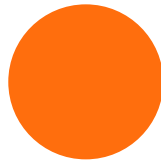
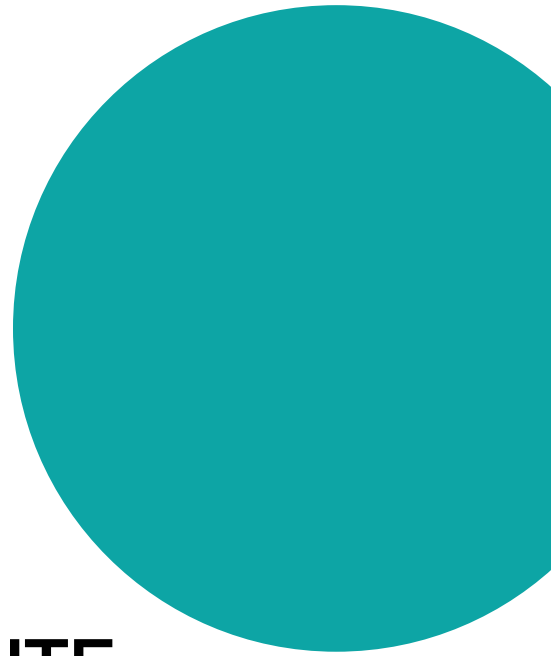




IGARAPÉ INSTITUTE
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THE CIVIC SPACE GPS

QUARTERLY BULLETIN 04

DECEMBER 2021



THE CIVIC SPACE GPS

July – September 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 in this country.

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 Amazônia Real, Brasil 247, Poder 360, R7 Notícias, Revista Fórum 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](#)

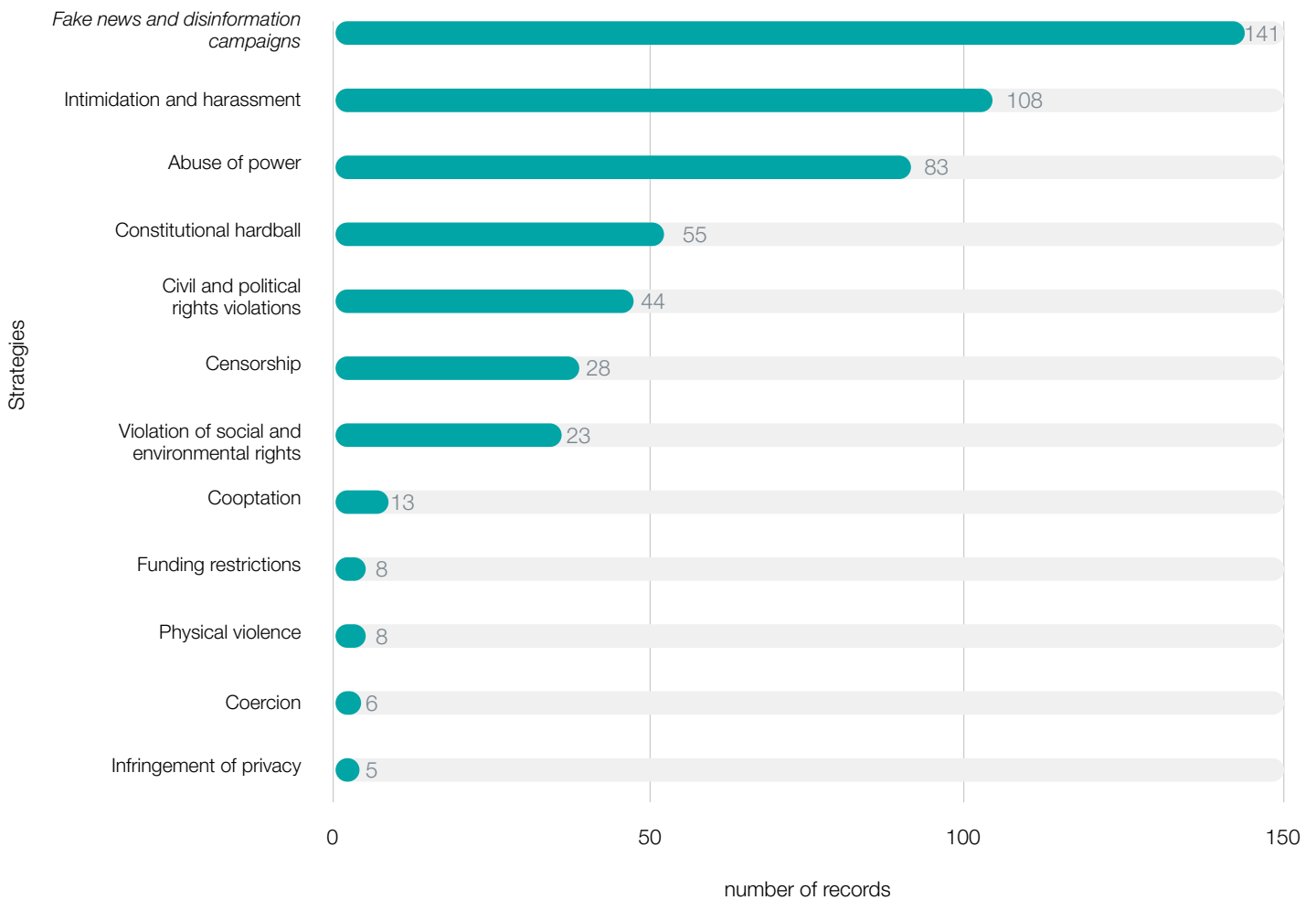
[space in Brazil and around the world](#),” and in the supporting Technical Note, “[A Typology to Understand Strategies and Tactics for Attacking the Civic Space](#)”, which updated the list of strategies and tactics.

In this edition, **522 threats** to Brazil’s civic space were identified by the Igarapé Institute and monitored by media outlets between **July 1 and September 30, 2021**. On the other hand, in this same period, the Institute identified **531 institutional responses and 306 acts of resistance** by civil society and other groups. It is worth emphasizing that the analyzed period witnessed specific facts generating multiple responses from different players. The spike in reactions over the previous quarter may have been due to an increased number of attacks or to the countless reactions to unique incidents. Each incident was accounted for to help identify those responsible as a way of mitigating attacks and organizing resistance. The Institute also identified **63 instances in which the government changed its position**, as reported by the media outlets studied.

Threats

In this edition, the Institute identified **522 threats** to Brazilian civic space. More than one quarter (141) of the incidents related to **fake news and disinformation campaigns**. **Intimidation and harassment** added up to **108 threats**. Other strategies commonly adopted this quarter included **abuse of power and constitutional hardball – 83 and 51 cases** reported, respectively.

Figure 1. Attack strategies used (July-September, 2021)



Source: Igarapé analysis based on news by the press.

The escalation of attacks due to specific events, particularly the vote on the printed ballot proposal (PEC, Constitutional Amendment Proposal) contributed to the escalation of attacks in early August and, later, during the September 7 demonstrations. Other spikes worth mentioning refer to President Jair Bolsonaro's attacks on electronic voting machines in July – prior to the vote in the Brazilian Congress –, attacks on the Justices of the Federal Supreme Court (STF) by the president and his supporters shortly after he was included in the fake news inquiry, and at the end of September, attacks regarding the Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry on the COVID Pandemic, particularly regarding the health insurance company Prevent Senior.

Fake news about the [Covid-19](#) pandemic add up to 33% of all cases categorized under **fake news and disinformation campaigns**. [Disinformation campaigns](#) on the Brazilian electoral system also found fertile ground, accounting for 22% of the identified [threats](#). Almost half of the [threats](#) classified under **intimidation and harassment** refer to [statements](#) by the [President](#) of the Republic, particularly attacks on the Judiciary. Threats to [critics](#) and those who [oppose](#) the government were the second most reported tactic in this category, 13%, including the [use of the judicial apparatus](#) for [intimidation purposes](#). It is also worth mentioning the [threats](#) related to the [September 7 demonstrations](#) (11%).

Among the instances of **abuse of power**, more than a third refer to the management of the Covid-19 pandemic. Political control over the public security and criminal justice systems ranks second with 19.3% of the threats. Inappropriate appointments and granting of benefits to allies make 18.1% of the identified threats, followed by misuse of taxpayer money, 15.7%. Almost half of the threats through **constitutional hardball** concern the misuse of institutional prerogatives to shield allies or to serve non-republican interests. [Omissions](#) by the Attorney General of the Republic were widely reported.

Civil and political rights violations generally affected the most vulnerable groups, [women](#) (14.6%), [black people](#) (14.6%), the [LGBTQIA+ community](#) (19.5%), and [traditional peoples](#) (24.4%). Among the incidents of **violation of social and environmental rights**, 52.2% refer to negligence when it comes to [protecting the environment](#), especially the [Amazon rainforest](#).

