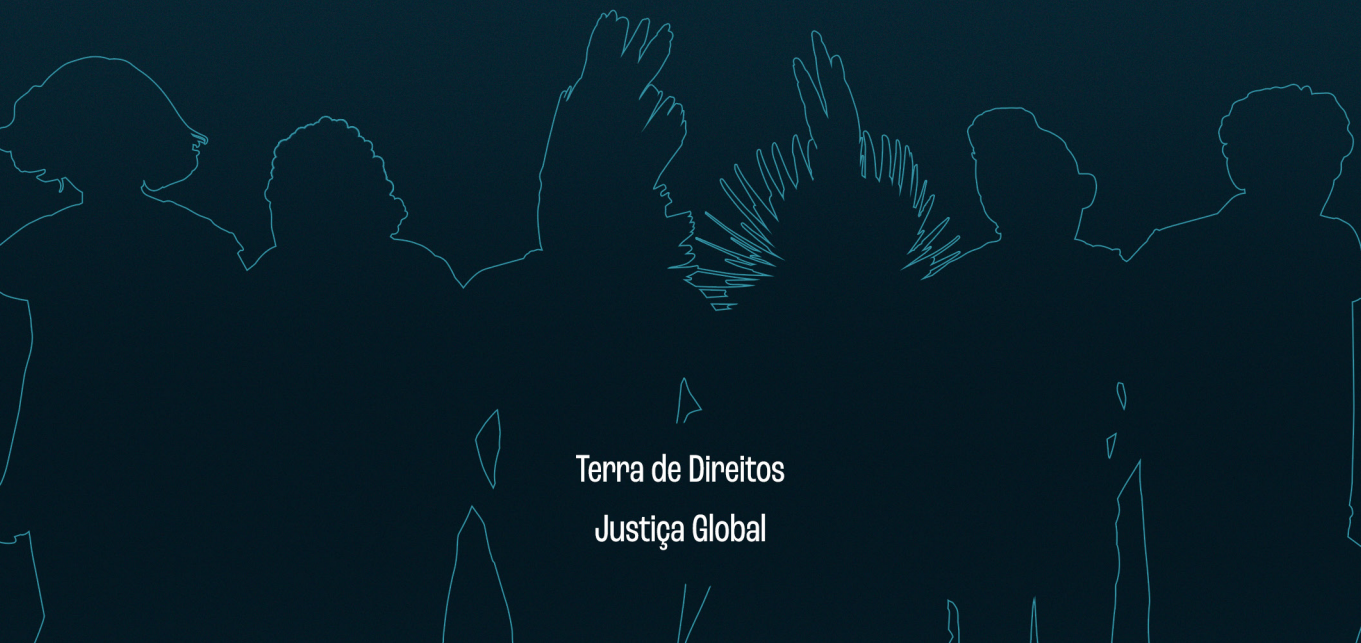




ON THE FRONTLINE

Violence against human rights
defenders in Brazil

2019 - 2022



Terra de Direitos
Justiça Global

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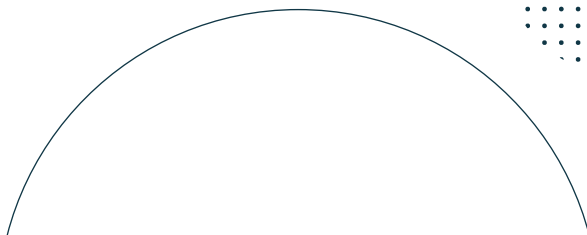
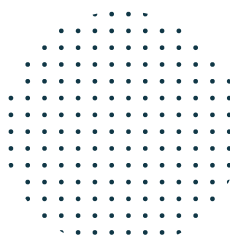
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INTRODUCTION

Human rights defenders have played a crucial – and remarkably challenging – role over the last period. They were responsible for denouncing and trying to bring to a halt a series of setbacks caused by the Brazilian government, which went from an attitude of connivance regarding the violation of rights to taking on a hostile stance, becoming an agent in the attacks on human rights and human rights defenders.

The election of Jair Bolsonaro (PL) resulted in a period of utmost deterioration and abandonment of government structures that used to guarantee rights and intensified a hostile environment of violence and hatred aimed primarily at historically marginalized groups.

Between 2019 and 2022, Bolsonaro's government adopted a policy that contributed to the strengthening of far-right groups aligned with fascism. His government chose indigenous people, *quilombolas*, women, LGBTQIA+ people, workers – especially those landless –, and human rights defenders in general as its enemies.

For four years, the country endured the closure of institutional areas for social participation and the lack of government transparency; a policy based

on disinformation; attacks on dissenting voices; and the criminalization of the fight for human rights and of those who opposed the ongoing policy. During this period, we dealt with a global threat posed by the Covid-19 pandemic, which aggravated the situation of human rights defenders. In this context, faced with the constant threat of the virus and the attacks by the government, human rights defenders had to reorganize the ways and strategies of action in order to survive one of the worst periods in national history.

The year 2023 started and brought with it the task of political, social, and economic reconstruction, but also the task of advancing our struggle and the fulfillment of rights in our country, which has historically been a territory marked by inequalities, structural violence, and racism.

Understanding the past is vital to articulate projects for the future, and it is for this reason that Terra de Direitos and Justiça Global – social organizations that work defending and promoting human rights – produced the survey “*On the frontline: violence against human rights defenders in Brazil (2019-2022)*”.

This report exposes the threats, violations, and persecution faced by human

rights defenders during the period of Jair Bolsonaro's government and serves as an acknowledgment of the fundamental part they play in the transformation of society.

This issue is part of an effort to provide an update on the previous research collaboration between both organizations. The report is part of the "*On the Frontline*" series which has already brought three surveys on the situation of human rights defenders, covering the period between 1997 and 2012.¹

This survey is one of many initiatives promoted by national – and even international – organizations to investigate violence against those who defend human rights. Such initiatives, in general, base their analyses on specific groups or emblematic cases. This material is, therefore, part of an unprecedented effort to provide a broad analysis, with a numerical survey carried out by Brazilian organizations on the context of violence against human rights defenders in the country. A broad look at the forms of violence against those who defend rights can contribute to the construction of new proposals for confronting the violation of rights and to the suppression of these challenges.

Therefore, the survey offers us an analysis of the data on violence perpetrated in the last four years against

human rights defenders. The cases described here do not represent the totality of this kind of occurrence. Still, they are a significant sample of the scenario of violence that surrounds the defense of rights.

The challenges ahead are massive. Structural changes are needed to consolidate policies and legislation that guarantee rights and strengthen democratic processes.

The data reinforce, among other things, the need to strengthen the Program for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, Communicators, and Environmentalists (PPDDH in Portuguese), by recovery of social participation in the construction of this important public policy, which will play a vital role in the construction of the national plan for the protection of human rights defenders.

The survey shows the urgent need for the government to act on the roots of inequality, which is yet another factor intensifying the conflicts that victimize human rights defenders. Access to rights that guarantee racial and gender justice is imperative, and so is the fulfillment of rights to land, territory, housing, health, and education if we are to guarantee an atmosphere of less violence and more rights for those who have always defended it.

1. **On the Frontline:** Human Rights Defenders in Brazil, 1997-2001 / Justiça Global, 2002.

On the Frontline: Human Rights Defenders in Brazil, 2002-2005 / Justiça Global and Terra de Direitos, 2005. Available at: <https://terradedireitos.org.br/uploads/arquivos/relatoriodefensores2005.pdf>.

On the Frontline: Human Rights Defenders in Brazil, 2006-2012 / Justiça Global, 2013. Available at: <http://www.global.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Na-Linha-de-Frente-III.pdf>.



WHO ARE THE HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS?

The organizations that conducted this study had the recognition of the importance of the role played by human rights defenders in strengthening democracy and building a culture of rights as a cornerstone for this work.

The United Nations (UN) defines human rights defenders as “individuals, legal entities, groups, organizations or social movements that act or have the purpose of promoting or protecting human rights”. This is the definition adopted by the federal government within the scope of the Program for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, which in 2019 extended its concept to include environmentalists and communicators, whose work of disseminating information aims to promote and defend human rights. However, this new definition stipulates as a condition that

defenders must be under risk, threat, or vulnerability.

The understanding of Terra de Direitos and Justiça Global in the development of their work and in conducting this study is based on the concept presented by the UN, but goes further: they both understand that human rights defenders can be individuals, groups, peoples, social movements or any collectivity that act against all violations of rights and in defense of human rights – whether individual or collective rights (political, social, economic, cultural, and environmental) –, even if they are not recognized and have not taken on a specific legal form or conceptual definition.

Both organizations acknowledge that human rights defenders politically resist a development model based on the exploitation of both human and environmental resources and which maintains racism and patriarchy as its substance.

It is noteworthy that the essence of some groups is the defense of human rights, which ensures the maintenance of their cultures or even the survival of these collectives. Such examples include indigenous peoples, *quilombolas*, traditional peoples and communities that, by fighting for the recognition of their territories, guarantee several other rights.

RESEARCHING VIOLENCE AGAINST HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

This study was carried out based on a survey and analysis of cases of violence registered against human rights defenders. The cases took place between 2019 and 2022:

Evident, blatant violations were mapped, according to parameters used in previous research by both organizations, such as:



Analysis of motivation: The survey analyzed cases of violence against people and groups that defend human rights that occurred because of the work performed, as a way to paralyze, prevent or constrain their fight for rights. In this way, we dismissed data such as deaths caused by diseases or by Covid, robberies resulting in death, femicides, and episodes of racism, sexism, and homophobia that were not committed as a way of delegitimizing people due to their work defending human rights;



Recognition by the representative movement: Although in some cases the police investigation attributes the motivation of the crime to external factors not linked to the struggle for human rights, we considered those cases in which representative movements or entities challenged the conclusion of the investigation and claimed that the reason for the crime was the victim's work in the defense of rights;



Victim identification: When a human rights defender died, we only considered those cases in which it was possible to identify the victim by name. In other situations that involved other types of violence, we considered cases where victims were not named, for security reasons, provided that the case description presented sufficient details to assess the victim's work and the context of the violence, so as to allow us to evaluate the relevance of the case or the possibility of repetition in the survey.

In the cases in which there was doubt as to whether the victim was a human rights defender and whether the violence would characterize the type assessed in this survey, we decided it collegially. This study, however, is not able to cover the totality of violations that impact those defending human rights in Brazil. We decided, for example, not to include incidents

that, due to potential underreporting, could result in false impressions, such as those common to almost all traditional territories or lands occupied by urban and rural movements and that, despite their high incidence, are difficult to identify, as they are not usually reported.

Thus, the following cases were not registered:

- a) cases of deforestation or areas overlapping indigenous, *quilombola*, or traditional territories, except in cases where the attacks resulted in confrontation with the populations of these territories or in the destruction of physical structures of the community, by deliberate action of the invaders.
- b) cases of social movements being delegitimized, such as, for example, through fake news or online attacks. We only considered cases in which individuals were targeted, as we understand that some social movements are frequently the victims of this kind of practice, which is difficult to account for.
- c) cases of rural or urban evictions, even in settlements led by organized social movements, except in cases that characterized some type of violence registered in this study.

Although not included in the survey, these situations will be better analyzed in the section *Analyzing some aspects of the context of violence against human rights defenders in Brazil*, on page 65 of this publication.

The guidelines for including the cases were made based on the understanding of the importance of producing a Brazilian data analysis on the context of human rights defenders, and, at the same time, given the challenges faced due to the notoriously high rate of underreporting. Nonetheless, we understand that these data gaps themselves represent a piece of information and this remains a challenge for future analyses.

