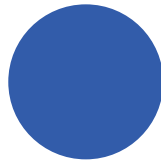




**IGARAPE INSTITUTE**  
a think and do tank



# CIVIC SPACE GPS

QUARTERLY BULLETIN 6

JUNE 2022



# CIVIC SPACE GPS

January—March 2022

The civic space – the sphere between business, the State, and family where citizens organize, debate and act to influence the public policy and the general direction of the country – is under attack. The constant assaults on this space threaten civil and political rights, hinder transparency and curtail the freedom of expression, peaceful assembly, and association. 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 is becoming troublingly common in this country.

This is why Igarapé Institute has launched “**The Civic Space GPS.**” The objective is to monitor attacks, responses led by State institutions, as well as acts of resistance led by civil society. These quarterly bulletins track and analyze such attacks as reported in multiple media outlets, in particular Folha de S. Paulo, G1, O Estado de S. Paulo, O Globo, and UOL. Our researchers then organize and catalog 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 in Brazil and around the](#)

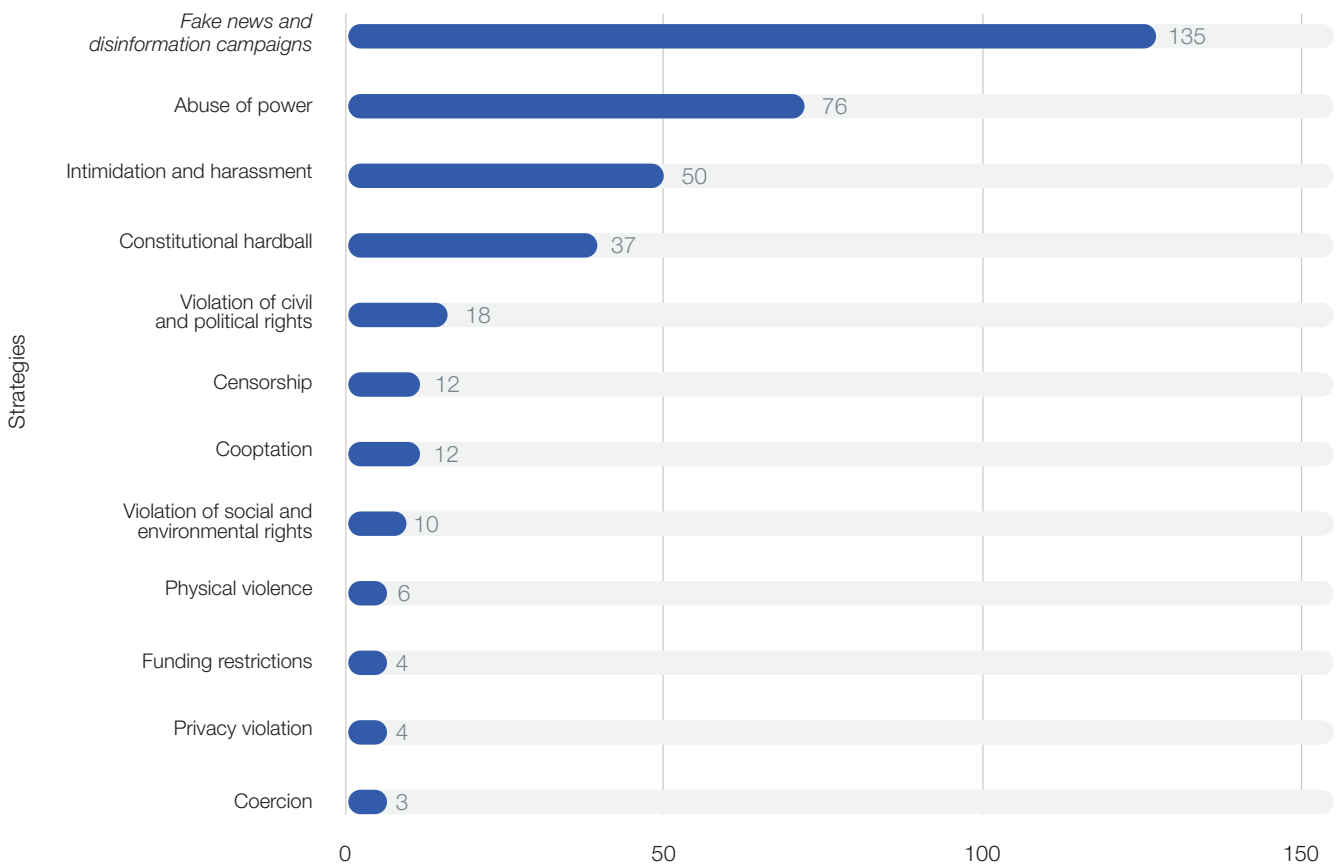
[world](#)” and in the supporting Technical Note, “[A Typology to Understand the Strategies and Tactics for Attacking the Civic Space](#)”.

In this sixth edition, the Institute provides an analysis of the first quarterly bulletin of 2022. Between January and March, **367** threats to the Brazilian civic space were identified. On the other hand, during the same period, **274** reactions were reported, with **194** institutional responses and **80** acts of resistance taken by civil society and other groups. Other **17** incidents of changes of position, mainly government reversals, were spotlighted by the media. The quarter marked the beginning of the electoral year, which has already been characterized by worsening institutional relations, especially between the Executive and Judiciary branches. The intensification of political disagreements and political violence was also highlighted. Opponents began to attack each other by disseminating fake news, threatening, and even practicing physical violence, reinforcing a polarized and hostile political landscape.

# The Threats

Between January and March 2022, the Igarapé Institute identified **367 threats to Brazilian civic space**, a **9,8%** increase compared to the previous quarter. Among the most frequent strategies adopted during this period, **fake news and disinformation campaigns** summed up **135** incidents, followed by **abuse of power, intimidation and harassment**, and **constitutional hardball**, responsible for **76, 50, and 37** cases, respectively.