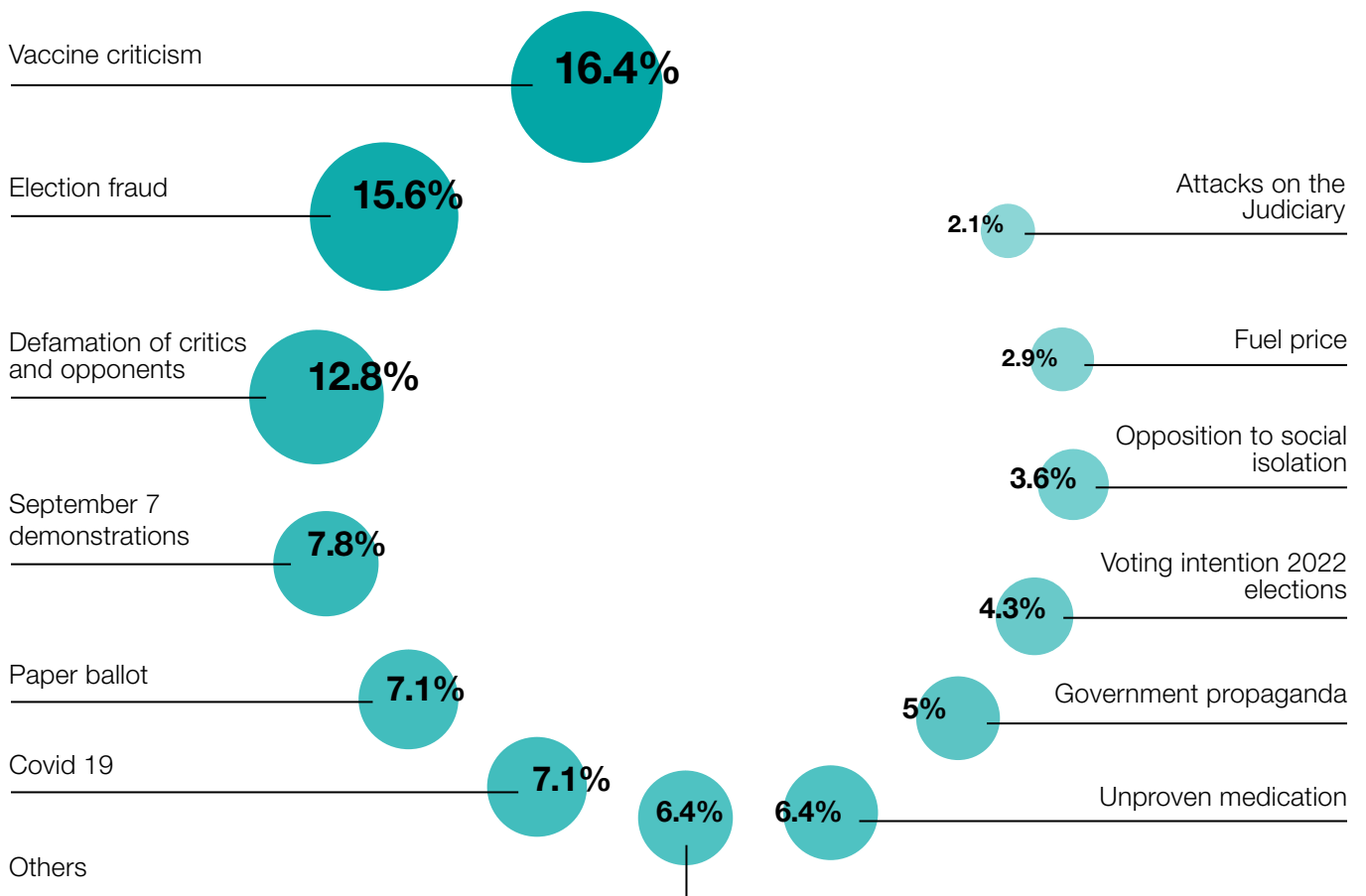
Of the incidents reported as **censorship** in the analyzed period, more than half were used to obstruct [access to information](#), that is, [restrictions](#) to access [public interest data](#) – in violation of the Brazilian [Freedom of Information Act](#). Most incidents identified as **cooptation** concern [granting of benefits](#) to the President's [allies](#) including the [Church](#) and the [security and armed forces](#). Most (77%) **funding restrictions** are against [cultural](#) projects, which have been suffering from [budget cuts](#) and [slowness in getting proposals off the paper](#).

[Harassment](#) and attacks on [journalists](#) mainly by [government supporters](#) account for one third of the incidents of **physical violence** reported in the period. Half of the cases of **coercion** involved attempts to limit [public demonstrations](#), such as [protests](#) or [individual demonstrations](#) against government actions. Lastly, [inappropriate access to confidential data](#) was widely reported, with 40% of incidents identified as **infringement of privacy**.

Fake News and Disinformation Campaigns

144 incidents related to **fake news and disinformation campaigns** were identified in the analyzed quarter. Fake news about the [Covid-19](#) pandemic add up to 33% of all cases in this category. [Disinformation](#) about the [vaccines](#) currently available in the Brazilian National Immunization Program tops the list of reported incidents, followed by the promotion of [unproven medication](#), and opposition to [preventive measures](#) including [social isolation](#) and the [use of masks](#) – [two regularly covered topics](#).

[Disinformation campaigns](#) regarding the Brazilian electoral system also found fertile ground, accounting for 22% of the identified [threats](#). Discussions around the printed ballot proposal (PEC) increased the dissemination of fake news about [electronic voting machines](#) and of [unproven claims](#) of [fraud](#) in Brazilian [elections](#), including in the upcoming [2022](#) elections. The third most reported topic was fake news aimed at [slandering](#) and/or discrediting those who [criticize](#) and [oppose](#) the government, especially [former president](#) Luiz Inácio [Lula](#) da Silva and [governors](#) of several [states](#). Finally, fake news on the [September 7 demonstrations](#) – mostly posts with fake photos or montages – were widely disseminated.



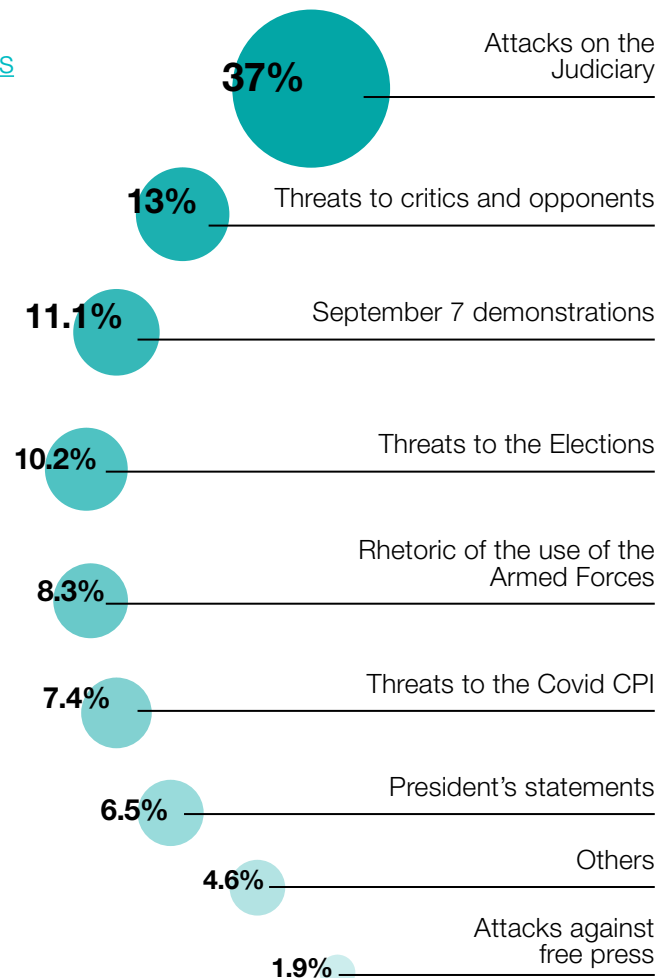
Intimidation and Harassment

A total of 108 incidents of **intimidation and harassment** were identified, mostly taking place in the first half of August and in early September. The first spike in incidents is mainly due to attacks on Supreme Court Justices, particularly Justice [Alexandre de Moraes](#), who included [President](#) Bolsonaro in the Fake News Inquiry, and on [Minister Luís Roberto Barroso](#) for launching an investigation against [Bolsonaro](#) at the Superior Electoral Court (TSE). A second spike in news covered cases of intimidation and harassment related to the [September 7 demonstrations](#) and the [anti-democratic attacks](#) that sparked from them.

Almost half of the [threats](#) classified under intimidation and harassment refer to [statements](#) by the [President](#) of the Republic. The majority of [attacks](#) targeted the [Judiciary](#) (37%) – more specifically the [Supreme Court](#) –, in the form of [intimidating statements](#), [menacing protests](#), [attempts to invade the court](#), and [online attacks](#).

Threats to [critics](#) and those who [oppose](#) the government were the second most reported tactic in this category, 13%, including the [use of the judicial apparatus](#) for [intimidation purposes](#) – such as in the incidents involving [Conrado Hubner](#) and [Luis Miranda](#). Other noteworthy cases include the threats to indigenous leaders, such as [Alessandra Munduruku](#), and the modifications made on the Unified Health System (SUS) records of political opponents of the government, namely [Gleisi Hoffmann](#), [Manuela D'Ávila](#), and [Guilherme Boulos](#), who were registered as deceased or had their profiles filled with offenses.