With this understanding and based on the mentioned criteria, the cases that form the basis of the data in this report were collected in different ways:



through news search engines in online search tools — such as Google, Bing, and DuckDuckGo — and social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, using terms variations in searches for the type or verb of the action, the instrument of violence or by the region where the cases were registered.



active search for news or information on websites of representative entities and social movements that are the potential targets of this type of violence.



inclusion of cases of violence against human rights defenders that are monitored by Terra de Direitos and Justiça Global, even if the cases are not publicized.



active search for cases monitored by networks and spaces for the participation of civil society, such as the National Human Rights Council and the Brazilian Committee of Human Rights Defenders;



cross-referencing data from previous studies carried out by Justiça Global and Terra de Direitos, such as the survey “Political and Electoral Violence in Brazil”.



analysis of reports and studies on violence against defenders relative to the period investigated by this survey. We used studies that were produced by the Brazilian Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, *Travesti*, Transgender, and Intersex Association (ABGLT), Pastoral Commission on Land (CPT), Missionary Council for Indigenous Peoples (CIMI), Front Line Defenders, Global Witness, and UN Women. It is important to highlight that analyzing these reports, we only considered cases in which it was identified that the victim was a human rights defender, and that the violence was perpetrated because of it.

The information collected was organized in a spreadsheet and verified by a smaller group dedicated to conciliating the data gathered from the target period. The spreadsheet had 28 variables (columns) and contained, among others, demographic information on the defender, the place where the violence was recorded, the type of violence,

the context of the crime, perpetrating agent, and complaints made.

Each row registered a victim (which could be an individual or a group); a case of violence that had multiple identifiable victims was registered in multiple rows but identified as a single case.

For instance:

Case 1. IL Arariboia 01.11.2019	Paulo Paulino Guajajara
	Laércio Guajajara
Case 2. IL Cana Brava 07.12.2019	Raimundo Benício Guajajara
	Firmino Prexede Guajajara
	Nelsi Olímpio Guajajara
	Nico Alfredo Guajajara

To make it easier, we agreed that the cases against a single victim² would be called individual violence, and the other cases, those against two or more individuals, would be called collective violence. We must remember that not every case of collective violence is necessarily against a group, but an attack on a group can generate an individual violence (as in the cases of attacks directed at a movement or against a community, which affect one person).

Likewise, people who suffered multiple violations over the period, in different episodes of violence, are shown in more

than one row in the survey, each one for a specific violence.

To ensure that the violations were not repeated, we held a posterior verification, checking the name, dates, and place to rule out the possibility of homonyms.

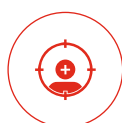
After validating the final worksheet, data were extracted and processed with the SPSS software. The 28 columns were then broken down into categorical variables for statistical analysis. To better analyze the types of violence committed against human rights defenders, they were categorized into eight types:



Threat: Encompasses any form of direct, indirect, explicit or implicit threat to the lives of people who defend human rights.



Physical assault: Acts of physical violence against an individual or a group of human rights defenders, with the intention of attacking or repressing the defender's actions.



Murder: Actions that result in the death of human rights defenders.



Attack: Actions that constitute an attack on the lives of individuals or an attack on property or the collectivity² that puts the safety of people and groups at risk.

2. In cases of individual violence, the victims can either be a single individual or a collective subject (when it is not possible to specify the victims of the attack).



Criminalization: Measures that use institutional means to attribute a crime to a person or group that defends human rights. Here, episodes involving the arrest of defenders, or judicial and administrative proceedings were considered.



Delegitimization: All forms of stigmatization or constraint of a person or collectivity; includes episodes of slander, insult, defamation, and detraction, which happened as a way to delegitimize the work of this person or collectivity while defending rights.



Sexual harassment: Actions of a sexual nature with the aim of constraining and destabilizing human rights defenders.



Suicide: Cases in which human rights defenders voluntarily took their lives as a result of a process of both mental and physical stress and illness due to the context of rights violations.

This study also seeks to identify the main perpetrating agents, sorting them into **private** parties (companies, loggers, farm owners, and militias, mainly) and **public** entities (police, state agencies and administration, actors of the justice system, etc.).

For this survey, episodes of violence registered in the territories, in an urban, ru-

ral, or online context were considered. Regarding the online context, we chose to select those cases in which there was some form of institutional complaint or that were publicized by news outlets, as we understood how difficult it would be to identify all forms of online attacks and delegitimization — which are frequent, for example, in social media comments — towards defenders.

VIOLENCE AGAINST THOSE DEFENDING RIGHTS IN NUMBERS

Timeline of violence

1,171 cases of violence against human rights defenders were registered between 2019 and 2022.

169
murders in
the period

355
violations

2019

2020

285
violations







302
violations

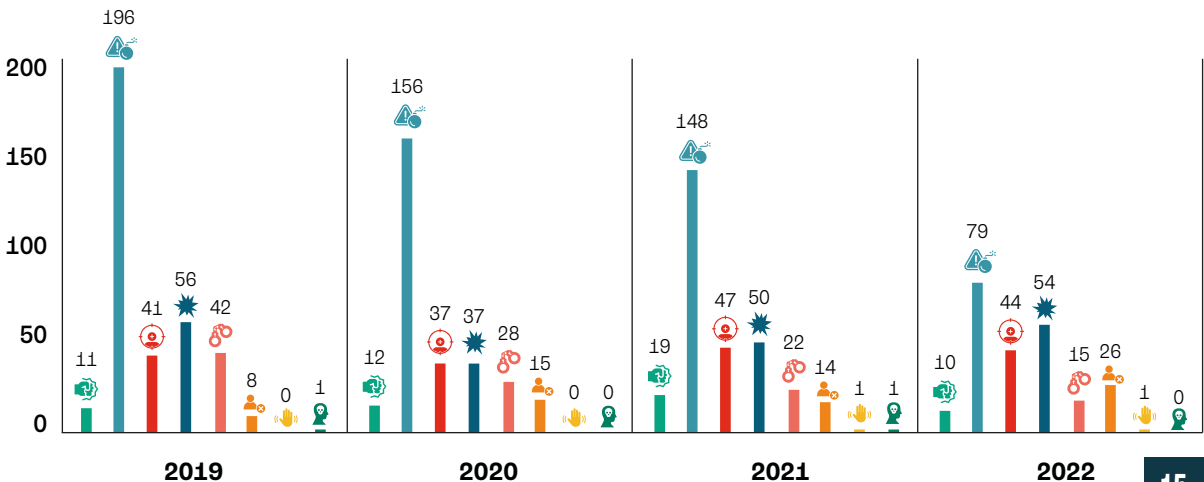
2021

2022

229
violations

Types of violations recorded each year

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
|  | Physical assault |  | Criminalization (via institutions) |
|  | Threat |  | Delegitimization (slander, etc.) |
|  | Murder |  | Sexual harassment |
|  | Attack |  | Suicide |



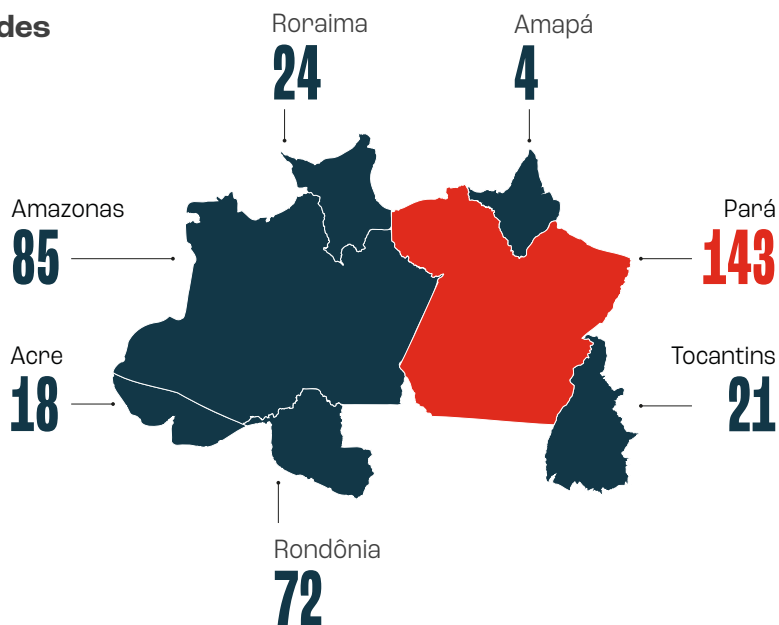
REGION

All 27 states of the federation are represented in the survey with at least one episode of violence registered in the period.

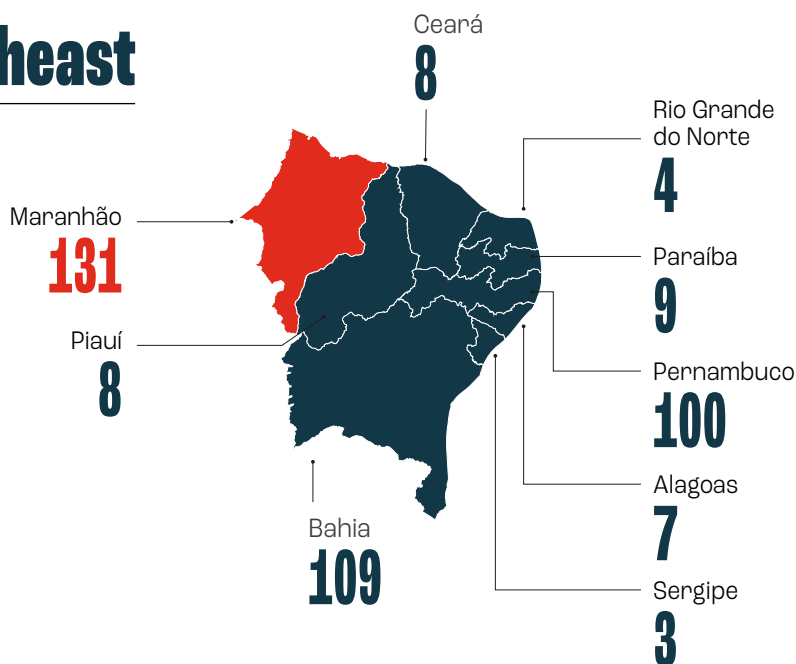
The state with the highest number of registered violations against human rights defenders was Pará, where 143 violations took place, followed by Maranhão.