**FIGURE 1** – Threats in the first trimester of 2022

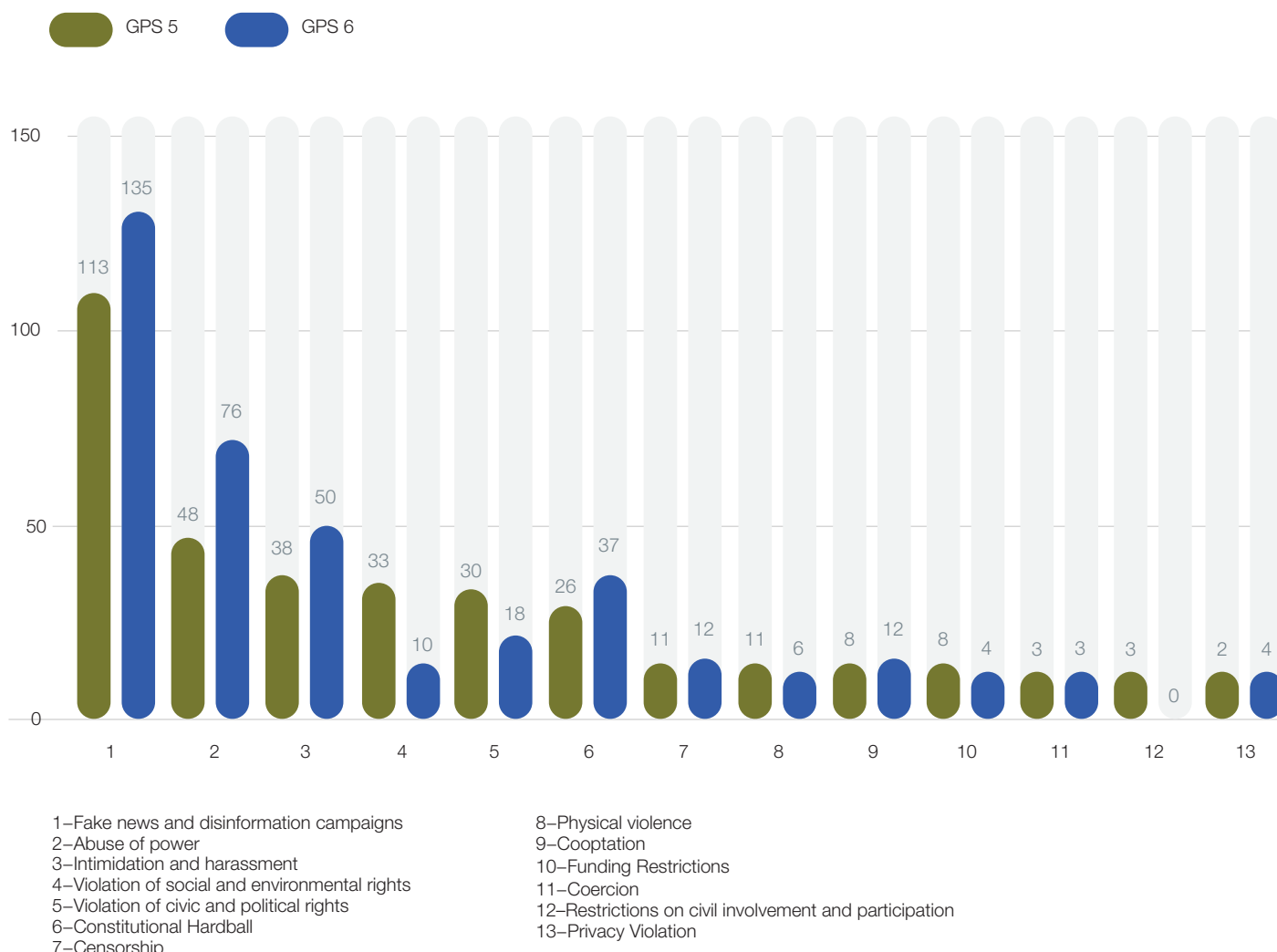


Source: Own elaboration, based on the systematic collection of information published in the press.

By comparing the number of incidents reported in this quarter to the previous one (October to December 2021), a 50% increase rate in cases of **cooptation** is highlighted, along with a 42% rise in **constitutional hardball**, and 32% in **intimidation and harassment**.

*Between January and March 2022, the Igarapé Institute identified 367 threats to Brazilian civic space, a 9,8% increase compared to the previous quarter.*

**FIGURE 2** – Comparison of threats to civic space between 2021 fourth quarter and 2022 first quarter



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

The **135 threats** to civic space classified as **fake news and disinformation campaigns** correspond to **36,8%** of the total amount of threats. This strategy is primarily promoted in different political spectrums as a manner of mobilizing supporters and defaming critics. Among them, fake news related to covid-19 (35,6% of cases) stands out, mainly concerning vaccination, especially in childhood. The disinformation about the side-effects of vaccines and the distortion of data and scientific studies represent most of the

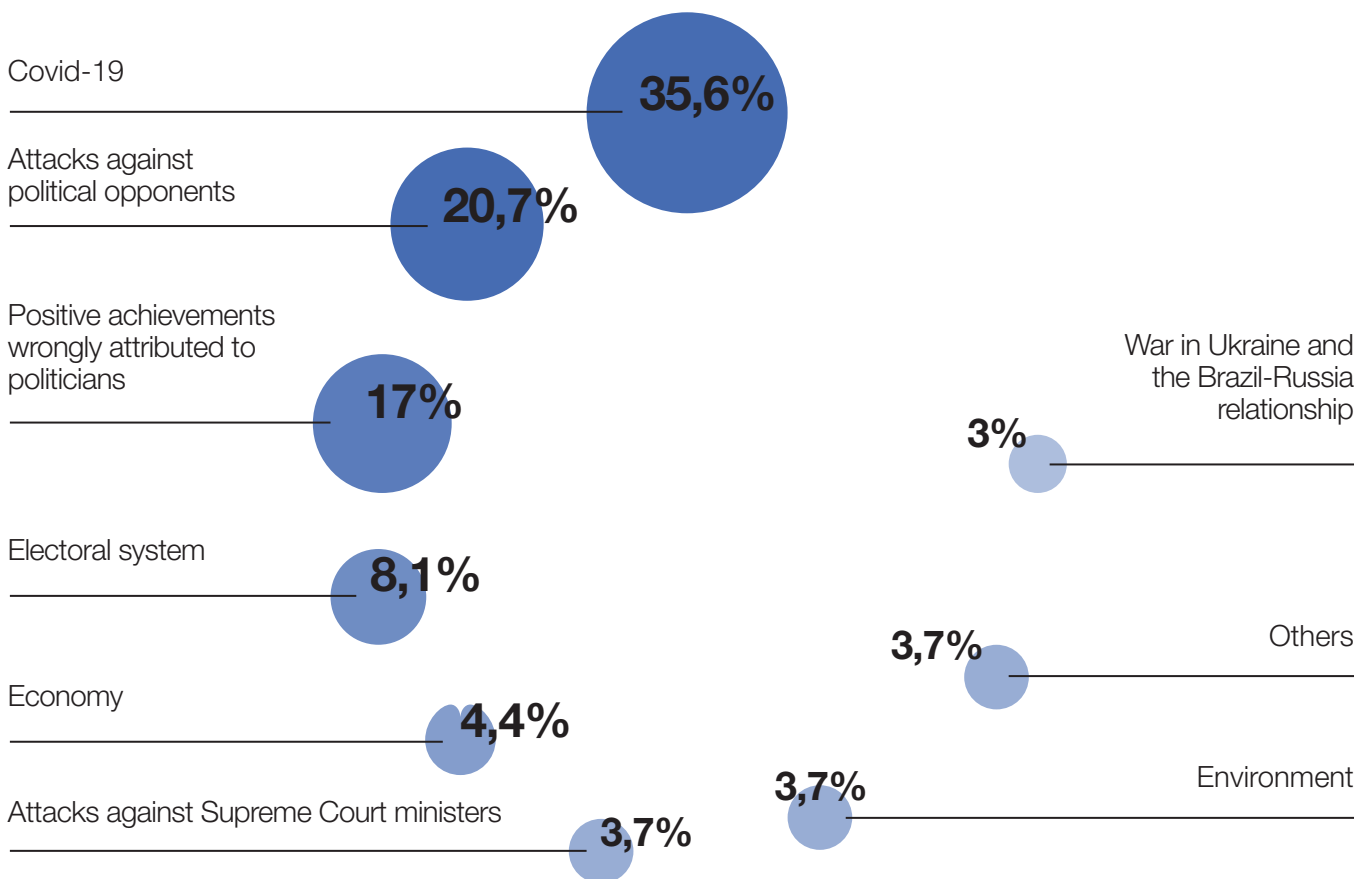
cases. Since the beginning of the pandemic, criticisms against effective scientific measures to combat the disease, like social distance, wearing of masks, and vaccination, have circulated. With this, the pandemic became one of the main debate themes between critics and supporters of President Jair Bolsonaro.