Other highlighted [threats](#) concerned the [September 7 demonstrations](#) (11%), including [invasions](#) of public buildings, posts about the [dictatorship](#), and [threats](#) aimed at the [2022 elections](#). In the latter, the wave of attack was driven by Bolsonaro's [defeat](#) over the [printed ballot](#) proposal (PEC) in Congress and comprises [different statements about the](#) outcome of the 2022 elections (10.2%) arguing that the vote is not auditable and, therefore, it is subject to fraud.



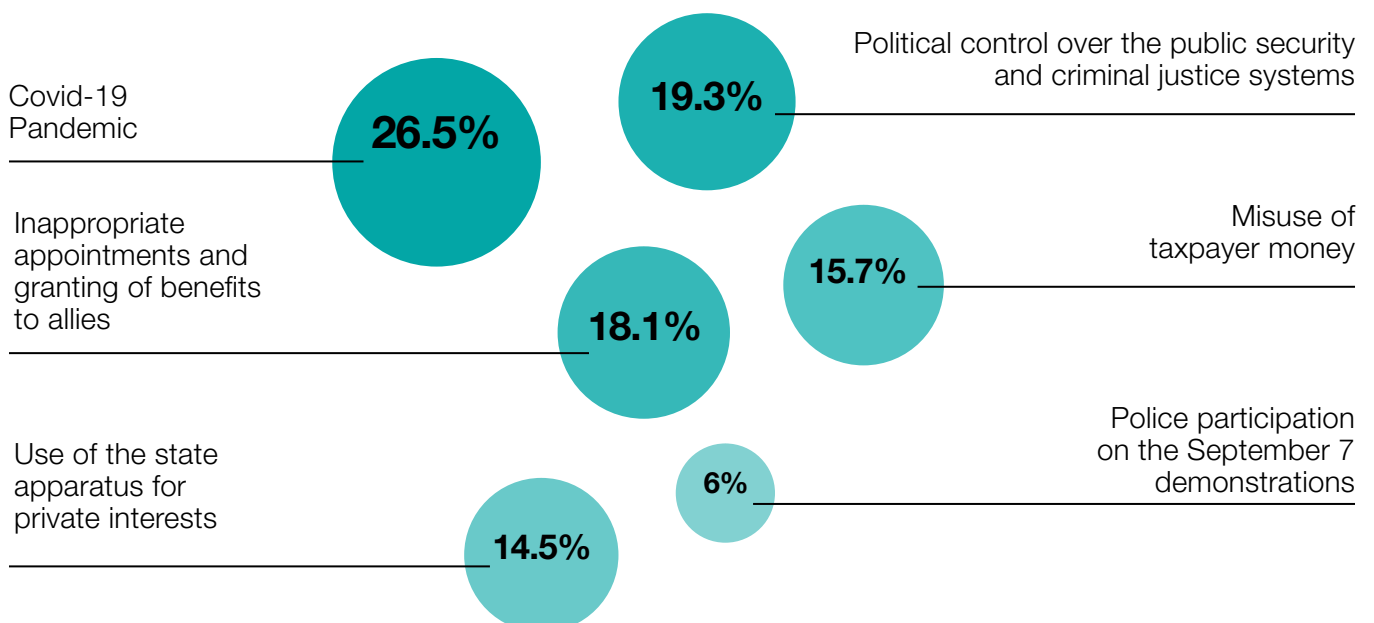
Abuse of Power

A sum of 83 cases of **abuse of power** were identified between July and September. More than a third of the incidents involve the management of the Covid-19 pandemic, particularly regarding the acquisition of [vaccines](#), which according to the press were [irregularly negotiated](#), [overpriced](#), and purchased [outside the deadline and the rules provided for in the agreement](#), as in the case of the Indian vaccine [Covaxin](#). There were reports of inappropriate spending in the [purchase of Covid-19 masks and tests](#) and in the [promotion of ineffective drugs](#) – the so-called “[early treatment](#).” In addition, news reports pointed out that [groups allied](#) to the government have benefited from the health crisis, such as the [military](#) and [Precisa Medicamentos](#).

Political control over the public security and criminal justice systems ranks second with 19.3% of the threats in this category. It is worth mentioning instances involving orders or [requests](#) for [dismissal](#) of allegations against allies, especially through the [Attorney General](#) of the Republic, and the removal of people from office, mostly managers in charge of [inspecting](#) or [investigating](#) critical issues for the government.

Inappropriate appointments and granting of benefits to allies make 18.1% of the identified threats. In the analyzed period, Bolsonaro [appointed](#) several government [allies](#) or even [family members](#) to [prominent public positions](#) based on [loyalty](#) rather than their [technical capacity](#). Political interference in [public university](#) appointments were also reported, including [interventions](#) for allies to take positions in dean’s offices. Other instances in which allies and family members were [unduly benefited](#) include priority vaccination and even [awards](#) for [military personnel from the Federal District](#).

Finally, 15.7% of the cases reported in the period refer to misuse of taxpayer money. The largest repercussions were the [secret budget](#), [overspending](#) on [non-priority agendas](#), [use of public money](#) for [personal](#) or [family gain](#), and apparently [overpriced](#) business deals.

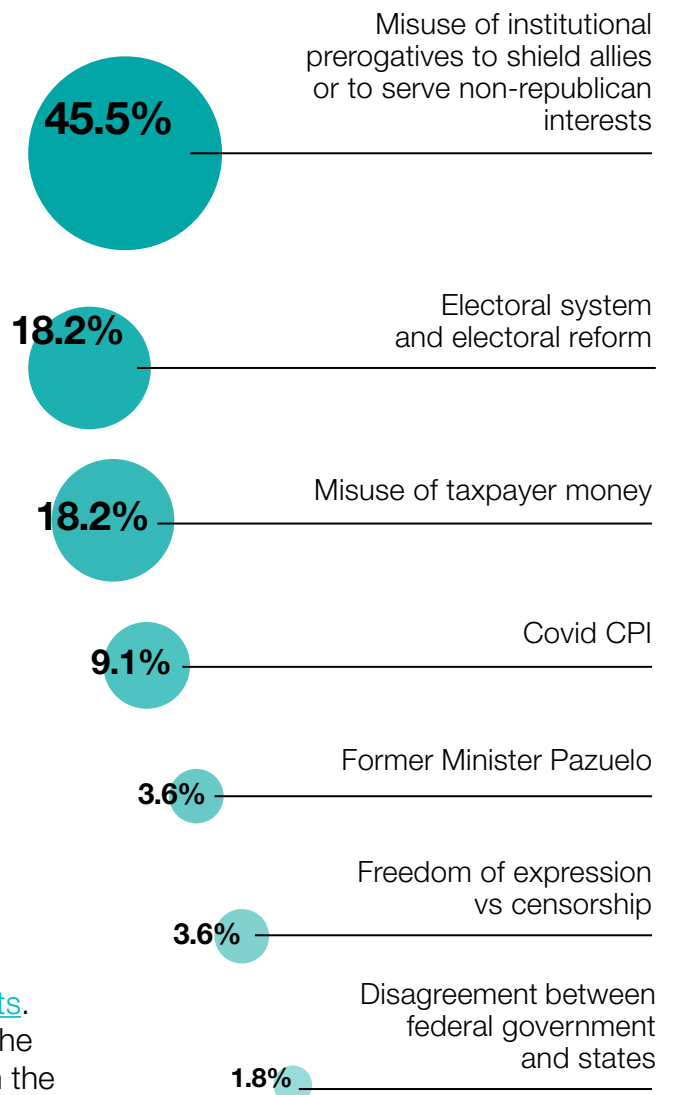


Constitutional Hardball

Almost half of the 55 threats categorized under **constitutional hardball** concern the misuse of institutional prerogatives to shield allies or to serve non-republican interests. Within this context, reports of threats concerning the [failures](#) of the Attorney General of the Republic to [protect the government](#) reached [alarming](#) numbers, with [complaints against politicians dropping by one third](#) over his predecessor in office. In addition, news reported that the [Judiciary](#) and the [Legislative](#) also [acted for political purposes](#) undermining the institutions they represent.

The electoral system accounts for 18.2% of the threats, including President Bolsonaro’s refusal to present [evidence of election fraud](#), [the failure of the Attorney General of the Republic](#) to contain attacks on electronic voting machines, and an [attempt by the president of the Chamber of Deputies Arthur Lira to make way for the voting](#) of the [printed ballot proposal](#). Not to mention all the [setbacks](#) created by the [Electoral Reform](#), especially with regard to the [electoral fund](#). Also representing 18.2% of the incidents, misuse of taxpayer money mainly referred to the congressional action to [keep the budget forecast secret](#) and to “[unstamped amendments](#)” – the so-called “[blank checks](#).” In addition, instances of [lack of supervision of public spending](#) and [lack of transparency in the transfer of funds](#) were reported.