Number of episodes
by state

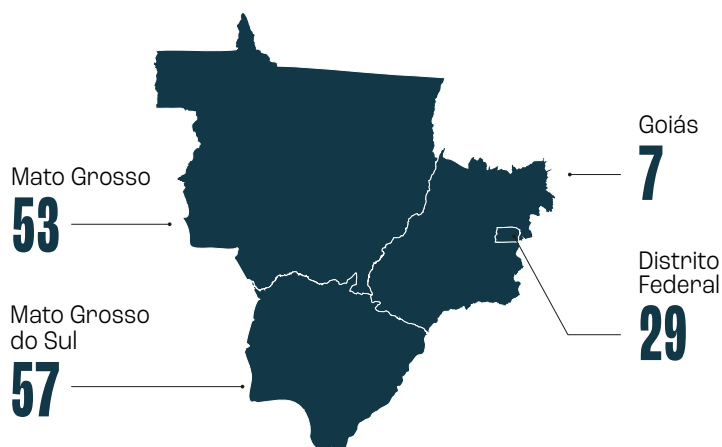
North



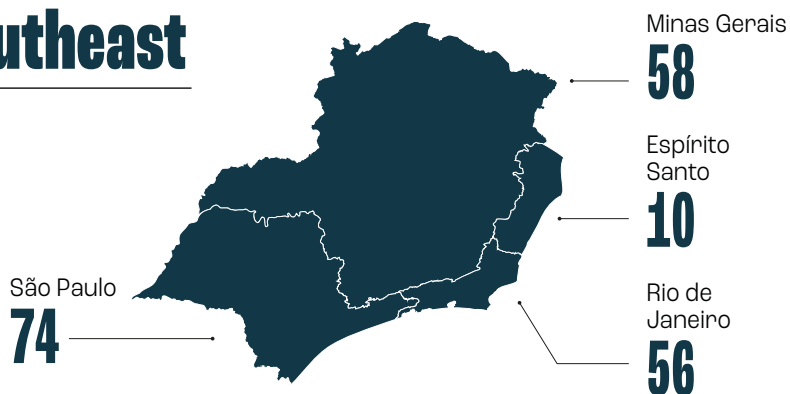
Northeast



Central-West



Southeast

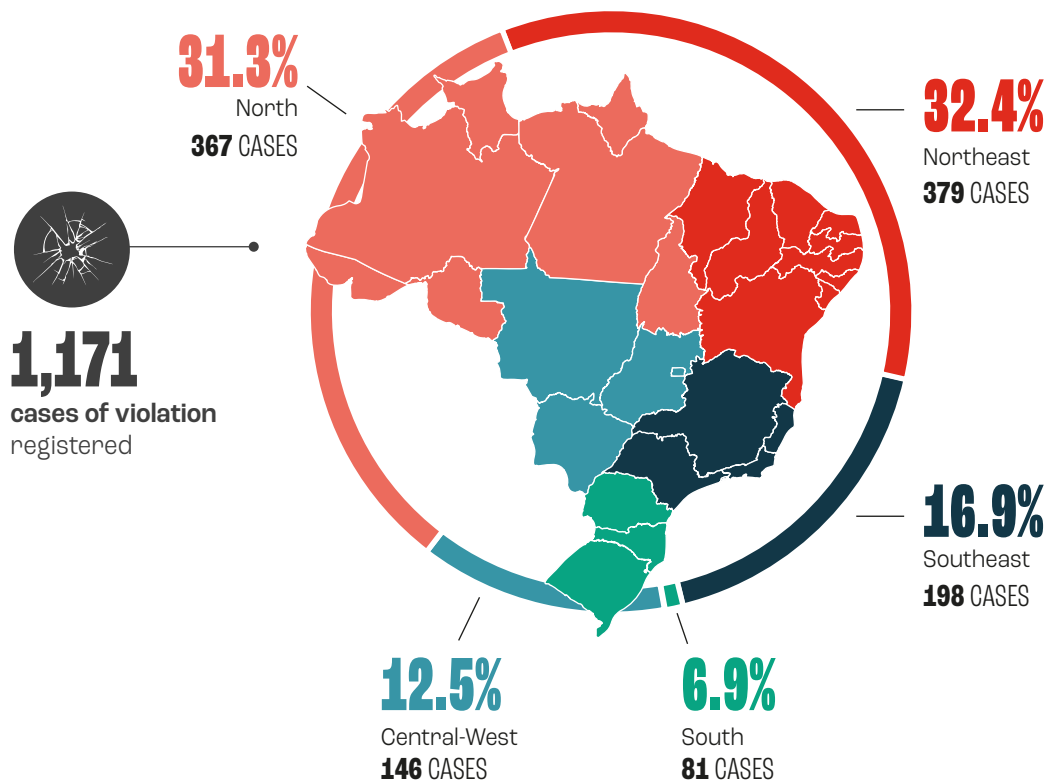


South



Among the five Brazilian regions, the Northeast and North regions concentrate the highest number of violations against human rights defenders.

Violations by region



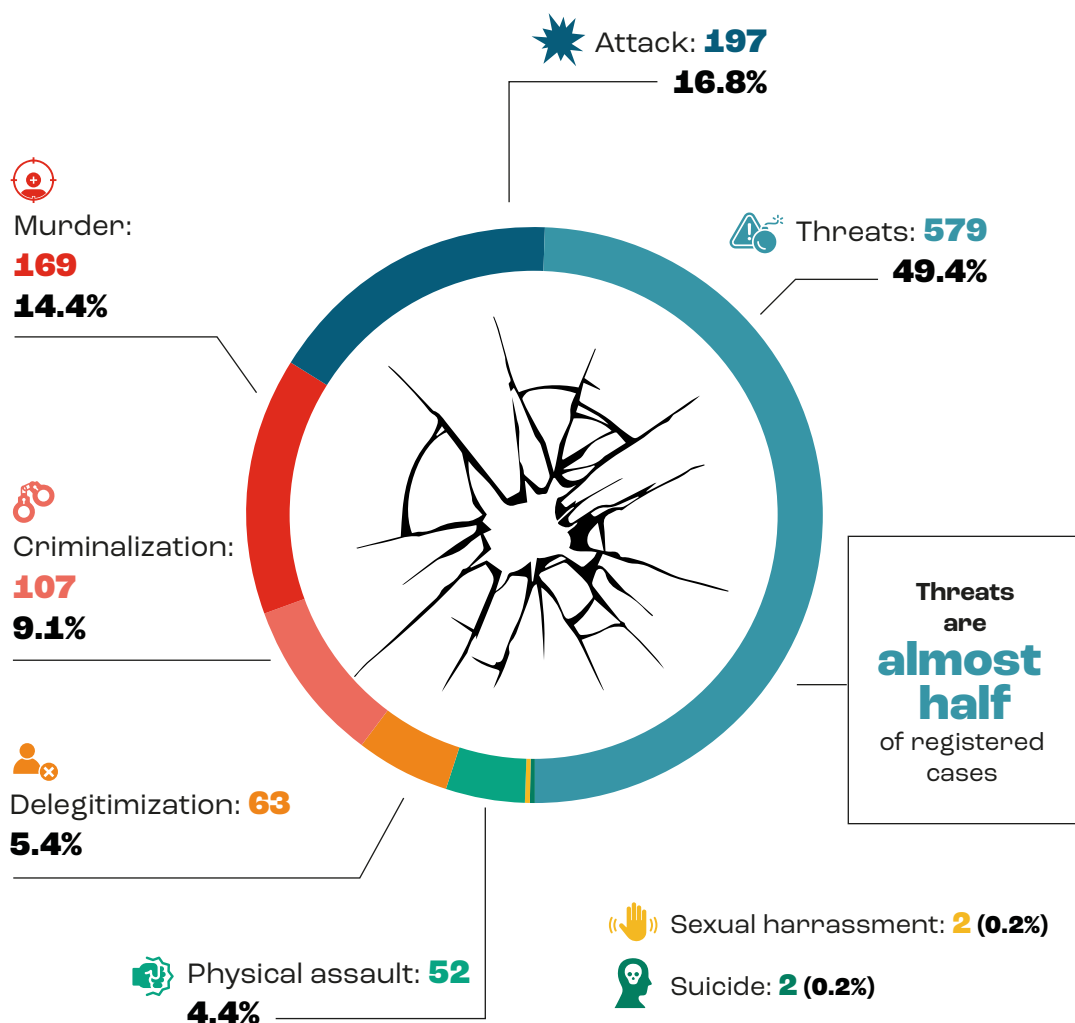
The regions defined by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) do not necessarily reflect the topography of violence against defenders in the country. The spatialization of violence against those who fight for rights can be better understood, for example, if we look at the states that make up the Legal Amazon, which represents 59% of the national territory, distributed throughout nine federative units. In addition to the seven states in the North region, Maranhão — despite being part of the Northeast region — is one of the states that encompasses part of the surface of the Amazon biome, as well as Mato Grosso, in the Central-West region.

The **Legal Amazon** is the home to 56% of the indigenous population in Brazil, according to IPEA data, and 13.7% of the country's entire population, according to IBGE data.³

Almost half (47%) of the cases of violence against human rights defenders were registered in the Legal Amazon.

3. Preliminary data on the population was calculated based on the results of the 2022 Population Census up to December 25, 2022. Available at: https://ftp.ibge.gov.br/Censos/Censo_Demografico_2022/Previa_da_Populacao/POP2022_Brasil_e_UFs.pdf.

TYPES OF VIOLENCE



Murders, sexual harassment, and suicide only involve individuals, with no cases in which the victim was a collective. Threats, criminalization, and slander also occur more frequently against persons, individually.

Attacks are the most frequent violence committed against a group.



MURDERS

Murders represented between 12 and 20% of the total reported violations each year. Despite 2021 being the year with the highest number of murders, 2022 was the year in which murders had the highest proportion, in relation to other types of violence.

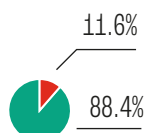
2019

Murders

41



Other
violations
314



TOTAL: 355 CASES

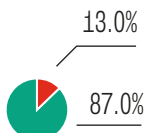
2020

Murders

37



Other
violations
248



TOTAL: 285 CASES

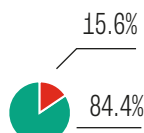
2021

Murders

47



Other
violations
255



TOTAL: 302 CASES

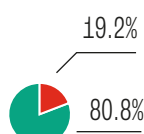
2022

Murders

44



Other
violations
185



TOTAL: 229 CASES



169

murders in the period
(2019-2022)



An average of
3 defenders
were murdered
every month



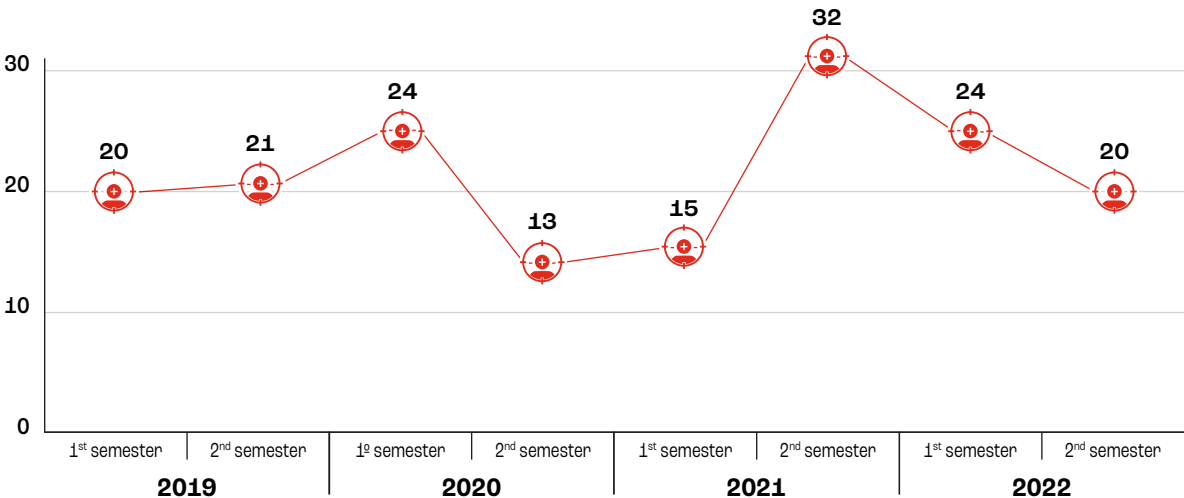
140

murdered defenders
fought for the **right to land,**
territory, and an
ecologically balanced
environment

Almost a third of the murders of defenders were registered between the second half of 2021 and the first half of 2022.