20,7% of fake news and disinformation campaigns showcase attacks on political opponents. False associations, distortions of facts, unfounded rumors, and images taken out

of context were used to discredit and defame members of the most diverse ideological fields, with President Jair Bolsonaro and the former President Lula being the preferred targets. On the other hand, both benefited from news that falsely attributed positive achievements to their respective administrations (17%), either by taking responsibility for a work executed by a third party or by boosting their popularity among voters.

News about attacks against the electoral system (8,1%) and on the Justices of the Supreme Court (STF in Portuguese) (3,7%), common in previous quarters, continued to be broadcast despite the lower intensity. Fake News associated with the economy (4,4%), such as incorrect or out-of-context data about the inflation, value of gasoline, and cooking gas, was used to promote or criticize the current management.

**FIGURE 3** – Fake news and disinformation campaigns



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

With the second-highest number of occurrences in the period, **76 cases of abuses of power** were identified, totaling **20,7%** of threats in the quarter. This tactic has been fundamental to the democratic erosion strategy, promoting people's occupation of crucial positions without the proper technical knowledge, unbalancing the three powers, and interfering with the system of checks and counterbalances.

Conflict of interest situations were reported to benefit supporters or defend their political group's interests. Episodes of favoring allies represented 14,5% of cases of abuse of power. Undue benefits, like the use of public television to promote bolsonarist candidates, and corporatism, like the Minas Gerais Court paying more than ten times the legal salary cap to its judges. These actions contradict the public interest and consist of deviation from constitutionally defined purposes.

The inappropriate use of public funds (10,5%) is illustrated by two prominent examples reported in the period: the high costs of the Secretary of Culture Mário Frias's trip to New York and the R\$ 1,7 million spent on the president's corporate card. Another point of attention was the politicization of the Judiciary branch (9,2%) since cases of judicial action with political aims, primarily to protect allies or guarantee appointments, were reported.

Equally worrying were the cases of misuse of parliamentary amendments (9,2%) in deploying funds of the so-called secret budget mechanism, as O Globo reported. They were used to favor allies, as in the case reported by Folha de S. Paulo, from Senator Davi Alcolumbre, who passed on R\$ 68 million to allied mayors or even to persecute political adversaries, like when Minister Ciro Nogueira was accused of vetoing R\$ 428 million in amendments related to a political rival.

In addition to these episodes, cases of early electoral campaigns (7,9%) were identified, mainly through the use of the public machine for self-promotion. Stand out the incidence

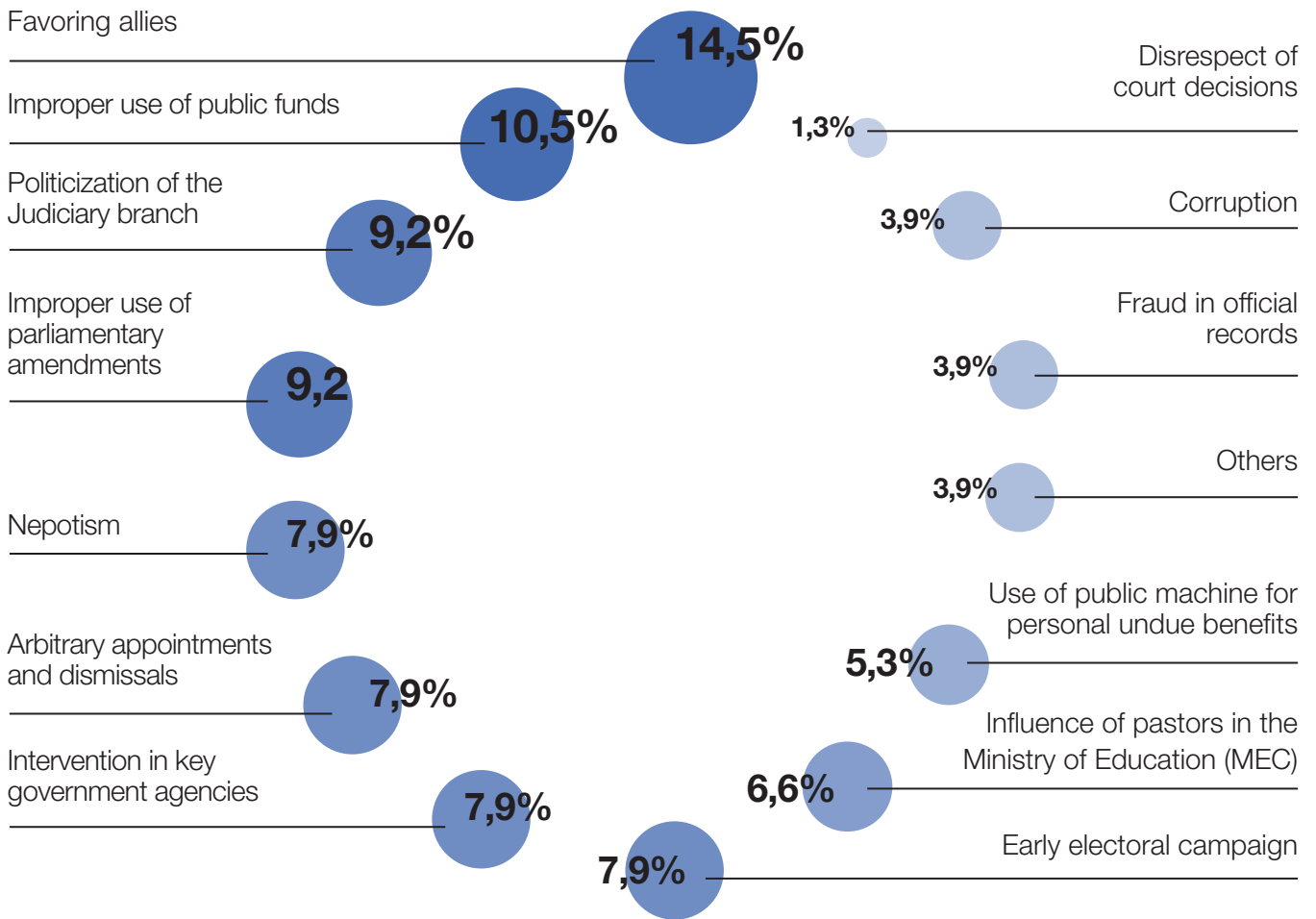
of nepotism (7,9%), undue appointments and dismissals (7,9%) based on political alignment to the detriment of technical capacity, intervention in control, and inspection bodies (7,9%). Finally, Folha de S. Paulo reported that episodes of influence by reverends in the Ministry of Education (MEC) (6,6%) were especially severe, involving the receipt of bribes in exchange for the release of funds. Consequently, there is a considerable decline in the efficiency of central bodies, the subversion of their mandates for non-republican ends, and the eventual centralization of power.