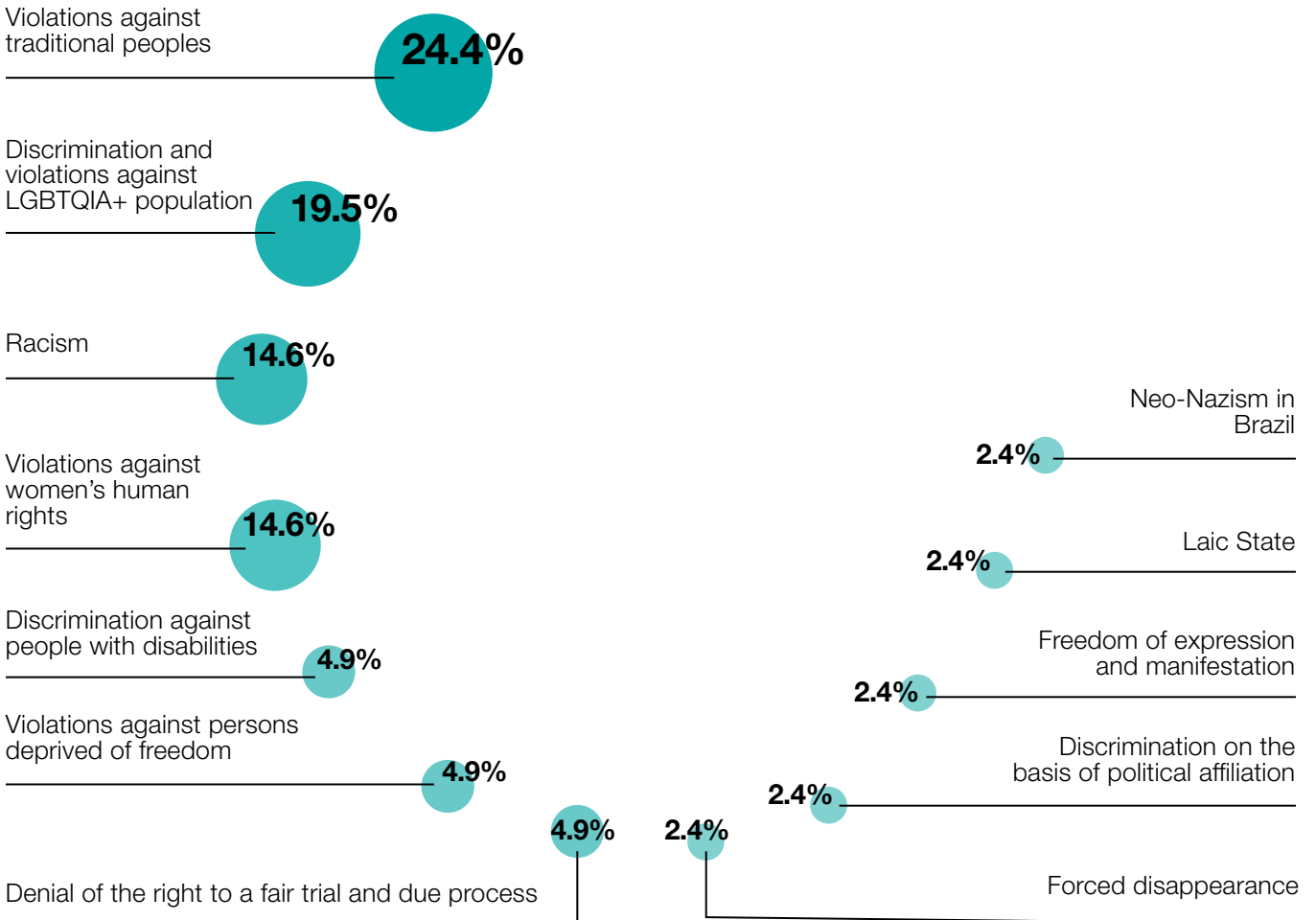
During the Covid CPI (Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry), several attempts by Bolsonaro to [hamper](#) or delegitimize the work conducted by the commission were reported by news outlets, either by [refusing to respond to a request for explanations](#) or threatening to [annul acts](#). A recurring and widely criticized practice involved the [Federal Police taking deposition from witnesses](#) on the [eve of their appearance at the CPI](#). Instances involving discussions on freedom of expression were also covered.



Civil and Political Rights Violations

Civil and political rights violations generally affected the most vulnerable groups, [women](#) (14.6%), [black people](#) (14.6%), the [LGBTQIA+ community](#) (19.5%), and [traditional peoples](#) (24.4%). Threats against [women's rights](#) range from [femicide](#) and setbacks in the area of [reproductive rights](#) to [political violence](#), expressed either [verbally through offenses](#) on [social media](#) or [female underrepresentation](#) in [Congress](#). The [LGBTQIA+](#) population was the target of [physical violence](#), [homophobic comments](#), [intimidation](#) and [discrimination](#), especially in [corporations](#) such as the [Military Police](#). Black people also suffered several [racist attacks](#), even from [public authorities](#) in the [Executive](#) and [Legislative](#) branches.

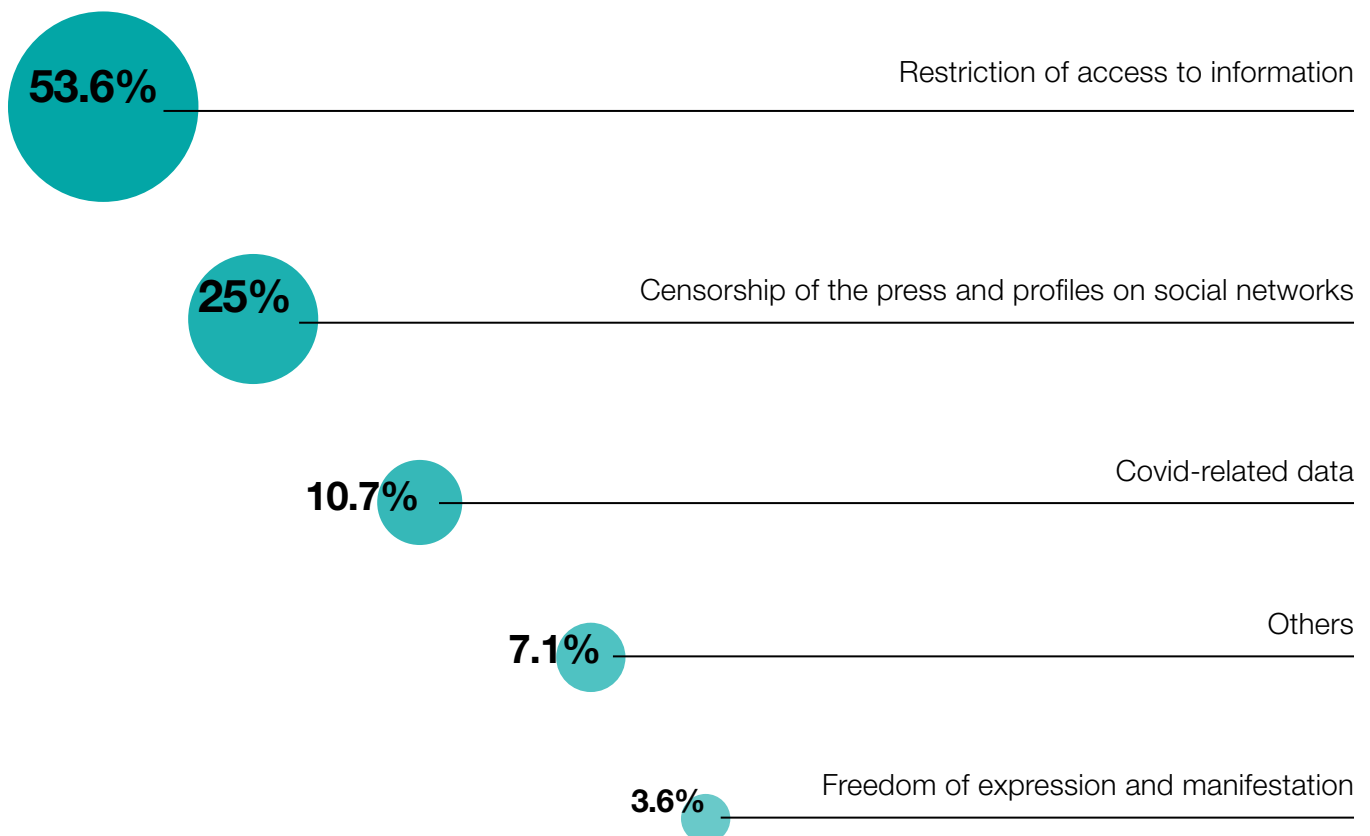
Regarding the violations against indigenous peoples, many came from the National Indigenous Foundation (FUNAI) as it failed in its duty to protect Brazil's native peoples either by [encouraging violence](#) and [defending the "Marco Temporal"](#) – a legal argument that proposes a change in the indigenous land demarcation process in violation of the rights of traditional peoples – or by [not executing resources](#) to fight the [Covid-19 pandemic](#). [Homicide](#) rates soared as the government stepped up to help [agribusiness](#) and the [development of productive activities in reserves](#). It is worth noting that the [indigenous](#) and [quilombola](#) populations were disproportionately affected during the pandemic.