The second half of 2020 was the period with the lowest number of murders, with 13 cases. Even so, the data is still staggering, given the health crisis that the country was facing at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Murder cases per semester

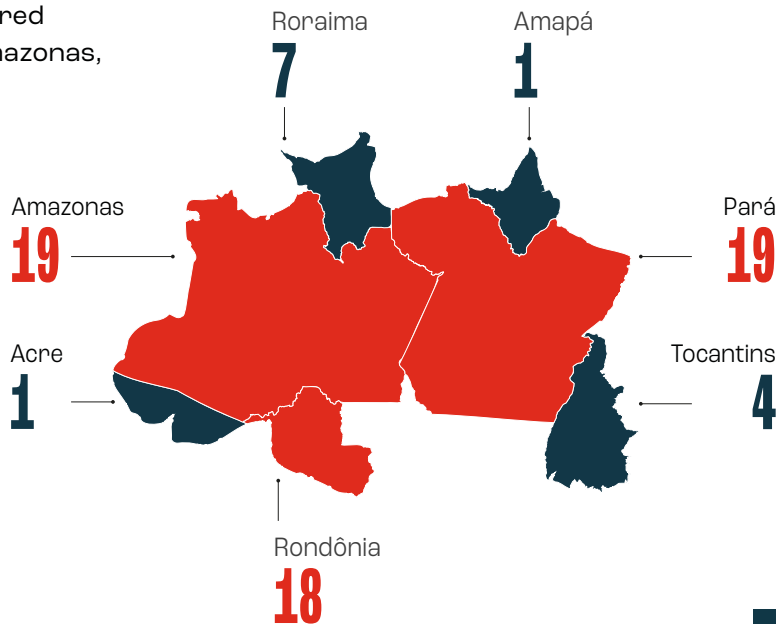


Murders by state

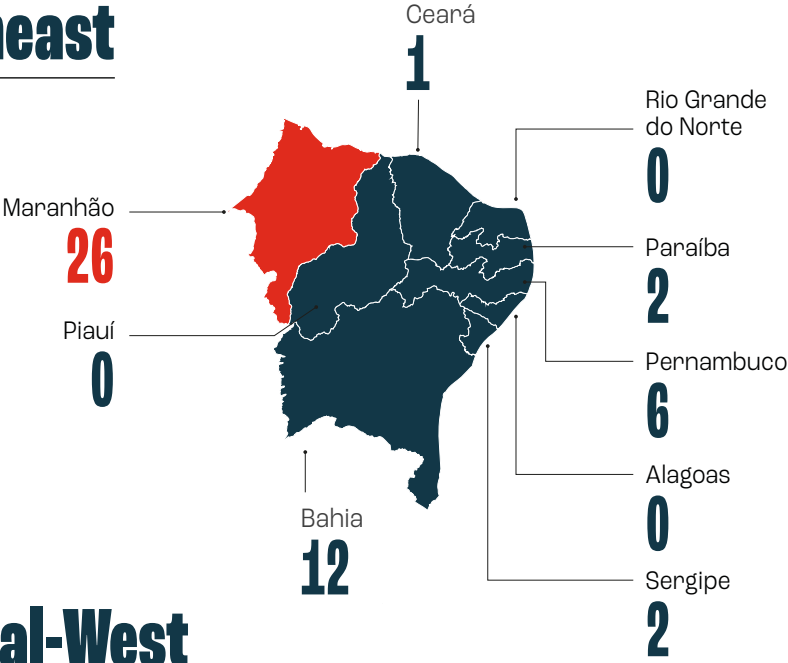
Maranhão is the state with the highest number of murdered defenders, followed by Amazonas, Pará, and Rondônia.

Number of murders by state

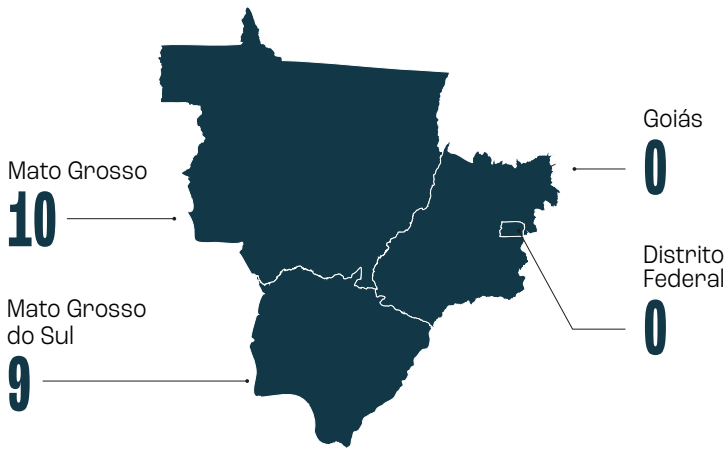
North



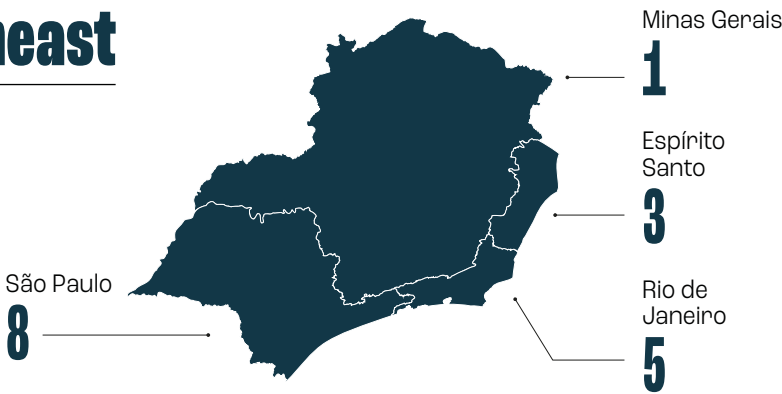
Northeast



Central-West



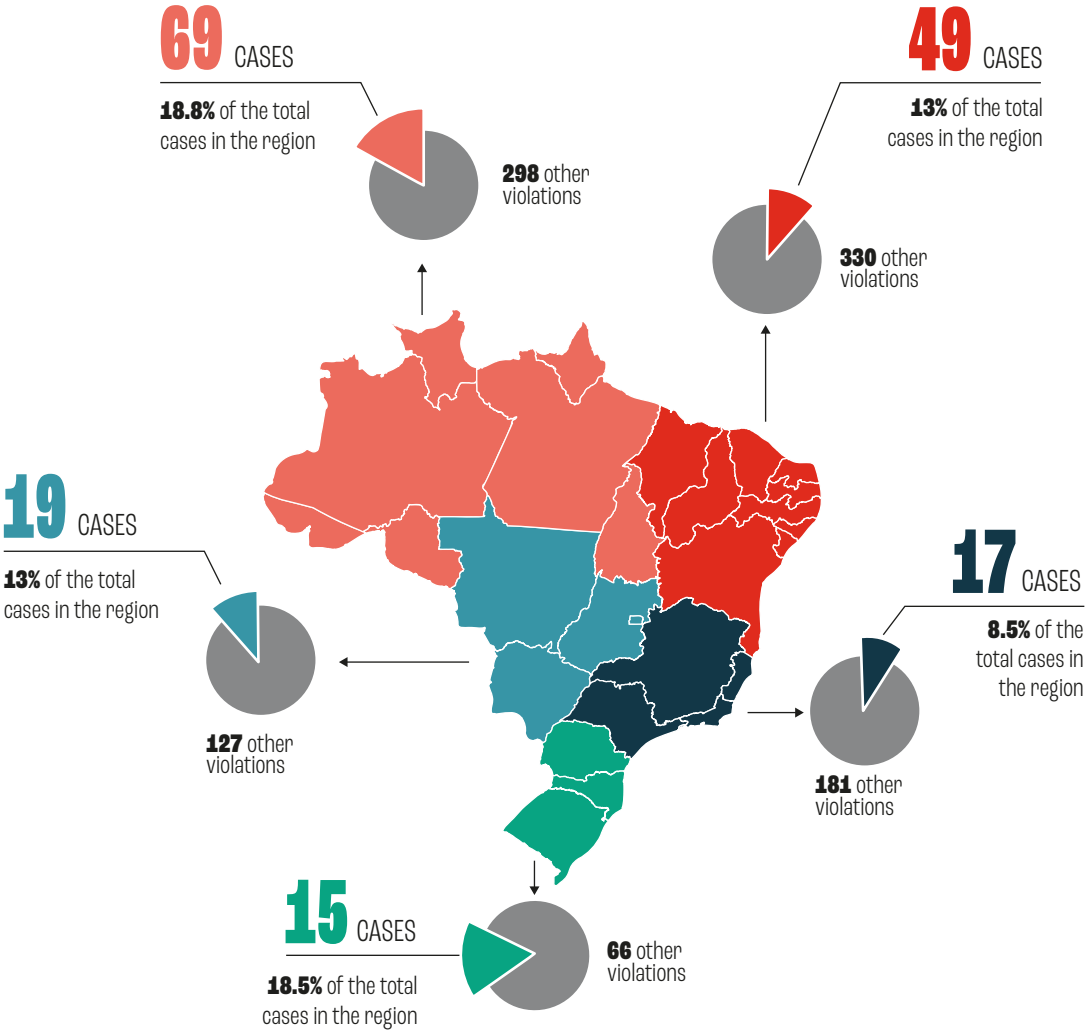
Southeast



South



Murders by region



The North region is the one with the highest number of murders, which can be explained by the high rate of land conflicts in the region (grabbing of public lands, invasion of indigenous lands, deforestation, illegal mining).

Although the total number of violations in the South region is lower than in other regions, it is noteworthy that a high percentage of registered cases are murders (18.5%). Possibly the underreporting of cases in other categories accounts for the high rate of murders in the South, as this type of serious violence is more easily monitored and registered.

Some places recorded murders of defenders on more than one occasion, such as the Settlement Tiago dos Santos. Located in the area of NorBrasil and Gleba Arco-Íris farms, in Nova Mutum Paraná, in the state of Porto Velho (RO), the landless rural workers' camp recorded the murder of five peasant men and women and human rights defenders between 2019 and 2022.

Characteristics of murdered defenders

In **105 cases (9% of the total violations)**, the color or race variable did not apply, as these were collective violation cases.



The **average age** of murdered defenders is

41.87

years, slightly above the average of **39.27** for the other violations.










The victim's

color or race

was identifiable, in **89** of the **169** registered murder cases.



Within this population, **indigenous people** are the main victims of this type of violence followed by **black people** (black and brown). White victims are the minority.

<p>Indigenous peoples</p> <p>Murders 50  29.6% of murders</p> <p>Other violations 296</p>	<p>29.5% violations against indigenous peoples</p> <p>  70.5% outros </p> <p>TOTAL: 346 CASES</p>
<p>Black</p> <p>Murders 30  17.8% of murders</p> <p>Other violations 123</p>	<p>13% violations against blacks</p> <p>  87% outros </p> <p>TOTAL: 153 CASES</p>
<p>White</p> <p>Murders 9  5.3% of murders</p> <p>Other violations 88</p>	<p>8.3% violations against whites</p> <p>  91.7% outros </p> <p>TOTAL: 97 CASES</p>
<p>Yellow</p> <p>Murders 0</p> <p>Other violations 2</p>	<p>0.2% violations against yellows</p> <p>  99.8% outros </p> <p>TOTAL: 2 CASES</p>

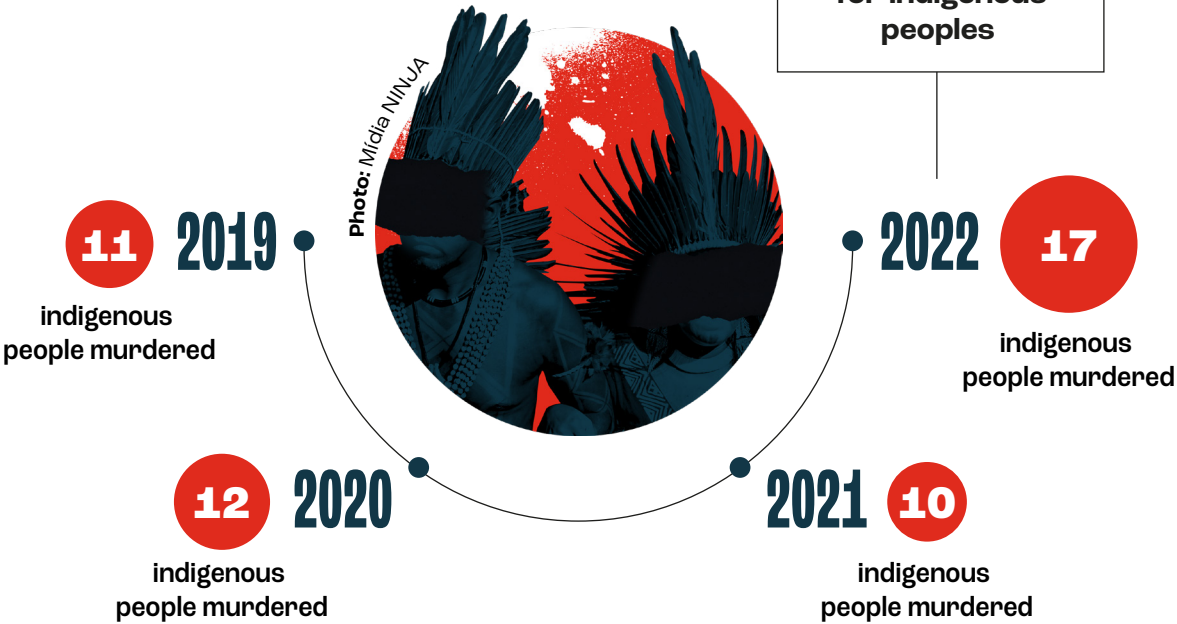
NOT IDENTIFIED: In addition to the non-applicable cases (9%), in **80 murders** (47.3% of murders) and **388 violations** of other types (38.7% of violations) color or race was not identified, adding up to 468 cases with unidentified color or race (40% in total).

