblat 2018; OHCHR; Rutzen, 2015; WEF 2017; World Movement for Democracy.</p>		

## 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”. The typology was updated and can be accessed in the note “A typology to understand strategies and tactics used to close the civic space”. Both materials are available at [igarape.org.br/en/issues/civic-space/the-civic-space-gps/](https://igarape.org.br/en/issues/civic-space/the-civic-space-gps/)



# IGARAPÉ INSTITUTE

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 awarded Igarapé Institute the best Human Rights NGO in 2018 and best think tank on social policy in 2019.

## **Igarapé Institute**

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

[www.igarape.org.br](http://www.igarape.org.br)