Censorship

Of the 28 incidents reported as **censorship** in the analyzed period, 53.6% were used to prohibit [access to information](#), that is, [restrict](#) access to [public interest data](#) – in violation of the [Freedom of Information Act](#). Some of the data unjustifiably declared as classified include [transfer of political funds](#), [purchases](#) using taxpayer money, [Covid CPI documents](#), [visits to the Presidential Palace](#), [fire and bushfire alerts](#), [Brazilian Air Force flights](#), [Federal Police documents](#), especially those related to [operations](#), and predominantly information about the “[secret budget](#).”

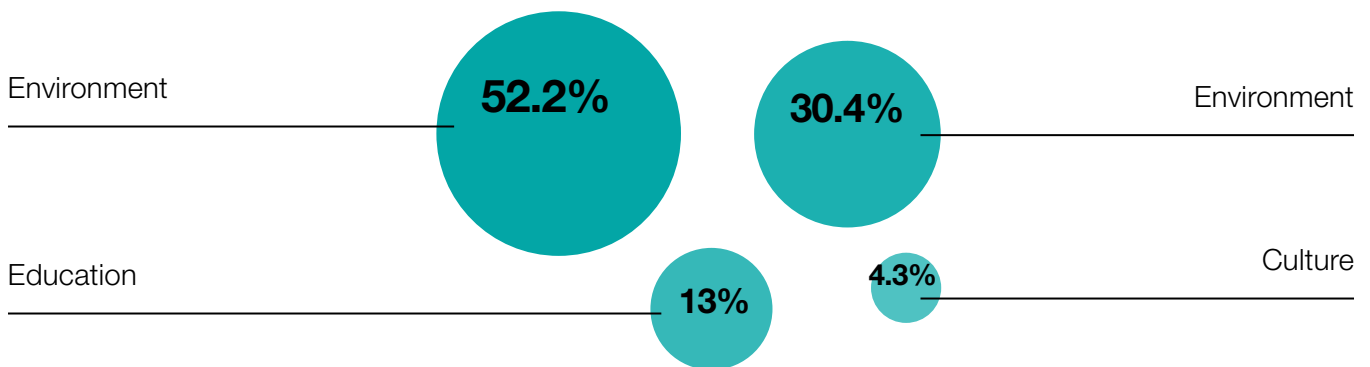
Restrictions to [press](#) activities amounted to 25% of the censorship incidents identified in the quarter. The [Judiciary branch](#) ordered some [content to be taken down](#), [prohibited publications](#) and [sentenced journalists for moral damages](#) for their articles. Human Rights Watch disclosed that [Bolsonaro](#) has blocked [176 social media profiles](#). Restrictions were also applied to many [Covid-related data](#), adding up to 10.7% of cases. [The cover up of the country's total death toll](#), [inaccurate counting of cases](#), and the [ban on negative news](#) also marked the period.



Social, Economic, Cultural, and Environmental Rights Violation

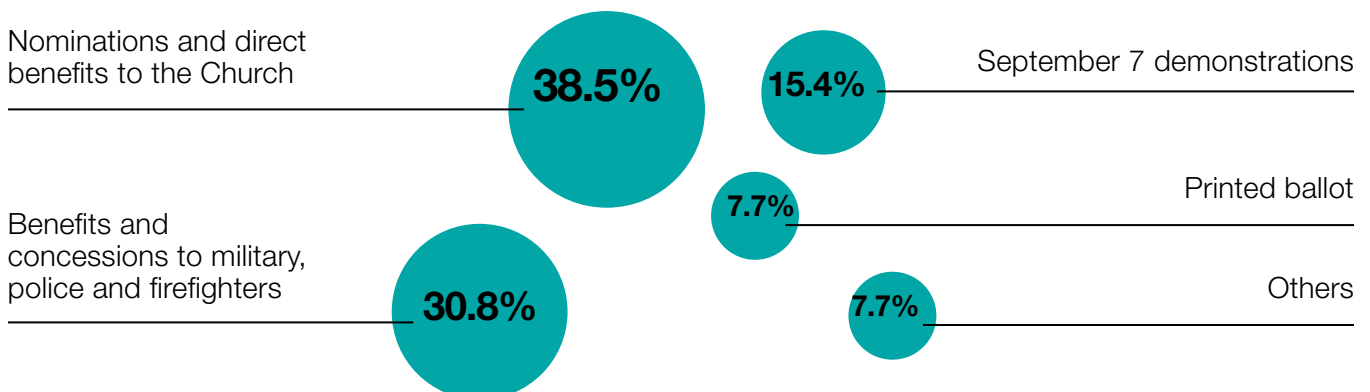
Among the violations, incidents involving attacks on state-run environmental protection structures accounted for more than half of the cases (52.2%). Media outlets identified the [obstruction](#) of the [environmental fine system](#), with a 93% decrease in collection. Actions that serve the interests of [ruralists](#), [flexibilization](#) of the [environmental licensing process](#), [support for illegal mining](#) and [offensives on indigenous lands](#) were also widely reported.

Healthcare and [education](#) top the list of social rights affected in the period. One of main obstacles in education was the [lack of access to schools](#), while [anti-vaccination campaigns](#) and a series of [shortcomings in vaccine procurement](#) had a major effect on [healthcare](#).



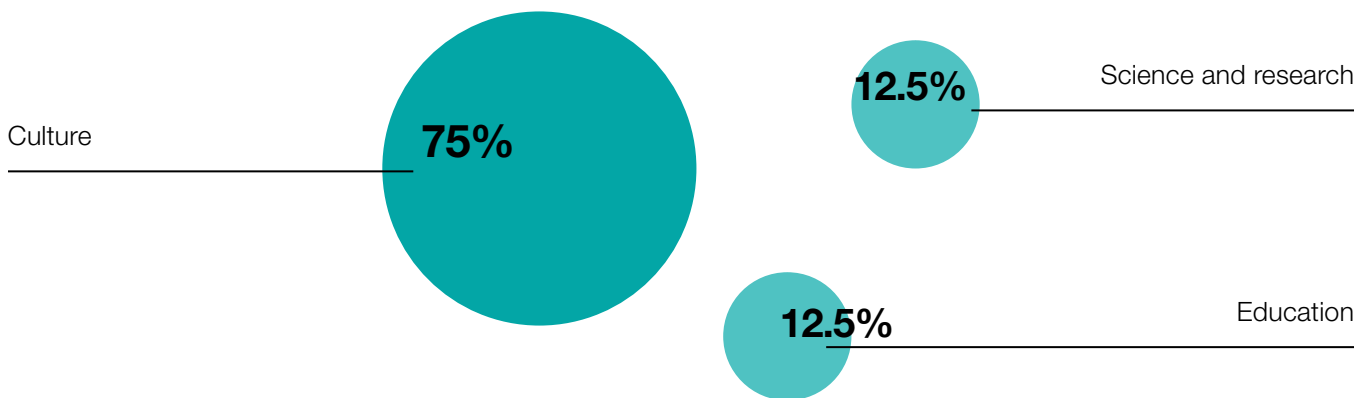
Cooptation

Among the **cooptation** reported incidents, 38.5% are associated with nominations and direct benefits to the Church, while 30.8% refer to other stakeholders such as the military, the police, and firefighters. As an important [ally of the president](#), the [Church](#) was favored either through [nominations](#) or [excessive benefits](#) intended to [meet the demands](#) of supporters, reported the media. Some of the privileges the president granted to this segment include the [distribution of civil servant positions for members of the military](#) and the [housing and allowance program](#) for police officers and firefighters. It should be noted that both segments [actively engaged](#) in the [September 7](#) demonstrations. Also, the voting of the printed ballot proposal led to a series of offers of privileges in exchange for support. Finally, [individual amendments in the amount of BRL 1 billion were approved](#) on the eve of the analysis of the proposal.