---

*Abuses of power been fundamental to the democratic erosion strategy, promoting people's occupation of crucial positions without the proper technical knowledge, unbalancing the three powers, and interfering with the system of checks and counterbalances.*

---

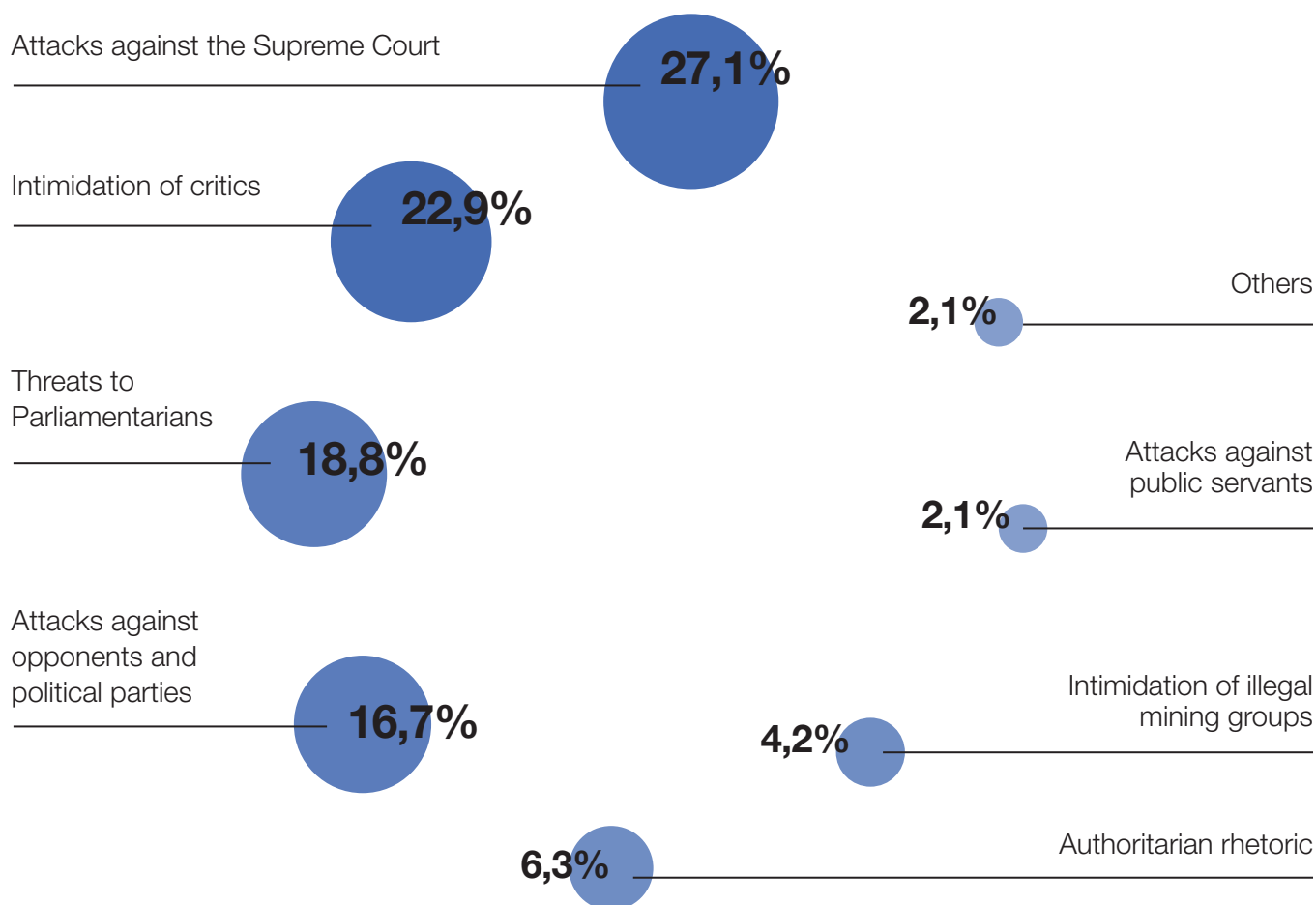
**FIGURE 4 – Abuse of power**



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

With **13.62%** of the total threats accounted for in the quarter, **the category intimidation and harassment** had **50** recorded cases. They refer mainly to the attacks against the STF Justices (27.1%) taken by President Jair Bolsonaro and his supporters, being Alexandre de Moraes and Luís Roberto Barroso the main targets. Several cases of intimidation against critics of the government were also identified (22.9%). Victims are usually journalists, activists, influencers, artists, and even protesters who criticized President Jair Bolsonaro, as in the case of the Lollapalooza

festival and a demonstration in Roraima. Threats against parliamentarians (18.8%) were also reported, mainly against women, black and trans people. Death threats, such as the one suffered by state representative Isa Penna and her family, were also mentioned. In addition to such cases, verbal attacks against political opponents (16.7%) illustrate the polarized and extremely aggressive political background in an electoral year.