The average of murders of indigenous and black people is higher than the average of other violations suffered by these population groups. Among the groups, white people are more represented in other violations than in murders.

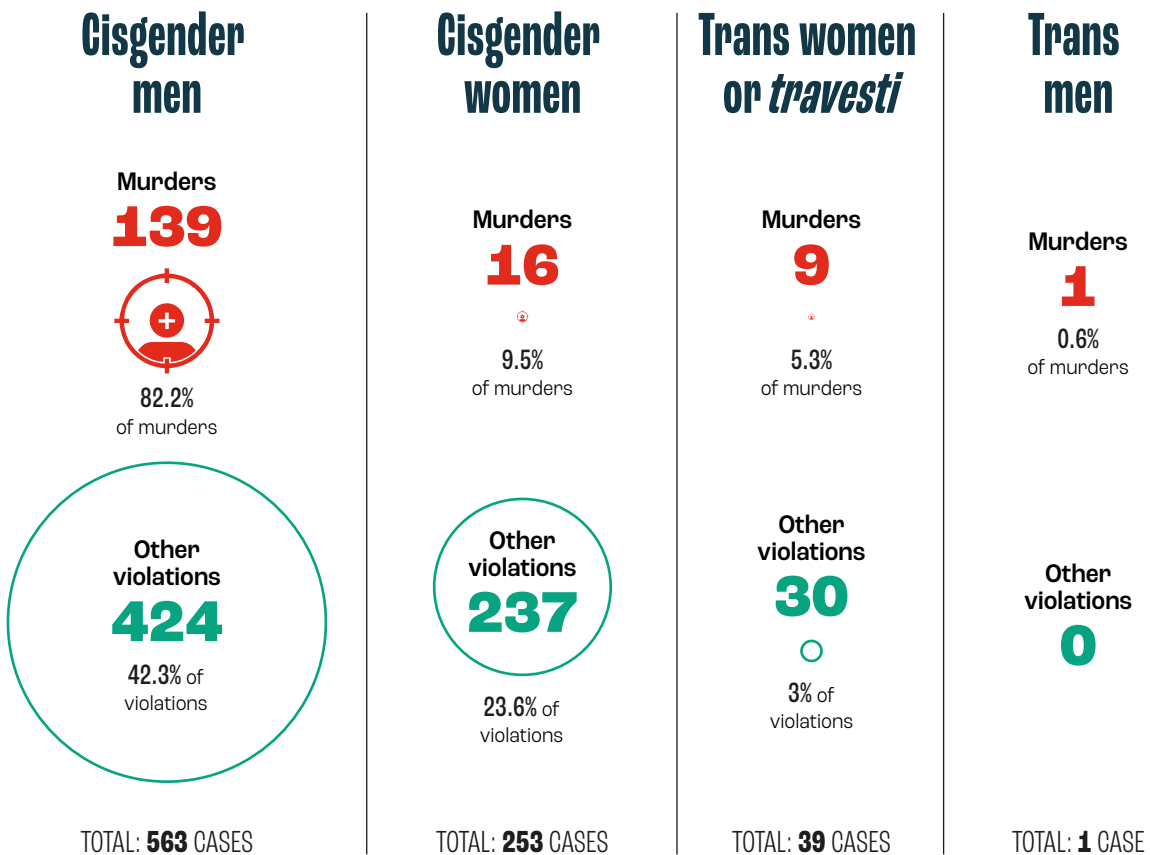
The higher incidence of lethal violence against indigenous and black people results from the structural racism in Brazilian society and, unfortunately, follows a national pattern. Research carried out by the Brazilian Forum of

Public Security indicates that 77.6% of intentional murder victims in 2021 were black. Added to this national pattern is the fact that protection policies for human rights defenders do not take the specificities of race and gender into account. This assessment, made by Justiça Global and Terra de Direitos, was published in the report [“Começo do Fim - O pior momento do Programa de Proteção aos Defensores de Direitos Humanos, Comunicadores e Ambientalistas”](#), released in 2021.

**2022, the
deadliest
year**
for indigenous
peoples



Out of every five murders, four were of human rights defenders.



NOT IDENTIFIED: In **4 murders** (2.4% of murders) and 102 violations of other types (10.2% of violations) the gender was not identified, adding up to **106 cases** with unidentified gender (9% in total). There are **209 cases** of other types of violations in which the gender category does not apply (17.8% of the total).

The proportion of men among those murdered is greater than the proportion of men who have suffered other violations. The same happens among transsexual women and *travestis**, but the opposite tendency is registered among cisgender women. In addition to registering the victim's gender identity, this survey also sought to register, whenever possible, the sexual orientation.

Among murdered LGBTQIA+ rights defenders, we were able to identify situations of violence motivated by the victim's connection to the LGBTQIA+ movement, but there were also those killed due to other conflicts, such as Fernando Araújo dos Santos, a gay rural worker who was murdered in 2021.

*Travesti is the preferred self-identification term for many transgender women in Brazil. In some contexts, the word might be associated with prostitution, and some may regard it as a transphobic slur. Nonetheless, those who chose to be called this way do so to honour their struggle and the lives of all travestis murdered over the years.



Fernando Araújo dos Santos



Date of murder:

January 26, 2021



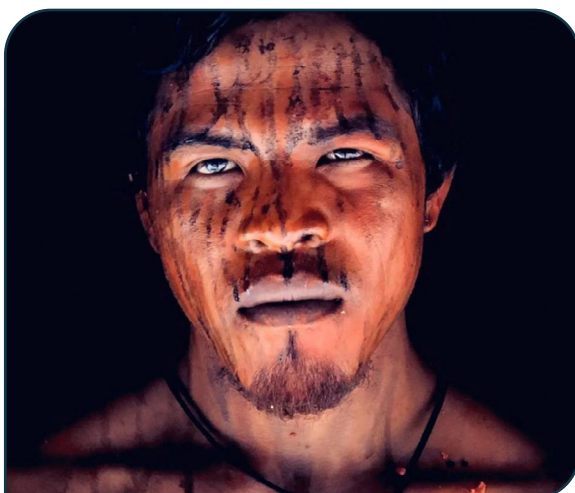
Location: Pau D'arco – Pará

Peasant Fernando Araújo dos Santos was killed with a shot in the back of his head, at home, while preparing to move from home (scheduled for the following day). He was moving because of a series of death threats against him. Fernando — a gay landless rural worker — was a survivor of the Pau D'arco massacre and a key witness in the criminal investigation into the case. During the massacre, in 2017, military and civil police officers murdered ten rural workers who occupied Santa Lúcia Farm, in the city of Pau D'arco, southeast Pará. In the massacre, Fernando saw his boyfriend killed. The police officers responsible for the massacre are still working and are awaiting trial in freedom. Fernando was placed in the Witness Protection Program but decided to return to his home at Santa Lúcia farm, where he was murdered.

Another important aspect in the intersectionality between color/race, gender identity, and sexual orientation is the murder of LGBTQIA+ indigenous people, such as the murders of Cleijomar Rodrigues Vasques, Timi Vilhalva, and Gabriel Rodrigues, all from the Guarani Kaiowá ethnic group.

Previous threats

Often, a threat or attack precedes the murder of human rights defenders. This finding raises concerns about the future of these people, especially those who were the victims of more than one episode of violence recorded in this survey. Six of the murdered defenders in the survey were victims of other forms of violence in our research, such as the indigenous man Paulo Paulino Guajajara and *quilombolas* Celino Fernandes and Wanderson de Jesus Rodrigues.



Paulo Paulino Guajajara



Date of murder:

1º de novembro de 2019



Location: TI Arariboia,
Bom Jesus das Selvas –
Maranhão

A guardian of the forest, Paulo Paulino Guajajara was murdered in the Arariboia Indigenous Land, in Maranhão, by armed men who invaded the territory. Paulo was with a friend, indigenous man Laércio Guajajara, who was also shot three times but managed to escape. Also known as Big Bad Wolf, Paulo Paulino had received death threats a few months before.

The Guardians of the Forest is a group made up of indigenous people responsible for guarding the territory. This form of organization was one of the ways indigenous people found to protect the land from attacks by invaders, mainly loggers and ranchers.

A month after Paulo Paulino's murder, two other Guajajara leaders were murdered in Maranhão.

Celino Fernandes and Wanderson de Jesus Rodrigues Fernandes



Date of murder::

5 de janeiro de 2020



Location:

Arari – Maranhão

Celino Fernandes and his son Wanderson, both human rights defenders, were murdered in early 2020 in front of their family by gunmen who invaded the family home during the early hours of the morning. The hooded killers wore Civil Police vests. Peasant, quilombola leaders from Comunidade do Cedro, in Arari (MA), Celino and Wanderson had been denouncing the agrarian conflict between the community and land grabbers, who fenced off the public land for raising buffaloes.

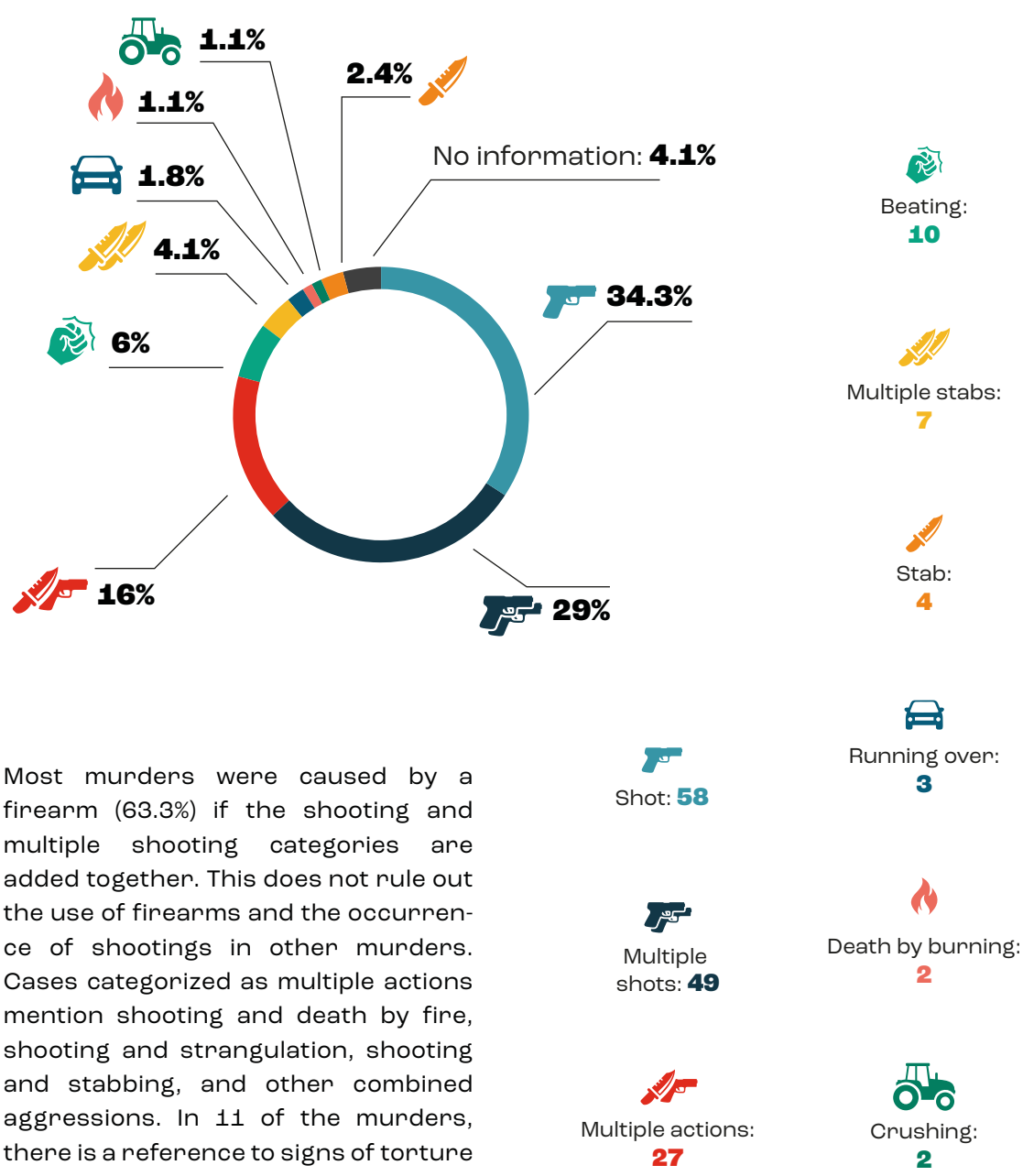
At the beginning of the previous year, father and son had been arrested along with three other people – including one of Celino's daughters – in a criminalization process for the removal of illegally installed fences.