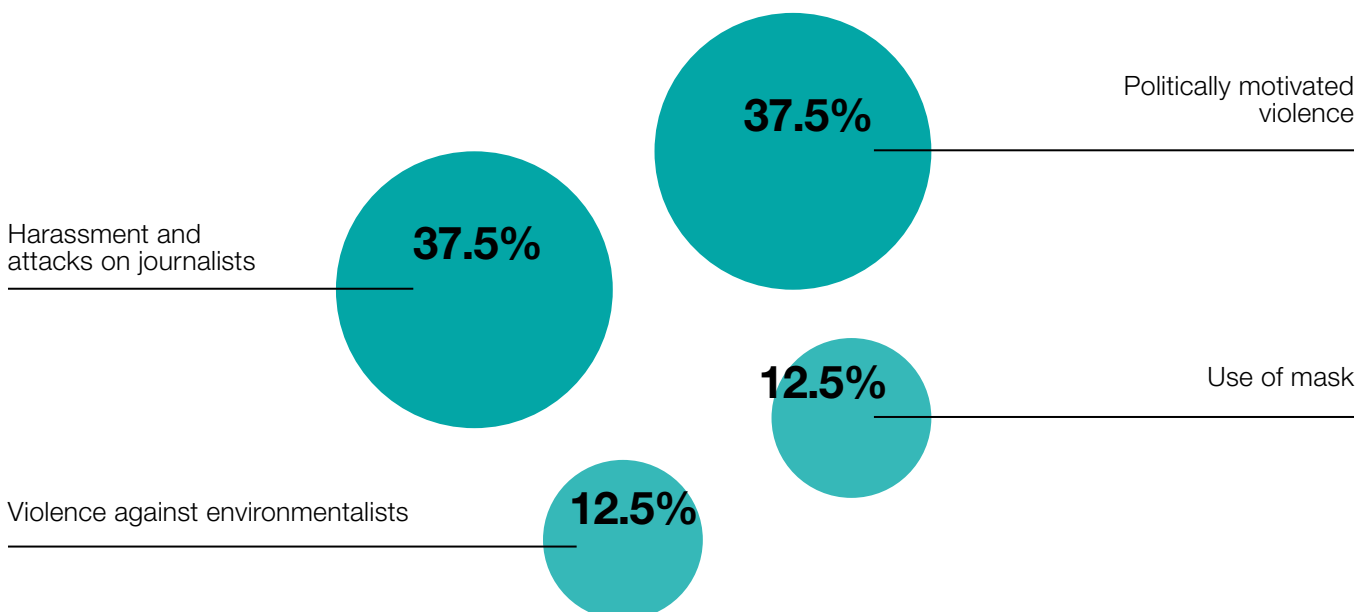
Funding Restrictions

Most (77%) **funding restrictions** are linked to the area of [culture](#), which has been suffering from [budget cuts](#) and [slowness in getting proposals off the paper](#). The paradigmatic rejection of granting through the [Rouanet Law](#) for the “[anti-fascism](#)” [jazz festival](#) is a fitting example of the series of funding [restrictions without legitimate justification](#) in the area. [Suspension of several research](#) in Brazil also reveals a systematic attack on science.



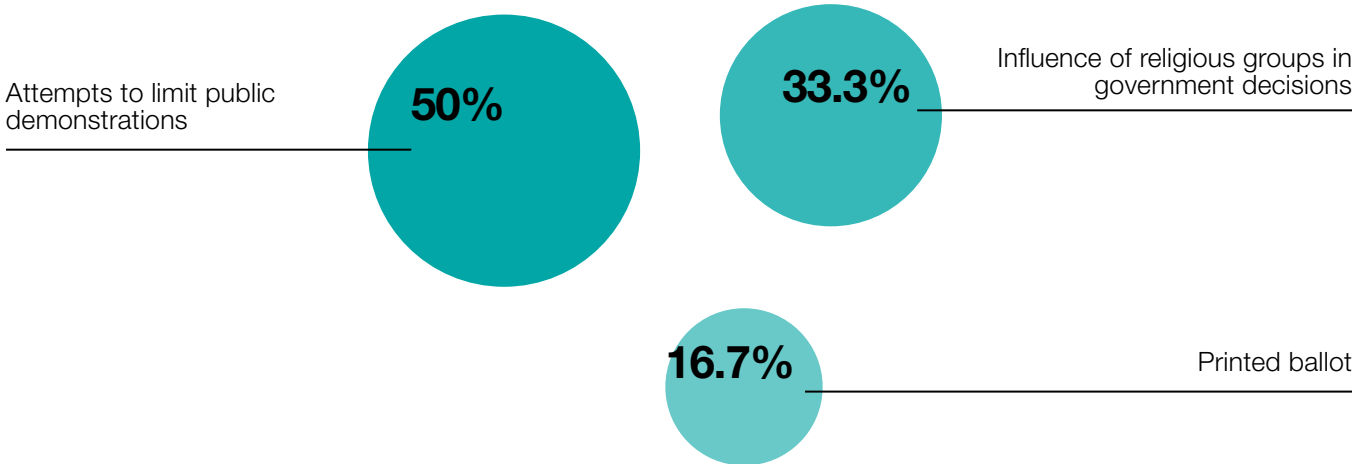
Physical Violence

[Harassment](#) and attacks on [journalists](#) predominantly by [government supporters](#) account for one third of the incidents of **physical violence** reported in the period. A similar portion of incidents consists of [politically motivated violence](#) mostly against [people](#) who [showed opposition to the president](#). Cases of violence against [environmentalists](#) were also noted.



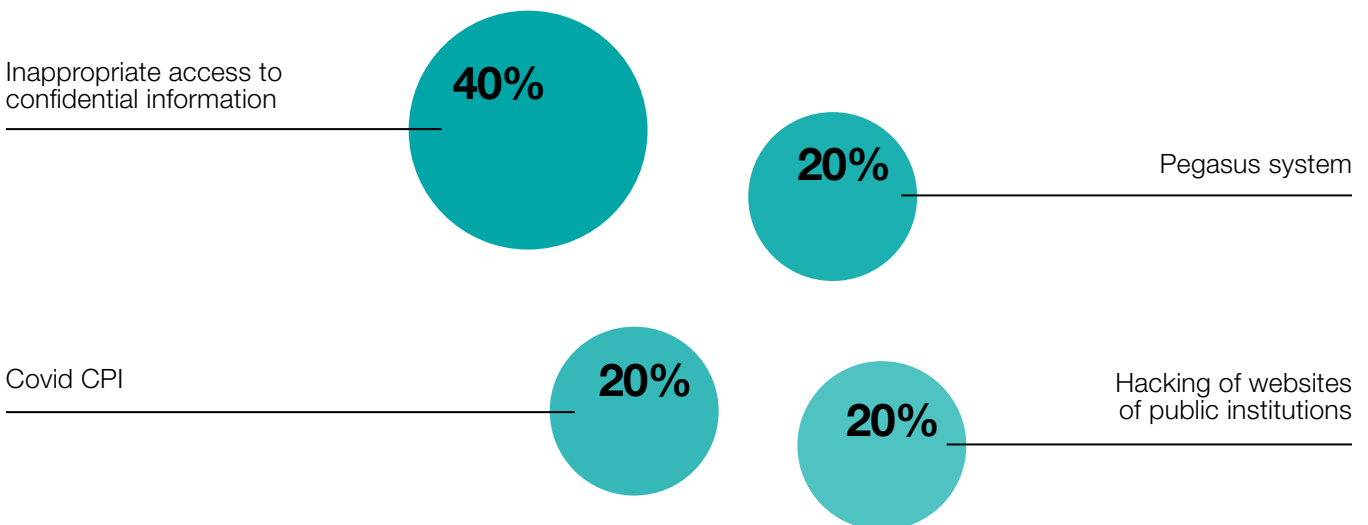
Coercion

Half of the cases of **coercion** involved attempts to limit [public demonstrations](#), such as [protests](#) or [individual demonstrations](#) against government actions. The influence of religious groups in government decisions stands out in 33% of the instances, as in the case of [André Mendonca's appointment to the Federal Supreme Court](#).



Infringement of Privacy

[Inappropriate access to confidential information](#) was widely reported in the period, accounting for 40% of the incidents. Other reports relate to the [Covid Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry](#), the [Pegasus system](#) procurement process, and [hacking of websites of several public institutions](#).



This quarter's analysis shows that most of the threats to civic space came from the Federal Government. The GPS identifies threats based on news stories, but another way to monitor government action is via [Atos](#), an intuitive platform designed to help society keep track of the decrees issued by the Executive Branch of the Federal Government.

In the analyzed quarter alone, the Executive Branch issued **86 decrees** covering topics such as public security, human rights, and the environment.

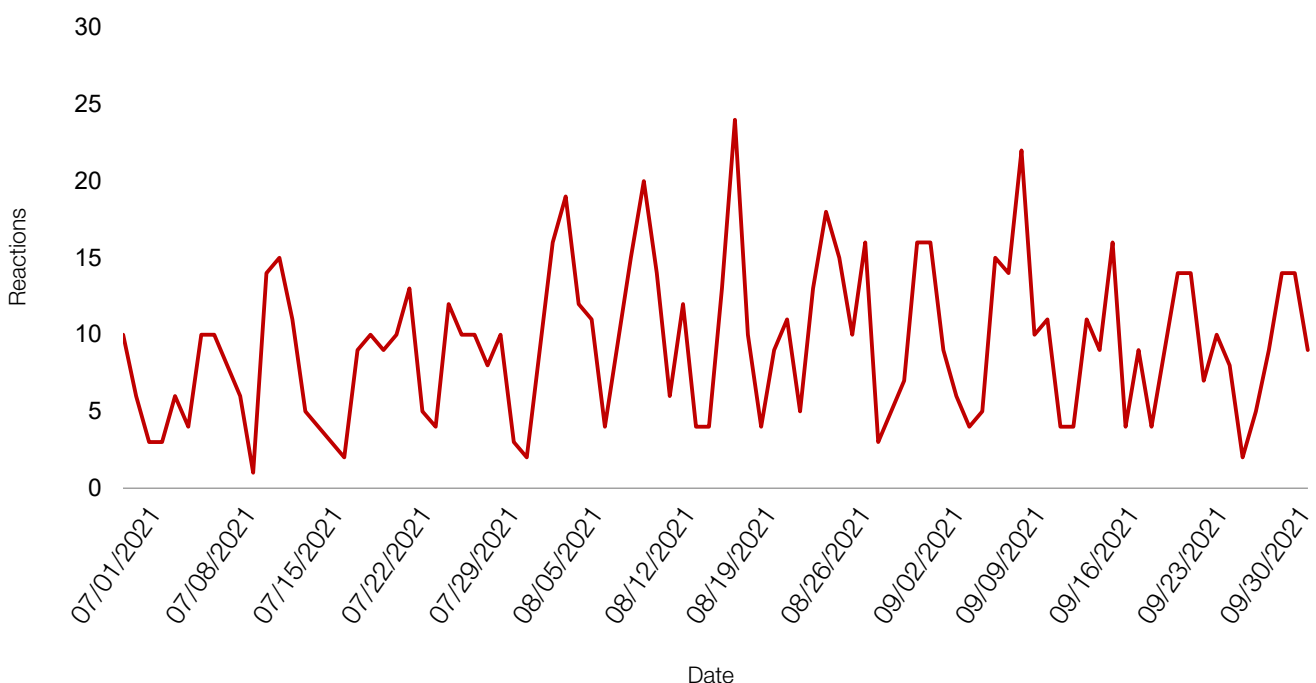
Would you like to join these acts of resistance? Turn on the alert system to keep a tab on the topics of your interest. This way, you will closely monitor the regulatory acts published, the changes arising from them, and their impact on public policies.