**FIGURE 5 – Intimidation and harassment**

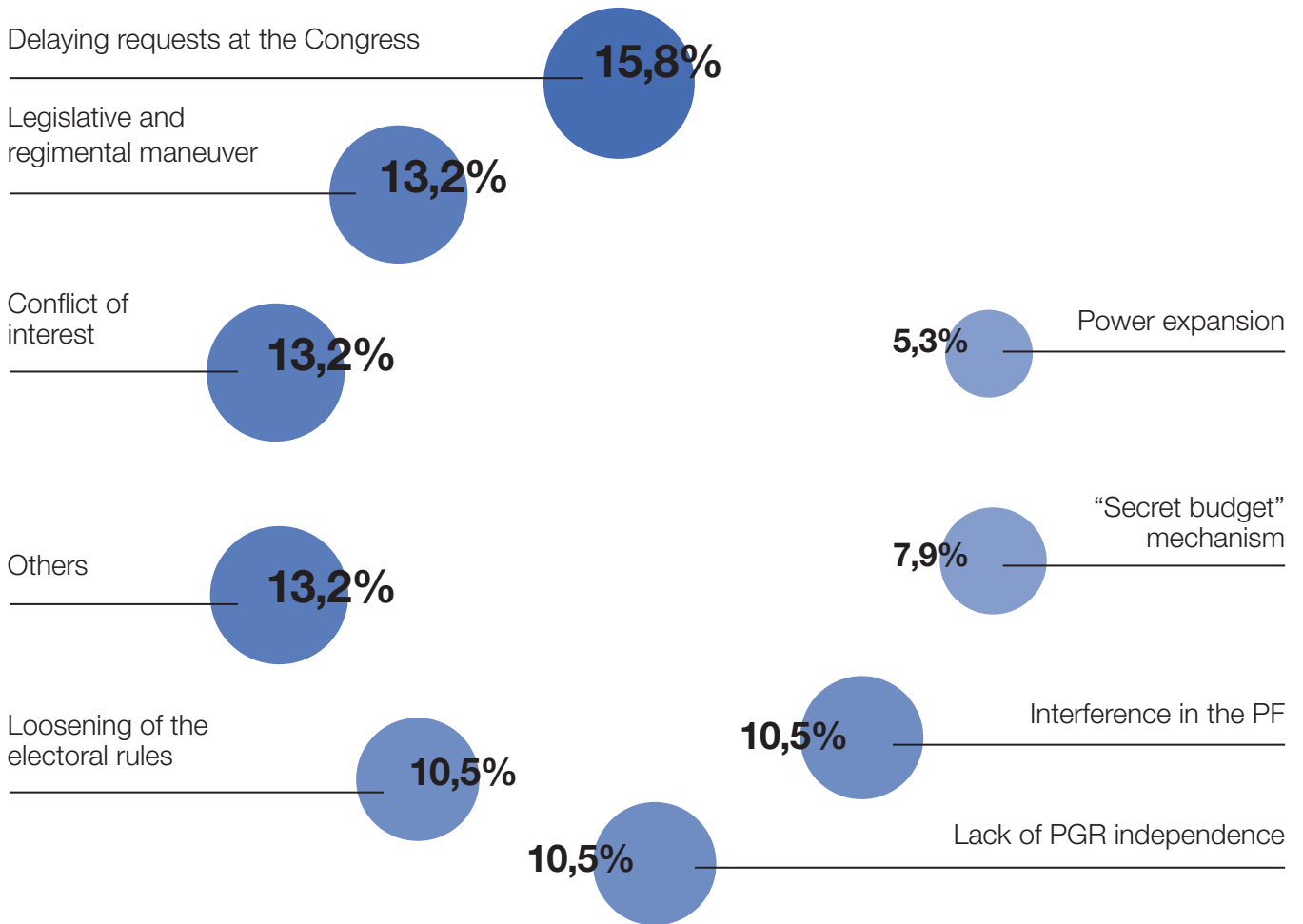
Source: Own elaboration, based on the systematic collection of information published in the press.

The incidents classified as **constitutional hardball** totaled **37** cases, about **10%** of the total number of threats in the period. Among them, 15.8% are related to the [unjustified postponement of requests](#), such as the [impeachment of government allies](#) that have been waiting for analysis in the lower house of Congress for more than two years. Another example is the [paralyzation of procedures](#), like the project that proposes limits to the salaries that exceed the top maximum in public service, which has been stuck for five months in the Senate. According to the *Folha de S. Paulo* and *O Estado de S. Paulo*, such stoppages aim to [protect allies](#) or [defend personal and political interests](#). The so-called [legislative or regimental maneuvers](#) represented 13.2% of the attacks, as in the cases of [approval of urgent](#)

[votes](#) in disagreement with the [regimental provisions and maintenance of the virtual voting system](#) even after the release of the use of masks in Congress. Also, 13.2% of the occurrences are the conflicts of interests cases, as when the president of the Chamber of Deputies, Arthur Lira, used the new Law of Improbability, sponsored by him, to request the annulment of a conviction that could make him a dirty record, according to *Folha de S. Paulo*. Also noteworthy are the [suspicions that the Federal Police \(PF\) has been hijacked](#) (10.5%), the loosening of electoral rules, allowing the current president to make [institutional publicity](#) in an electoral year (10.5%), [the amnesty for parties that failed to comply with the quotas](#) for women and black people, and [the advertisements of presidential candidates on TV](#), contrary to the electoral law.



**FIGURE 6 – Constitutional hardball**



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

Women (23.53%), indigenous peoples (11.76%), black (11.76%), and LGBTQIA+ (17.65%) populations were the main targets of the **18 violations of civil and political rights** cases recorded. The research identified several episodes of discrimination against women in political decision-making spaces as pieces of evidence of an upsurge in gender-based political violence, as in the case of the bolsonarist councilman from Espírito Santo, Gilvan da Federal. He ordered the parliamentarian Camila Valadão to “shut up” during a session in the Municipal Legislature of Vitória. Violations to fundamental freedoms (17.65%) such as demonstration, expression, and religion were also identified.