Photo: CPT



Characteristics of the murders

Still on the murders, we were able to identify the characteristics of the attacks. The graph below represents the types and frequencies of different occurrences of attacks on the lives of defenders of the survey:

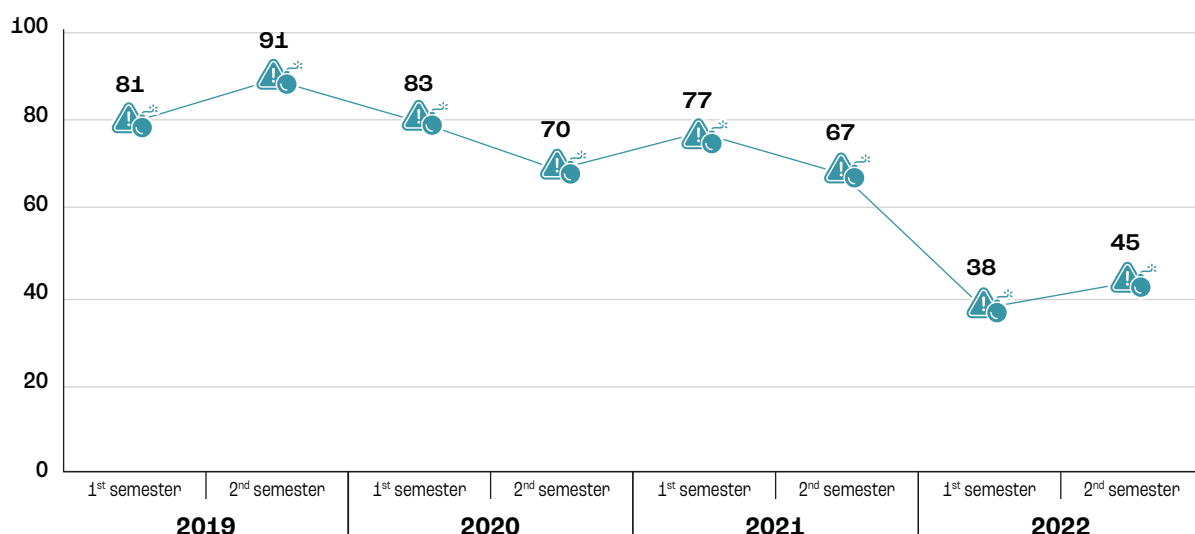


Most murders were caused by a firearm (63.3%) if the shooting and multiple shooting categories are added together. This does not rule out the use of firearms and the occurrence of shootings in other murders. Cases categorized as multiple actions mention shooting and death by fire, shooting and strangulation, shooting and stabbing, and other combined aggressions. In 11 of the murders, there is a reference to signs of torture on the defender's body.

THREATS

A total of 579 threats were registered in the survey — which represents almost half of the cases between 2019 and 2022. It is the most frequent type of violence in the study.

Of the total number in the survey, 2022 recorded the lowest number of threats. There is an upward trend in threats against defenders for the second half of the year, as shown in the graph:



*The graph shows only the cases in which it was possible to specify the date of the violence. In some situations, only the year was identifiable and therefore they are not represented here.

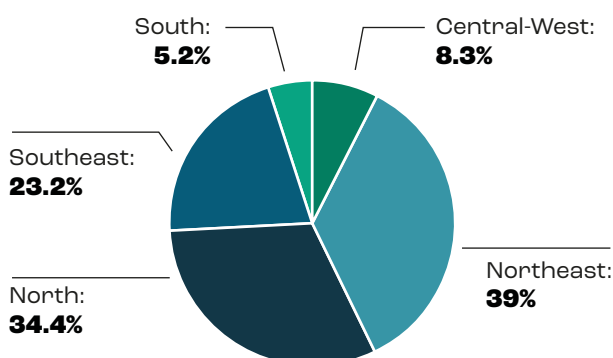
Although in total numbers it presents fewer cases, the Southeast is the region where threats are most frequent, followed by the Northeast region (6.6 points and 6.5 points of average difference, respectively). In the North region, the frequency of threats also exceeds the frequency of violations registered in the region but the magnitude is lower.

Cases of threat by region

579
Registered cases of threats

X

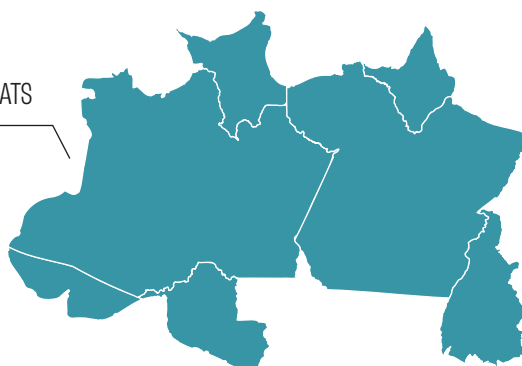
592
Cases of other types of violation



North

199 THREATS

34.4% of the total cases of threats in Brazil



170

cases of other types of violation

28.7% of the total records at the national level



Northeast

226 THREATS

39% of the total cases of threats in Brazil



154

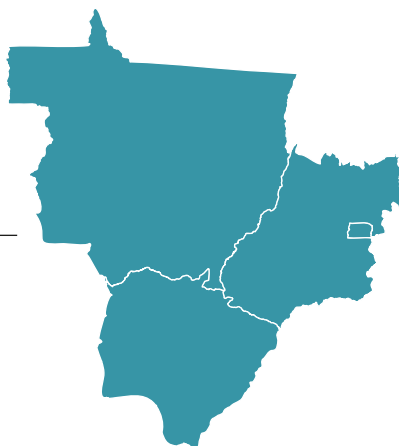
cases of other types of violation

26% of the total records at the national level

Central-West

48 THREATS

8.3% of the total cases of threats in Brazil



98

cases of other types of violation

16.6% of the total records at the national level

South



cases of other types of violation

20.1% of the total records at the national level



51

cases of other
types of violation

8.6% of the total records at the national level

Even so, all states in the North region have an average of threats above the average of total violations, except for Tocantins and Roraima. In the states of the Central-West and South regions, the average of threats against defenders is below the total average of violations registered in the other regions.



Of the **1,171 cases** of violence recorded, **579 of them** are **threats** corresponding to **49.44%** of the total.

The victim's
color or race
could not be identified
in **272 of the**
579 registered
cases of threat.



32

in **32 of the 579**
threats registered,
the race/color category
does not apply.

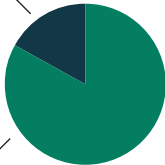
Threats and victims



Threats

Other rights
97 (16.8%)

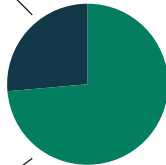
Land, territory,
and the environment
482 (83.2%)



● Other violations

Other rights
155 (26.2%)

Land, territory,
and the environment
437 (73.8%)



The average of threatened people involved in the struggle for land, territory, and the environment is higher than the average of the total cases of defenders of this struggle in the entire survey.

The opposite is true for people fighting for other rights, such as education, racial equality, gender equality, and freedom of expression. They are more often victims of violations other than threats.

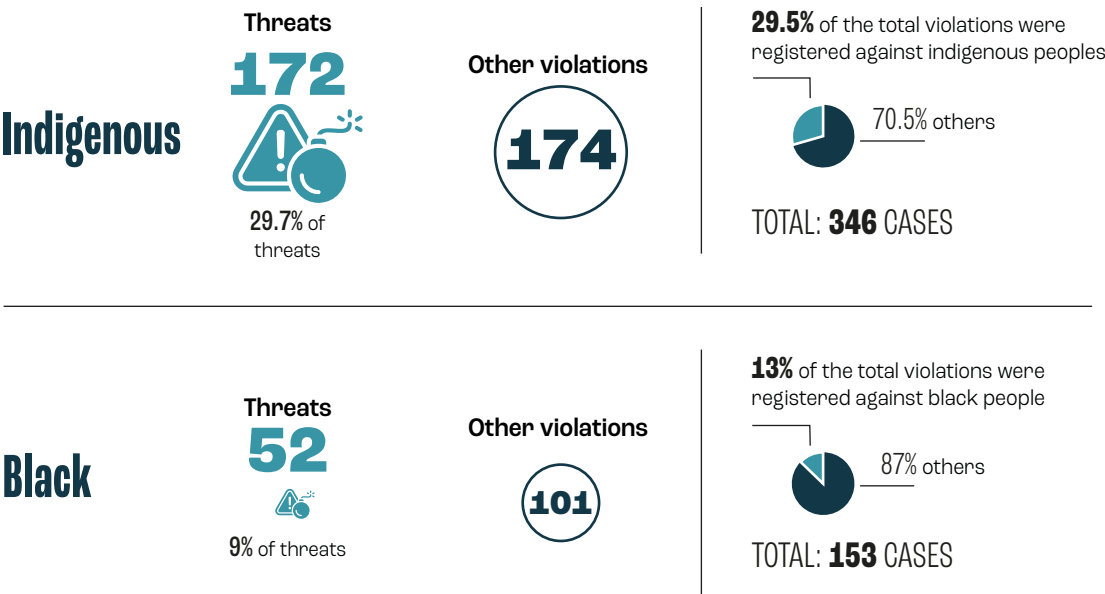
There are more cases of threats against individuals than episodes in which a collective is threatened. In 103 of the rows, or in about a fifth of the total of the survey, the threats were aimed at groups. These rows show the names of communities, peoples of an indigenous land, families, or leaders who, as a collective

subject, suffered violence.

Almost all cases of threats to groups concern those groups fighting for land, territory, and the environment. The locus of most of these threats is traditionally occupied territories. Only two of the episodes of threats to groups do not involve the struggle for such rights. The first case is about threats to a media outlet and its members in Rio de Janeiro and the second, an organization defending LGBTQIA+ rights in Natal.

Of the individual (not groups) victims of threats, most are indigenous, followed by black people. However, proportionally, indigenous and white people suffer more threats than other types of violence.