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.

In this quarter, **837 acts of resistance** were detected: **531 were institutional responses**, that is, they referred to actions taken by State institutions themselves; **306 others were carried out by members of civil society, the academic community, political parties, the press, and other private actors**. It is worth emphasizing events that sparked different reactions from several stakeholders, such as the [Covid CPI](#) — particularly the [Covaxin](#) scandal —, the discussions about the printed ballot, the tanks parade, and the September 7 rally. That partially explains the high number of incidents registered. To strengthen civic space, we must identify the institutional players and members of society that are pushing back against efforts to constrain it. To that end, we took into consideration all reactions concerning the same fact albeit from different players.

In fact, there were spikes in the number of reactions in August and September. In the beginning of August, we saw the Superior Electoral Court and the Federal Supreme Court responding to attacks against the electoral system as the voting of the printed ballot proposal in the Chamber of Deputies unfolded. Meanwhile, investigations launched against Bolsonaro and supporters for attacks on the Supreme Court and dissemination of fake news and mobilizations against the impeachment of Justice Alexandre de Moraes were also widely reported. The spike in reactions in early September refers to responses from several players and institutions to the call for protests on September 7 (Brazil’s Independence Day).



Institutional Responses

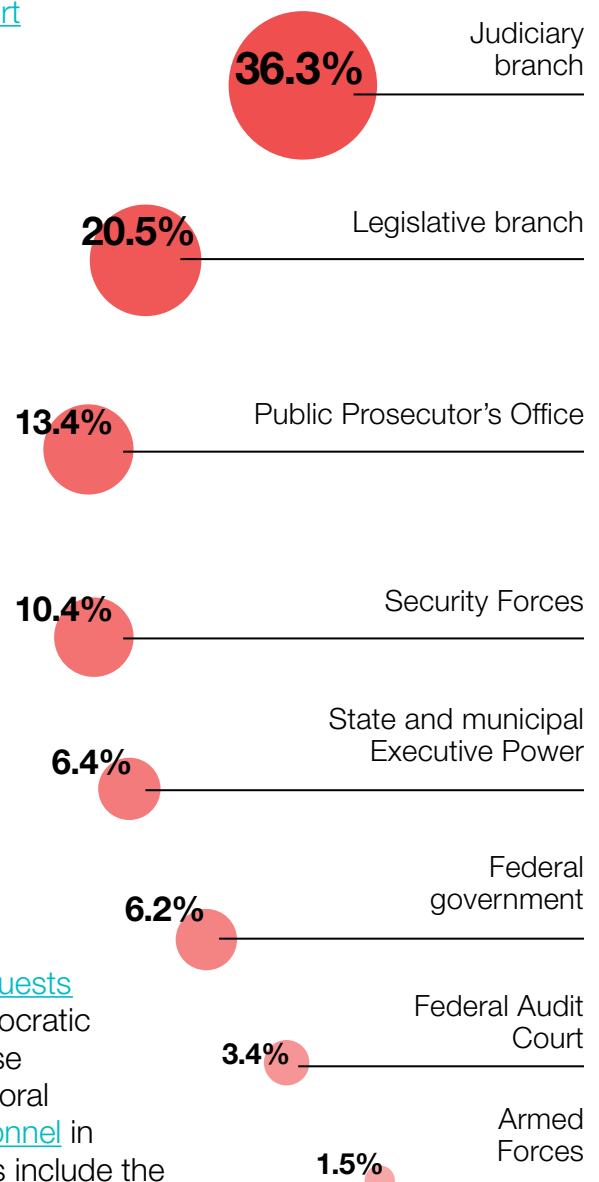
The Judiciary branch (36.3%), the Legislative branch (20.5%), and the Public Prosecutor's Office (13.4%) are the state entities which most responded to attacks against Brazilian civic space. The security forces stood out in this quarter, with 10.4% of institutional responses arising from reactions to the so-called "undemocratic acts" on September 7. Likewise, state and municipal executives appeared in 6.4% of the institutional responses registered.

Most responses from the Judiciary branch (49%) came from members of the Federal Supreme Court, followed by the state Justice Courts (20.2%), and the [Supreme Electoral Court](#) (16.1%). The actions generally comprise responses to attacks on the Judiciary, particularly against Justices of the [Supreme Court](#), including the [request to impeach Justice Alexandre de Moraes](#), and on the Brazilian electoral system. There were also [specific statements](#) and [investigations](#) against Bolsonaro, either for the omissions and [mismanagement of the Covid-19 pandemic](#), or for claiming, without evidence, that the [country's electronic voting system is liable to fraud](#). Other declarations refer to the [malfeasance in the Covaxin case](#), or even for [inciting anti-democratic acts](#) contrary to [republican principles](#) and [interfering with the Federal police](#).

In the state justice, several reactions to [sexist](#), [racist](#), and [homophobic](#) statements or even [intimidation](#) against the press stand out. Most actions by the [Superior Electoral Court](#) are in defense of [electronic voting machines](#) and the [electoral system in force in Brazil](#).

In the case of the Legislative branch, the Chamber of Deputies (49.51%) and the Senate (41.75%) were the main players leading institutional responses. Within the Chamber, it is worth mentioning the [rejection of the printed ballot proposal](#), the countless [impeachment requests against Bolsonaro](#), statements contrary to the anti-democratic acts related to [September 7](#), and the attempts to impose quarantine for [judges and military personnel](#) in the Electoral code or to [limit participation of active duty military personnel](#) in the government. In the [Senate](#), the most covered topics include the [rejection of Bolsonaro's impeachment request against Justice Moraes](#), the overturning of [Bolsonaro's ban on removal of social media posts](#), and the [actions of the Covid Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry](#).

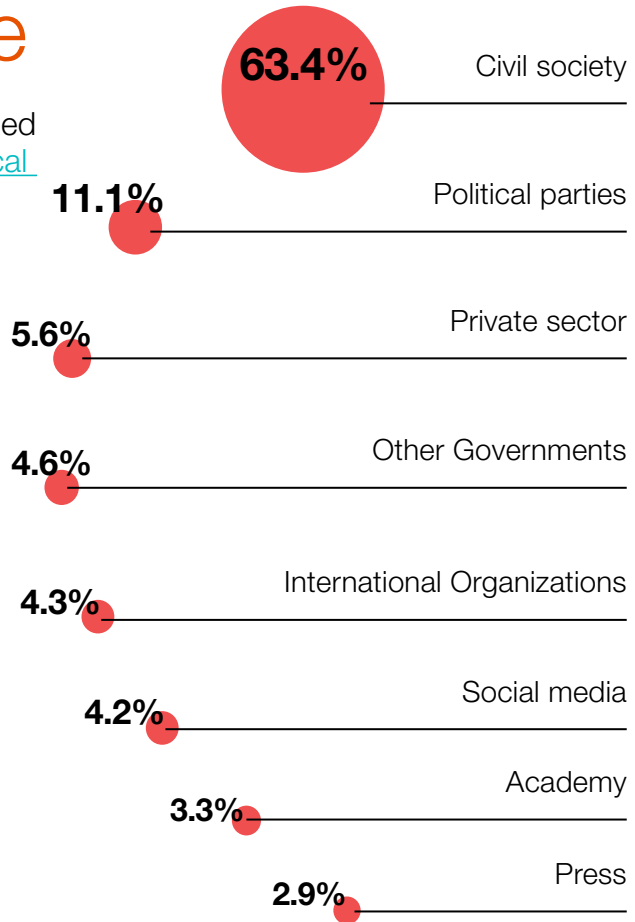
Finally, the actions taken by the Public Prosecutor's Office against the [mishandling of the pandemic](#), [Pazuello's actions](#) and [negotiations of the Coronavac vaccine for triple the price](#), and the [investigations of the September 7 protests](#).