During the period, **12** episodes of  **censorship** were reported. They were mainly related to the lack of transparency concerning spending public money (33.33%), imposition of secrecy of documents (16.67%), and non-disclosure of data of public interest (16.67%). The illustrative case of Enem, in which Inep stopped publishing part of the information that allows the analysis of the exam results with clippings of race, income, and school is symptomatic. Some cases of critical content restriction (33.33%) became widely known, like the order to remove Danilo Gentili’s comedy movie from streaming platforms and the already mentioned prohibition of political manifestations at the Lollapalooza festival. Meanwhile, the **12** episodes of **cooptation** are related to granting privileges in exchange for support. These episodes primarily aim to meet the interests of religious groups (50%), Army

and [security forces](#) (25%), reported Folha de S. Paulo. Attempts to [use parliamentary amendments to gather political support](#) were also identified (16.67%). According to Estado de S. Paulo, Bolsonaro's government paid a record volume of parliamentary amendments to be applied in his electoral strongholds.

The [violations of the right to health](#) (60%), mainly related to the discouragement of vaccination against covid, and the [environmental degradation](#) (40%), primarily due to illegal mining and deforestation, starred among the **10 violations of social and ecological rights cases**. Among the **6** incidents of **physical violence**, 66.67% were motivated by [political disagreements](#), as in the case of the councilman who pointed a gun at a colleague during a discussion in the Municipal Legislature of Querência, in Mato Grosso. 33.33% were [attacks on leaders](#), as in the case of the young indigenous Pataxó Vitor Braz de Souza shooting death. The **restriction of funding** (**4** cases) occurred in a context of discouragement of specific public policies (75%), especially those regarding [gender](#) and the [protection of activists](#) and the [environment](#). The project to track the Cerrado deforestation, for instance, was disabled due to a lack of funds. The National Public Safety Fund had only 0.01% of its resources to combat violence against women.

The **4** cases of **privacy violation** are related to the [data leakage](#) (50%) of millions of Brazilians and the "spying tools" capable of hacking into the target's computers and cell phones and [monitoring citizens](#). Finally, **3** cases of **coercion** were identified in the period. Episodes of [political pressure were exemplified by the federal government's demand that the Army clarifies the vaccination passport requirement for the troops to return to work in person](#). On the other hand, cases of [coercion of public servants](#) were illustrated by the case of mayors who forced employees to campaign on their social networks.

---

*The violations of the right to health (60%), mainly related to the discouragement of vaccination against covid, and the environmental degradation (40%), primarily due to illegal mining and deforestation, starred among the 10 violations of social and ecological rights cases.*

---

# Reactions

Between January and March 2022, **274 reactions** were recorded in response to the threats of closing the civic space, a decrease of about 30% compared to the previous quarter. In total, the survey recorded **194 institutional responses** from the most diverse actors, such as the Judiciary branch, the Public Prosecutor's Office, and the Legislature branch, as well as **80 acts of resistance** from civil society, political parties, social media, international organizations, academia, the press, and the private sector, among other groups.

Unlike the previous quarter, the number of threats to civic space outnumbered the number of reactions. Although the monitored reactions are not always able to completely stop setbacks, they play a key role in containing, even if just partially, the threats. In certain situations, institutional responses have imposed explicit limits, revoking or suspending legal, infralegal, or extralegal actions that undermine democracy. In addition, the pressure from civil society and other civic actors, and the opposing positions and demands of other state institutions, contributed enormously to the government's retreats and **changes in position** (17 registered during the period).

# Institutional responses

The Judiciary branch (36%), the Public Prosecutor's Office (23.2%), and the Legislative branch (21.65%) were the state entities that most responded to a large number of attacks against the Brazilian civic space. The Supreme Court remained the most active entity, responsible for 52.86% of the **judiciary's** reactions, followed by the Superior Electoral Court (TSE in Portuguese), with about 17%, and the state courts, with 15.71%.

The Supreme Court exercised its role as guardian of the Constitution, supervising the actions of the Executive and Legislative branches at a time when constitutional limits are being tested all the time. Besides acting in defense of its own Justices — some of the favorite victims of recent increasing attacks —, the Court has been reacting to the hate speech of extremist groups. As illustrated by the majority vote that made former congressman Roberto Jefferson a defendant for crimes of homophobia, slander, and incitement to crimes. The Court also stood out in the battle against disinformation, having one of its most incisive measures, the determination to block the Telegram social media in Brazil, become one of the most popular topics around the country.

The Supreme Court supervised and demanded that other institutions fulfilled their functions. It has determined, for instance, that Congress makes public the so-called "secret budget," and the federal government publishes data on the health of indigenous populations. Protecting the environment and indigenous lands were important topics debated, especially triggered by the joint trial of seven actions on environmental issues called "Pauta Verde" (Green Agenda). The Court also reinforced vaccination policies against

[covid-19](#) addressing [children](#). Finally, the non-compliance with judicial decisions was firmly rejected and duly punished, as in [the case of the congressman Daniel Silveira. He had to wear an electronic ankle bracelet for refusing to accomplish a Court order](#). The undue leak of [ongoing investigations](#) and confidential decisions were also stressed and reprehended, as we could see in the [inquiry opened against a Twitter user for having leaked a decision on blocking Telegram](#).

The **Public Prosecutor's Office** (MP in Portuguese) was the author of 23.2% of the institutional responses in the period. It surpassed the Legislative branch, which occupied the second place in previous quarters. It performed a prominent role in combating threats. We highlight the preliminary [investigations to deepen the facts reported in the Parliamentary Inquiry Commission of the Pandemic](#), [the investigations of government spending](#), and the [fight against misinformation](#). Public authorities trusted by the President have had some of their actions reprimanded by the Public Prosecutor's Office. Three notorious cases stand out: the then-[Minister Damares](#) was called to give explanations about the anti-vaccine hotline; the then-president of the Palmares Foundation, [Sérgio Camargo](#), had his power restricted after practicing [moral harassment against employees](#); and the then-[Minister of Education](#), Milton Ribeiro, was accused of [homophobia](#) and became [investigated for allowing pastors to handle the agenda and resources of the Ministry](#). The investigations against the TV host Monark and congressman Kim Kataguirí for [allegedly apologizing Nazism](#) are also noteworthy. Those others against [mayors who forced their employees to campaign on the networks and social media](#) for them are equally notable. In time, the Public Prosecutor's Office [struggled against the pandemic](#) either to [suspend the prescription of the so-called covid kit](#) or to [restrict the circulation of fake news](#) on the subject, [defending the population's vaccination](#) and [protecting pro-vaccine doctors](#) whose data were leaked.