Color/race of victims of threats

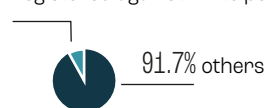


White

Threats
49
8.5% of threats

Other violations
48

8.3% of the total violations were registered against white people



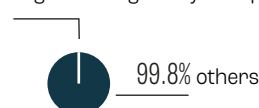
TOTAL: **97 CASES**

Yellow

Threats
2
0.3% of threats

Other violations
0

0.2% of the total violations were registered against yellow people



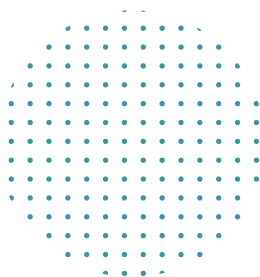
TOTAL: **2 CASES**

NOT IDENTIFIED: In 272 cases of threats (47% of cases) and 196 violations of other types (33.1% of violations) the color or race of the victims was not identified, adding up to 468 cases with unidentified color or race (40% in total). In 32 cases of threats (5.5%) and 73 cases of other types of violations (12.3%), the color or race category does not apply, adding up to 105 cases (9%).

It is worth noting that this result should be read with caution, given the difficulty in identifying ethnic-racial classification information for a significant number of people (approximately one-third of the total database). Black people (black and brown) are more represented in other violations than in threats. This does not mean that they are not threatened, but it reflects the research limitation in capturing ethnic-racial data for people categorized here as “unidentified.”

Regarding the names that are shown in two or more rows of the survey, we could notice that most of the violations they suffered were threats. A quarter of the defenders who were victims of more than one episode of violence are parliamentarians: there were **17 names, all victims of political and electoral violence.**⁴ Repeated victims mean different threats, made in person or online. The group of defenders of rights who were elected or candidates for a position in the Executive and Legislative branches has been the victim of threats and delegitimization.

4. We will further analyze cases of political and electoral violence involving human rights defenders in an article on page 75.



Benny Briolly



Location: Niterói - RJ

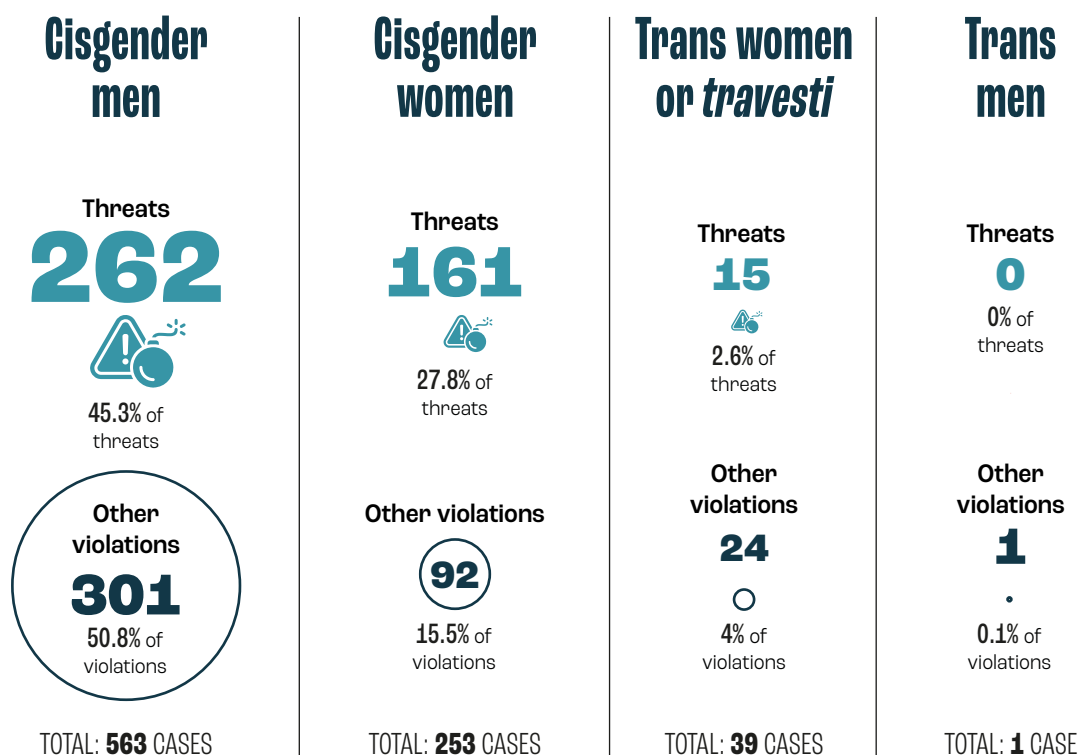
Benny Briolly received threats even before she was elected councilor at Niterói, in 2019. The first travesti to hold the position in the municipality and the state of Rio de Janeiro, Benny held the position of parliamentary advisor when the threats began, which intensified after her election. She has been active in the fight for the rights of the LGBTQIA+ population and the black population; she has already been the victim of a series of episodes of racism and transphobia. She was chased while in her car and received a series of death threats — one, sent by email, showed Benny's exact address, and demanded that she resign from her position, or they would kill her in her house.

The threats caused the councilor to temporarily leave the country in May 2021. In 2022, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (CIDH) recommended that Brazil adopt precautionary measures to protect the councilor. Benny is currently included in the Program to Protect Human Rights Defenders.

If we look at the gender distribution among threats, we realize that, although cisgender men are numerically the largest group of victims of this type of violence, they are less represented among threats than in other violations.

On the other hand, cisgender women were more recurrently threatened than victims of other mapped violations. This trend is opposite to that found among murders.

Of the total number of episodes for which gender identity information is available, fifteen of them had transgender individuals and *travestis* as victims. A single female defender who fights for LGBTQIA+ rights endured seven different violations, suffering several types of attacks (multiple threats and delegitimization) on different dates.



NOT IDENTIFI: Gender was not identified in 50 cases of threats (8.6% of cases) and 56 violations of other types (9.4% of violations), adding up to 106 cases with unidentified gender (9% in total). In 91 cases of threats (15.7%) and in 118 cases of other types of violations (20.1%) the gender category does not apply, adding up to 209 cases (17.8% of the total).

Cases in which the same defender received threats and suffered assassination attempts are also of concern, as was the case in two situations in this survey⁵ involving small farmers and leaders in their respective communities, in the North, in Anapu (PA) and the Northeast, in Alto Alegre do Maranhão (MA). In fact, although threats are the most frequent forms of attacks against human rights defenders, they

are rarely investigated. There are many difficulties even in filing police reports regarding threats. The crime of threat, provided for in Article 147 of the Brazilian Penal Code, is considered to have less offensive potential and does not receive attention from police authorities. However, threats are frequently recurrent and, in many cases, after years without being investigated, they result in homicides.

5. The names of living persons who are at high risk of violence will not be cited, except for those high-profile cases.

There are many examples:



Missionary Dorothy Stang, who died on February 12, 2005, in the state of Pará, had been threatened for years. She had denounced the threats both nationally and internationally. A week before being killed, she participated in the launch event of the National Program for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, which was also attended by the then-deputy governor of Pará and the minister of human rights at the time.



Manoel Mattos, a social lawyer and human rights defender, as executed on January 24, 2009, in the state of Paraíba. He received recurrent threats and even had precautionary measures granted by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.



Maria do Espírito Santo and José Claudio, environmentalists, were executed on May 24, 2001, in Pará. Both received death threats.



More recently, the murder of indigenous expert **Bruno Pereira** and journalist **Dom Phillips**, in June 2022, in the State of Amazonas, also repeats this history. Bruno had received threats before being killed.

In summary, impunity has been recurrent when it comes to threats. It is urgent to establish protective measures that allow such vulnerable defenders to survive and keep their struggle.

Threats that are not investigated or whose perpetrators have not been held accountable – as well as threats that are not registered for fear of persecution by police agents – can be fatal for human rights defenders.



Bruno Pereira e Dom Phillips



Date of murder:

June 5, 2022



Location: Atalaia do Norte – Amazonas

Indigenous expert Bruno Pereira and British journalist Dom Phillips were doing investigative work in the Indigenous Land of Vale do Javari, in the state of Amazonas, when they were last seen on June 5th. After passing through the São Rafael Community, they traveled on a boat towards Atalaia do Norte, but did not reach their destination (it was a two-hour trip). The bodies of the two men were found ten days later, on the banks of the Itaquai River.

The investigation found that the defenders were murdered because of the work done by Bruno in the fight against illegal fishing in indigenous lands in the region. Three people were arrested for the crime.

Bruno Pereira was on leave from his position as an official at the National Foundation for Indigenous Peoples (Funai) and worked for Univaja, an organization representing the peoples of the Vale do Javari Indigenous Land. He was the general coordinator of Isolated and Recently Contacted Indigenous Peoples at Funai and was considered one of the leading specialists in the area. Due to his work, he received a series of death threats. He was dismissed from office in 2019, during Jair Bolsonaro's government, without explanation. Because of the difficulties he was facing in developing his work at Funai, he took a leave of absence from the agency to work directly with Univaja.

Bruno was killed with three shots and Dom Phillips, with one. Dom had been in Brazil since 2007 and produced several news reports for the British newspaper The Guardian and was drafting a book about the preservation of the forest. Bruno and Dom's trip to Vale do Javari was even part of the research to produce the material.

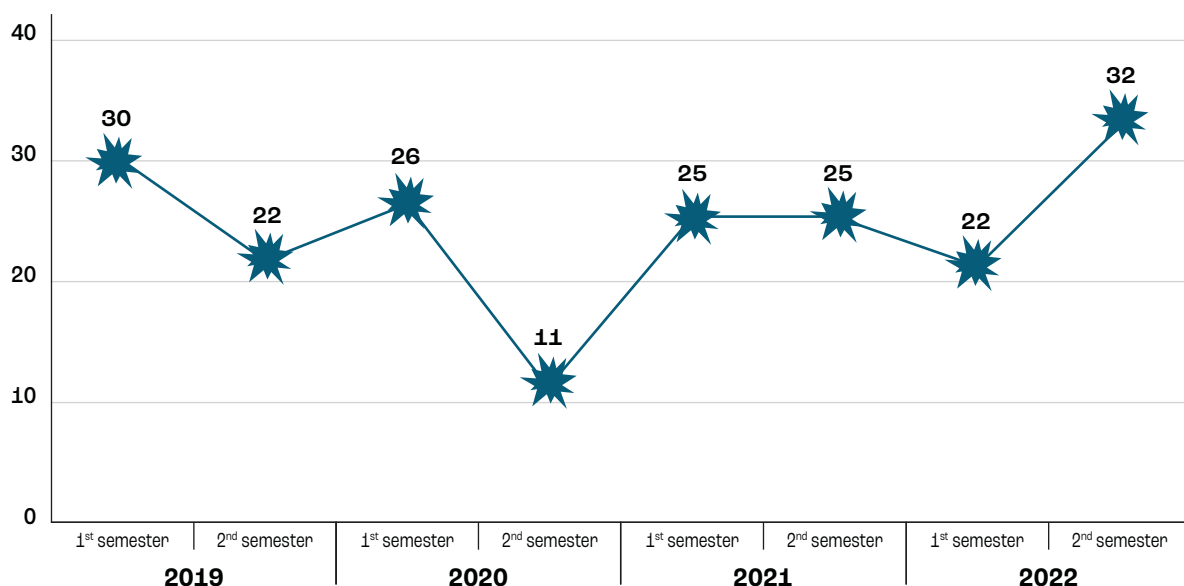


197 attacks were recorded over the period studied.

Attacks are the second type of violence with the highest occurrence in the survey.

In the four years covered by the survey, the number of attacks fluctuated from a maximum of 56, in 2019, to a minimum of 37, in 2020. Just as murders reached the minimum level in that year of the pandemic, we can see a similar pattern with attacks.

Total attacks per semestre



*The graph shows only the cases in which it was possible to specify the date of the violence. In some situations, we were able to identify only the year and therefore they are not represented here.