Acts of Resistance

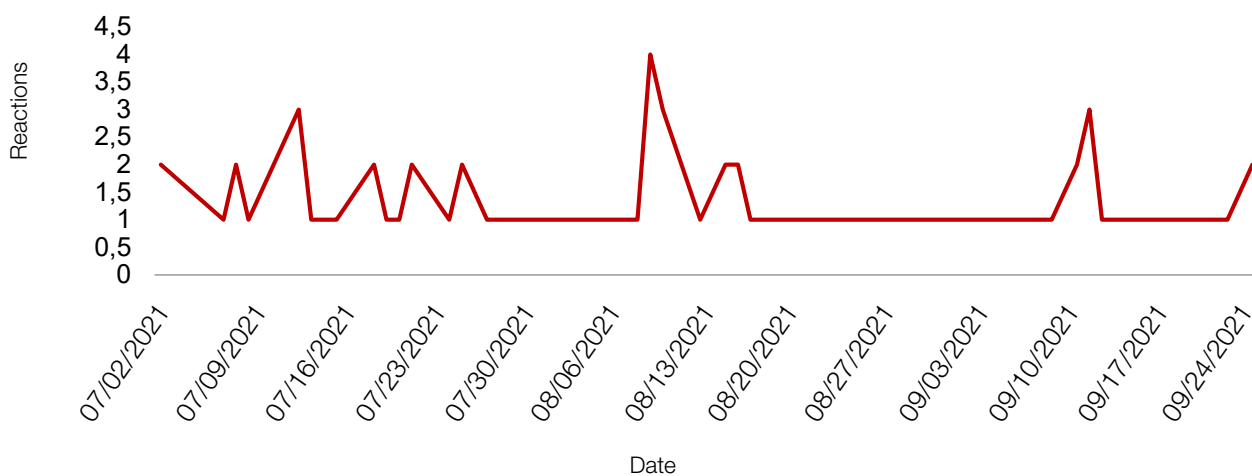
In the reporting period, civil society championed resistance actions (63.4%), followed by [political parties](#) (11.1%) and the [private sector](#) (5.6%). Several statements by [other governments](#) (4.5%) and [international organizations](#) (4.3%), particularly the [United Nations \(UN\)](#), also drew attention.

Most of these actions stood by [protests](#) for rights, as in the case of [indigenous peoples](#) demonstrating [against the Marco Temporal](#), [statements in support of democracy](#), and [notes of repudiation](#) against authoritarian demonstrations – such as the [tank parade](#) in front of the Presidential Palace – by [emeritus members](#) such as [former presidents](#) and [former ministers](#) or associations such as the [Brazilian Bar Association \(OAB\)](#).



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. In the reported quarter, 63 instances in which the government changed its position were identified.



Among the most publicized incidents, we highlight the management of the pandemic, specifically regarding the [Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry \(CPI\)](#), such as its extension, the [dissemination of information by the Ministry of Health against the use of the “Covid kit,”](#) and [disclosure of data via Twitter and Facebook](#). In addition, [declarations about the printed ballot by President Bolsonaro](#) and about [environmental commitments](#) also had a lot of repercussions. So did the actions of the Attorney General’s Office, particularly regarding the investigation into Bolsonaro for [malfeasance in the Covaxin case](#) and his [attacks on electronic voting machines](#). Finally, it is worth mentioning the repercussions of the September 7 rally and the statements by the president in support of [democracy and the three branches of government](#).

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>
I. 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. (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>
II. Coercion	Coercion is the use of threats to influence another's behavior by limiting choice (Schelling 1966).	<p>Veiled or open threat to dismiss or disempower public servants and political appointees if they don't adhere to government's false narratives or wrongdoings.</p> <p>Veiled or open threats to suspend ongoing partnerships and/or public funding in light of public criticism.</p>
III. Fake News and disinformation campaigns	<p>Fake news are false stories circulated on the news, social media, and spread on the internet, which try to appear as real news. There are six types: news satire, news parody, fabrication, manipulation, advertising, and propaganda (Tandoc, Lim, Ling, 2007).</p> <p>Disinformation 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>
IV. Censorship (overt or veiled)	Censorship refers to the "policy of restricting the public expression of ideas, opinions, conceptions and impulses which have or are believed to have the capacity to undermine the governing authority or the social and moral order which that authority considers itself bound to protect" (Laswell, 1930)	<p>Intent to provoke self-censorship of individuals that are targeted online or offline.</p> <p>Creation of obstacles to access public information.</p> <p>Classification or restriction of publications and documents.</p> <p>Direct 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>

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Strategies	Description	Examples of tactics / actions
V. Intimidation and Harassment	<p>Intimidation refers to direct or indirect actions against others to prevent them from continuing their work or to induce fear of an attack (CIVICUS, 2019).</p> <p>Harassment 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.
Pressure and threats to private companies to stop advertising on non-aligned media channels.		
VI. Infringement of Privacy (State surveillance)	<p>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.” (Declaration of Human Rights, 1948).</p> <p>State Surveillance is the collection of information, including the monitoring, tracking, and identification to the administration of subject populations, supervised by officials and administrators, hinged to some specific purpose (Giddens, 1984; Lyon, 1994). It usually inhabits a shadowy realm of public affairs (Starr et al).</p>	Illegal 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.

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<p>VII. Civil and Political Rights Violations</p>	<p>Violations of political rights include denial of the right to a fair trial and due process; and rights of participation in civil society and politics such as freedom of association, the right to assemble, and the right to vote (Dahl 2005).</p> <p>Violations of civil rights include discrimination on grounds of race, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, color, age, political affiliation, ethnicity, religion, and social origin; and restrictions of individuals' freedom. (ICCPR 1976).</p>	Restrictions or 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.
<p>VIII. Restrictions on Civic Participation and Engagement</p>	<p>Restrictions to any forms of individual or collective work to solve community problems and to address issues of public concern (civic participation) as well as any forms of following, having knowledge, beliefs, opinions and attitudes on public issues (civic engagement) (Barrett and Brunton-Smith 2014), especially when contributing and interacting with policy design, monitoring and/or decision-making process.</p>	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.

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Strategies	Description	Examples of tactics / actions
<p>IX. Funding Restrictions</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>
		<p>Overly broad application of anti-money laundering and counterterrorism measures.</p>
		<p>Using defamation, treason, and other laws to bring criminal charges against recipients of international funding.</p>
		<p>Restrictions for domestic and international funding and/or prohibition of specific donors.</p>
		<p>Requirement of advance government approval and/or international funds routed through government-controlled entities.</p>
		<p>Capping the amount of international funding per CSO.</p>
		<p>Restriction of activities undertaken with international funding, including content-based restrictions (e.g. ban on human rights work or ‘political activity’).</p>
		<p>Taxation of international funds.</p>
		<p>Categorizing CSOs that receive international funding as ‘foreign agents’, adopting specific treatment of these organizing or imposing a burden on their work.</p>
		<p>Burdensome procedural requirements.</p>
		<p>Freezing or seizure of funds targeted toward funding civil society.</p>
		<p>Prohibition from receiving international funding and public budgets allocations.</p>
		<p>Shrinking public universities through excessive budget cuts.</p>
<p>Cutting fiscal benefits for scientific research and academic development.</p>		

Strategies	Description	Examples of tactics / actions
<p>X. Physical Violence</p>	<p>Physical Violence 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.
		Refusal to protect those who are threatened.
		Violent attacks on minorities and vulnerable groups.
		Threats of physical violence by State and non-State actors.
		Illegal imprisonment of civil leaders.
		Tortures / maltreatment.
		Forced disappearance.
		Taxation of international funds.
		Assassination / extrajudicial killing of human rights defenders, civil leaders, and journalists.
<p>XI. Constitutional Hardball*</p>	<p>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 (Tushnet 2004, Levitsky and Ziblatt 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.
		Issuing of norms and decrees that contradict the Constitution.
		Nonconforming with non-written norms that serve to respect the separation of State Powers.
		Executive decisions which reduce budgets, structure, and alter the functioning of public agencies created to audit, inspect, and supervise the Executive Branch.
		Reducing the power of opposition parties in Congress, restricting broader debate on votes.
<p>XII. Abuse of Power</p>	<p>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 (Sankowsky, 1995).</p>	Political interference in ordinances from the Armed Forces that violate laws and/or the Constitution.
		Political interference in the public administration with nominations and dismissals of public servants to favor private interests.
		Political interference in nominations of public universities, research centers and participatory councils to impose censorship.
		Political interference in procedures and nomination of leadership of law enforcement and other independent public agencies to protect private interests.
		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.

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Strategies	Description	Examples of tactics / actions
<p>XIII. Violation of social, economic, cultural, and environmental rights.</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>

* 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.

Sources for these tactics: off the record interviews with civic leaders; Buyse 2018; Civicus 2017, 2018, 2019; ICNL; Levitsky and Ziblath 2018; OHCHR; Rutzen, 2015; WEF 2017; World Movement for Democracy.

Learn more

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

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



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