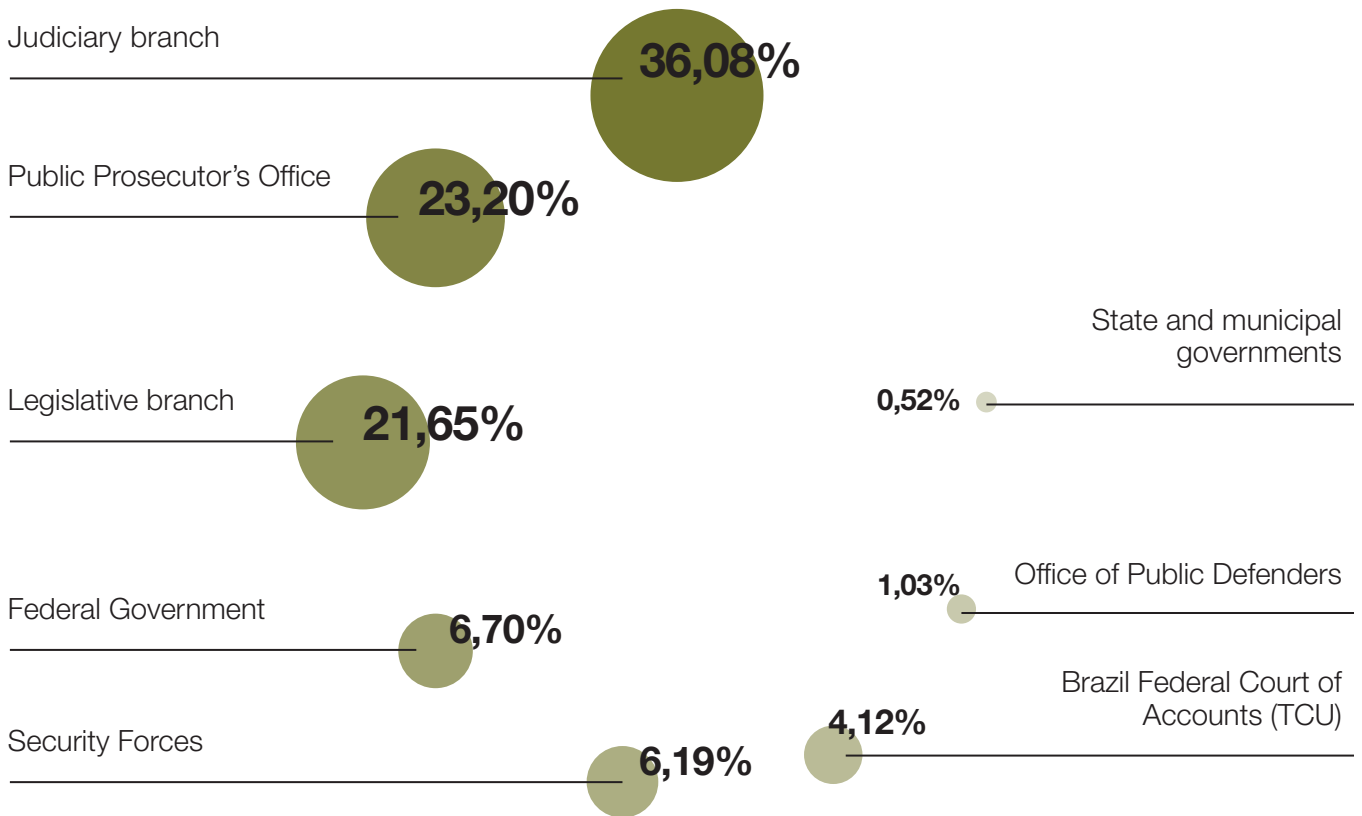
The **Legislative branch** also acted in defense of civic space, responsible for 21.65% of the responses. Parliamentarians [called on the Brazilian Federal Court of Accounts \(TCU in Portuguese\)](#) to [investigate the President's corporate card spending](#) and [invited Mário Frias to explain his expenses during a trip to New York](#). [Sexist audios](#) by congressman Arthur do Val about the women's situation in Ukraine moved the people and motivated [a reaction by the Chamber](#), as well as several [requests for his impeachment](#) and [an investigation request to the UN Women](#). In [reaction to the scandal involving the suspicions of corruption in the MEC](#), [requests for investigating and impeaching Milton Ribeiro](#) were submitted. Parliamentarians sued [the STF, the Attorney General's Office \(PGR in Portuguese\), the Federal Prosecutor's Office, and the TCU](#). Concerning the [pandemic](#), deputies requested the [investigation of the then-Minister Damares for her actions against childhood vaccination](#) and Deputy Bia Kicis for [leaking personal data of doctors who favored vaccinating children](#). At last, it is also noteworthy the Senate's actions [to pressure Attorney General to open an investigation](#) against Bolsonaro due to mismanagement of the pandemic.

---

*The Public Prosecutor's Office (MP in Portuguese) was the author of 23.2% of the institutional responses in the period. (...) It performed a prominent role in combating threats.*

---

**FIGURE 7**– Authors of institutional responses



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

## Resistance

In the first quarter of 2022, civil society led half of the **80 actions to resist** closing civic space. Political parties, in turn, accounted for 17.5% of the initiatives. In third place, social media, such as Instagram and Twitter, were responsible for 8.75% of these acts. International organizations (7.5%), academia (3.75%), the press (3.75%), and the private sector (3.75%) also acted to contain the attacks.

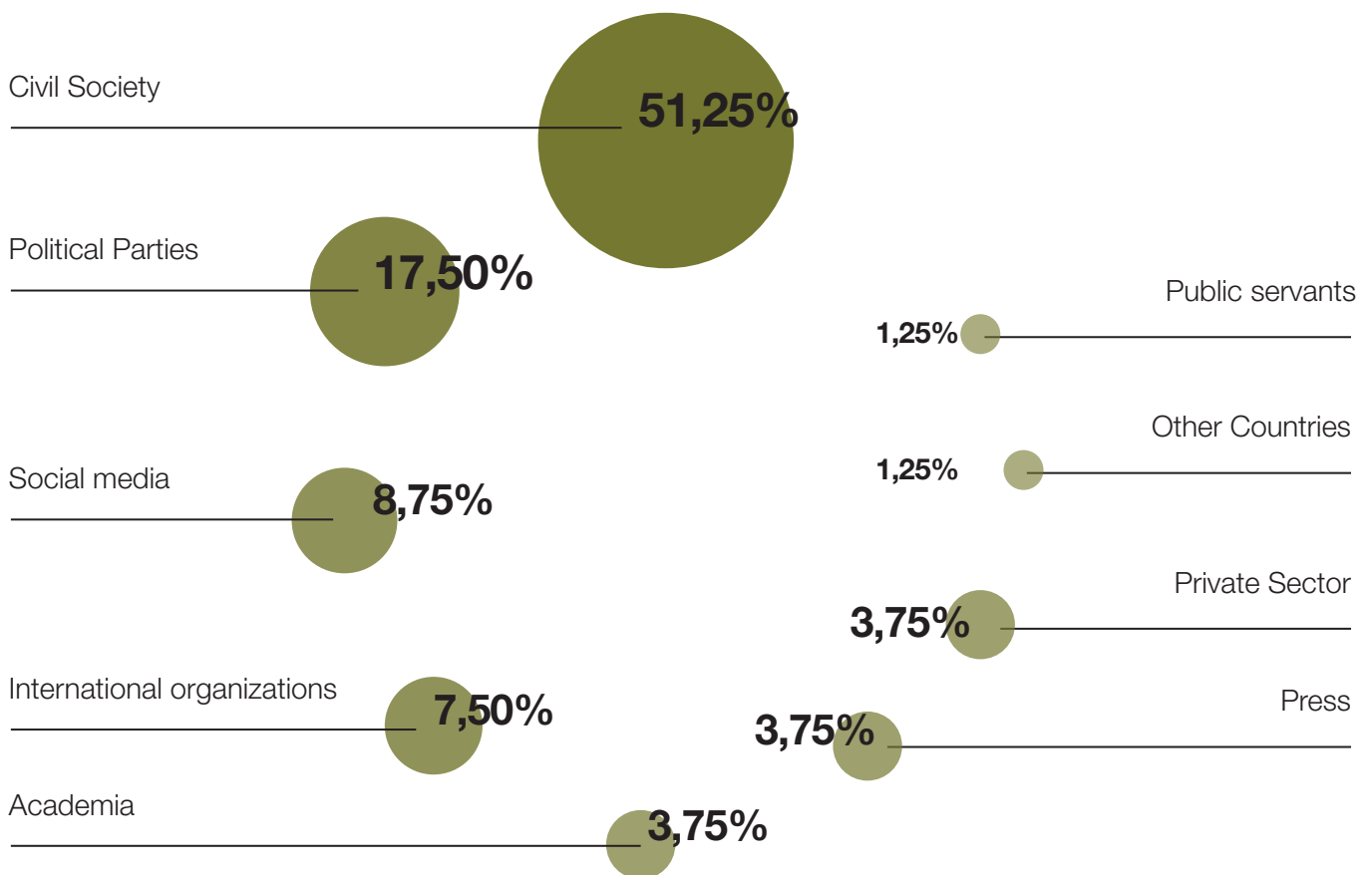
Brazilian civil society also acted in coordination, be it through [professional associations](#) or social organizations, as illustrated by the [entities that took to the UN Human Rights Council](#) a complaint on the dismantling of the torture combat system; and the [NGOs that asked the MP to investigate the monitoring](#)

[of citizens by the federal government](#). More decentralized actions were also identified, i.e., individuals or groups of independent individuals occasionally united in defense of a common goal. There have been [complaints, online and in-person demonstrations, alliances, and representations to trigger institutions](#), as in the case of the teacher who called on the Public Prosecutor's Office to investigate the use of public funds to pay the lawyer of Congressman Arthur do Val. During the period, [artists from all over the country went to the Congress and to the Supreme Court](#) to oppose projects that loosened environmental rules; [three ethnic groups united in an unprecedented way](#) to stop the mining project in indigenous lands; and the [former president of FUNAI returned the indigenous merit medal](#) after Bolsonaro received the same award.

Civil society organizations have mobilized to confront deforestation and protect indigenous lands through mobilizing actions in Brasilia. Among the various initiatives, the protests against bills called “Destruction Package,” the demand for government transparency through the movement “Transparency Now,” the repudiation of censorship, and the need to combat fake news are highlighted. Joint notes and open letters were the primary means used, complemented by the cost of legal defense in abusive lawsuits in cases about freedom of expression and the elaboration of studies and rankings to denounce the democratic erosion and the attacks against Brazilian institutions.

The political parties, mainly the PT, PSOL, and Rede, have acted in favor of the vaccination against the covid-19; they have presented complaints to Brazilian institutions and international organizations and brought legal actions against cases of abuse of power and censorship. Social media, in turn, acted mainly in restricting offensive posts and disinformation content, especially concerning covid-19 and the electoral system.

**FIGURE 8** – Authors of Resistance Actions



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



# Changes of Position

The changes in the positioning of state entities help in the evaluation of the impact that social and institutional pressure has had on decision-making. Several retreats about actions harmful to the civic space, especially from the federal government, have been motivated by negative signals from society and the other government powers. Concerning the management of the pandemic, allies of the president began to advocate the acceleration of vaccination of children to reduce the erosion of the government's image, which conducted an open campaign against childhood vaccination. The [committee to confront the covid aimed at indigenous peoples](#) was created by Bolsonaro after the STF determined the adoption of measures to protect indigenous communities. In addition, the government backtracked the prescription requirement for child vaccination, and then-minister Damares said she would no longer collect anti-vaccine complaints through Dial 100. After the scandals involving excessive public spending on travel by government members, Mario Frias and four advisors canceled trips to Moscow and Budapest, and Damares her trip to Israel. In addition, after the negative repercussions of the court decision that banned artistic manifestations contrary to the government at the Lollapalooza festival, the Liberal Party (PL in Portuguese), the president's party, withdrew the lawsuit that resulted in the TSE decision at Bolsonaro's request. Jair Bolsonaro about the free distribution of sanitary pads is also noteworthy. After being pressured by feminist movements, he signed a decree with a similar provision to the project he had previously vetoed.

---

*Several retreats about actions harmful to the civic space, especially from the federal government, have been motivated by negative signals from society and the other government powers.*

---

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

<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Examples of tactics / actions</b>
<b>I. Cooptation</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>II. Coercion</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>III. Fake News and disinformation campaigns</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>IV. Censorship (overt or veiled)</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. Pressure and threats to private companies to stop advertising on non-aligned 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.
<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.	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.
<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 Ziblat 2018). The inappropriate use of institutional prerogatives in the interest of political groups and/or private or non-republican interests.	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.
<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).	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.

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

Access: [igarape.org.br/en/issues/civic-space/](https://igarape.org.br/en/issues/civic-space/)



# IGARAPÉ INSTITUTE

a think and do tank

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

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

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

We have partnerships and projects in over 20 countries.

## **Igarapé Institute**

Rio de Janeiro - RJ - Brasil  
Tel/Fax: +55 (21) 3496-2114  
contato@igarape.org.br

[facebook.com/institutoigarape](https://www.facebook.com/institutoigarape)

[twitter.com/igarape\\_org](https://twitter.com/igarape_org)

[instagram.com/igarape\\_org/](https://www.instagram.com/igarape_org/)

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