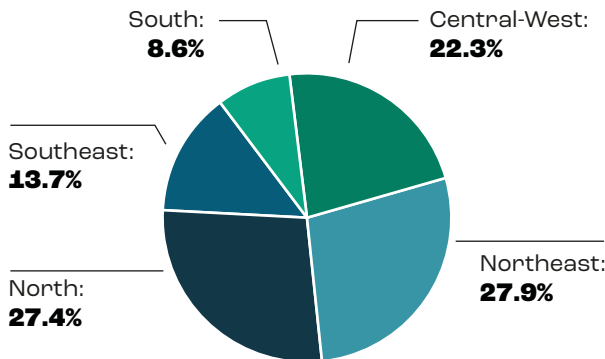
Of the five regions of the country, the Central-West and South regions have averages of attacks above the averages of the total of other violations mapped in the states of those regions.

Cases of attack
by region

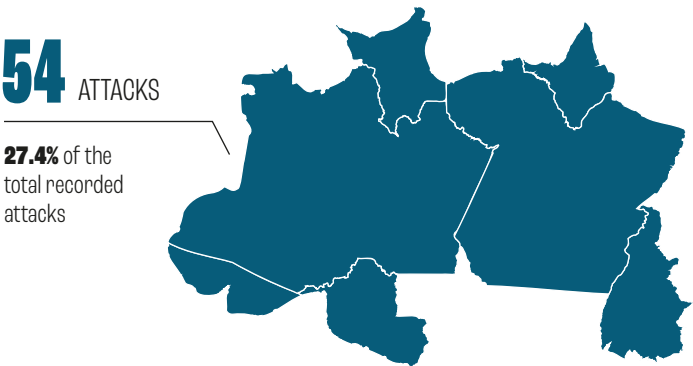
197
Registered cases
of attack

X

974
Cases of other
violations



North



315
cases of other
violations

32.3% do total
de registros em
âmbito nacional



Northeast



325
cases of other
violations

33.4% do total
de registros em âmbito
nacional

Central-West

44 ATTACKS

22.3% of the total recorded attacks



102

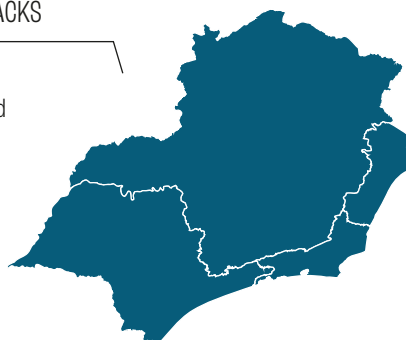
cases of other violations

10.5% do total de registros em âmbito nacional

Southeast

27 ATTACKS

13.7% of the total recorded attacks



168

cases of other violations

17.2% of the total records nationwide

South

17 ATTACKS

8.6% of the total recorded attacks



64

cases of other violations

6.6% do total de registros em âmbito nacional

Of the places that concentrate a substantial number of attacks, it is important to mention some cases. The states of Mato Grosso and Mato Grosso do Sul were the stage for the attack against rural workers in Colniza, at the Bauru Agricultural Farm (Fazenda Magali), which resulted in the death of Eliseu Queres de Jesus and left nine other people injured, as well as attacks on the

Guarani Kaiowá people, at IL Ñu Vera and IL Amambai, also known as the Guapo'y Massacre. These episodes give prominence to the Central-West region.

In the states of Mato Grosso, Mato Grosso do Sul, and Pará, the averages of attacks remain above the total average of other violations recorded in those states in the entire research.

CRIMINALIZATION

107 episodes of criminalization

The misuse of the legal system and legal actions against a defender or his fight was categorized as criminalization, in order to register the violence practiced through institutional means.

Violations of this type were more common in 2019 than in 2022, according to our research.

Total cases of criminalization per semester

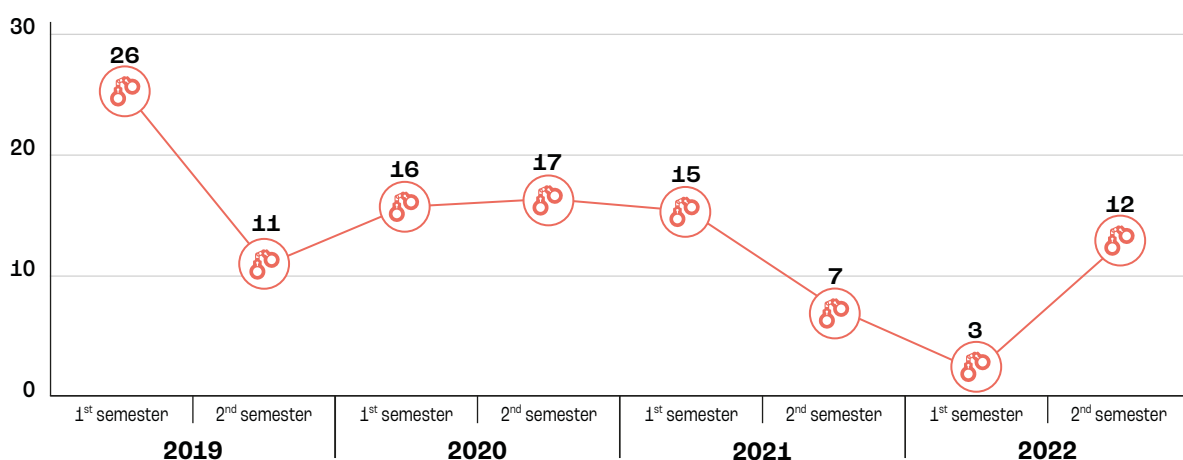
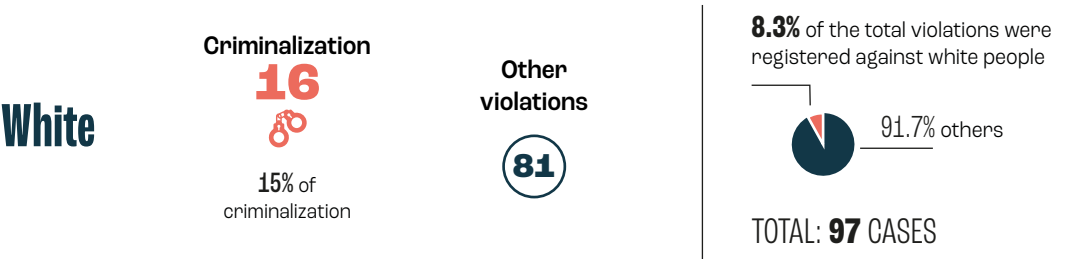


Foto: Midia NINJA



Characteristics of the victims

Proportionally, black and white people suffer more criminalization than other types of violence. However, we must consider that in almost a quarter of the cases, it was not possible to identify the color or race of the defender.





Of the **1.171** registered cases of violence, **107** are cases of **criminalization** corresponding to **9.1%** of the total.





The victim's **color or race** could not be identified in **37 of the 107 registered cases** of criminalization.

In **12** registered cases of criminalization, the race/color category does not apply.



If we analyze the rights those criminalized human rights defenders are advocating, unlike what is observed with murders and threats, they are defending diffuse human rights.

Land, territory, and the environment

-  Criminalization: 45
-  Other violations: 204



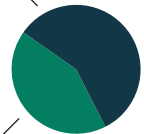
Other themes

-  Criminalization: 62
-  Other violations: 860

Criminalization

Other themes
62 (57.9%)

Land, territory, and the environment
45 (42.1%)



Other violations

Other themes
860 (80.8%)

Land, territory, and the environment
204 (19.2%)



People fighting for freedom of expression, LGBTQIA+ rights, racial and gender equality, and human rights are more often victims of criminalization than those defending land, territory, and environment.

In terms of the gender identity of defenders, cis men are, on average, more frequently the victims of criminalization, amounting to 11% of the total number of men identified in the survey. The average is higher than that of cisgender women and transgender women or *travestis*, whose criminalization represents 8.6% and 7.7%, respectively, of the total violence they endure.

Criminalized human rights defenders are not infrequently also the victims of other forms of violence – almost as if the criminalization were part of a process of repeated violence that tries to retaliate or prevent their struggle. Social lawyer José Vargas Sobrinho is an example of this situation: to the death threats he received and attacks he suffered, a **criminalization process** was subsequently added, in 2021. *Quilombola* leaders Celino Fernandes and Wanderson de Jesus Rodrigues Fernandes had been arrested in 2019 and then murdered the following year.

It is worth mentioning that criminalization can happen even after the defender's death. Two murdered defenders suffered institutional criminalization, that is, the judicial institutions acted against the defenders after their death, in a process of denouncement and reparation.

José Vargas Sobrinho Júnior



Arrested on:

January 1st, 2021

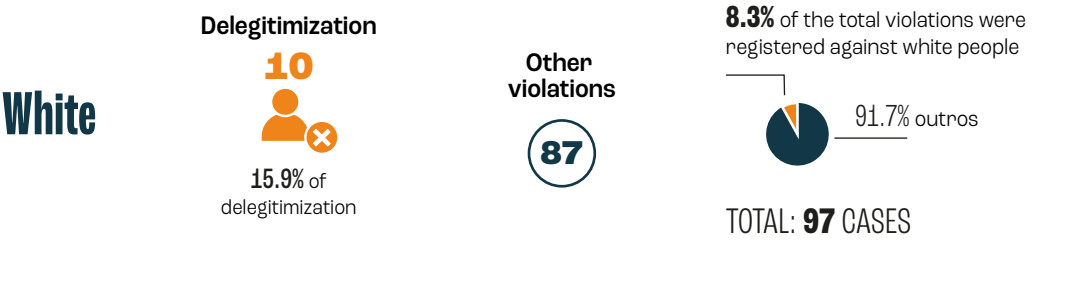
Social lawyer and human rights defender José Vargas Júnior was arrested in January 2021 wrongly accused of having participated in the disappearance and murder of Cícero José Rodrigues, the president of the Association of People with Epilepsy in Redenção (PA). The charges against him were based on messages exchanged as a joke and his arrest is marked by a series of illegalities. The evidence of Vargas' innocence in the investigation was ignored and for months the lawyer's defense did not have access to the evidence on which the charges were based.

Before being arrested, Vargas was the lawyer of the families of the victims of the Pau D'arco massacre (in 2017, civil and military police officers executed ten landless workers). Due to complaints of abuse and illegalities committed by the police in this case, and due to José's work with landless workers, he had been receiving several threats that led him to be included in the Program for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders.

DELEGITIMIZATION

We recorded 63 cases of delegitimization of human rights defenders, the fifth most frequent violation in the survey. Acts of slander, defamation, racist, sexist, homophobic and transphobic slurs, public interruptions, religious racism, and other arbitrary acts were considered delegitimization.

In these situations, we considered those attacks made with the deliberate intention of delegitimizing the actions of the defender. The episodes of delegitimization we identified in this survey are more recurrent against black defenders when compared to the average suffered by white or indigenous defenders.





Of the **1.171** registered cases of violence, **63** are cases of **delegitimization** corresponding to **5.38%** of the total.



The victim's **color or race** could not be identified in **2 of the 63** registered cases of delegitimization.

In **13** registered cases of delegitimization, the race/color.

Cisgender women are the most frequent victims of some form of delegitimization among all defenders who are victims of this type of violence, which also frequently affects transgender women and *travestis*.

Cisgender men

delegitimizations

10



15.9% of delegitimization

Other violations

553

49.9% of violations

TOTAL: **563** CASES

Cisgender women

delegitimizations

28



44.4% of delegitimization

Other violations

225

20.3% of violations

TOTAL: **253** CASES

Trans women or travesti

delegitimizations

6



9.5% of delegitimization

Other violations

33

3% of violations

TOTAL: **39** CASES

Trans men

delegitimizations

0

0% of delegitimization

Other violations

1

0.1% of violations

TOTAL: **1** CASE

NOT IDENTIFIED: ED: In 1 case of delegitimization (1.5% of cases) and 105 violations of other types (9.5% of violations) the gender was not identified, adding up to **106 cases with unidentified gender** (9% in total). In **18 cases of delegitimization** (28.6%) and in **91 cases of other types of violence** (8.2%), the gender factor does not apply, adding up to 209 cases (17.8% in total).

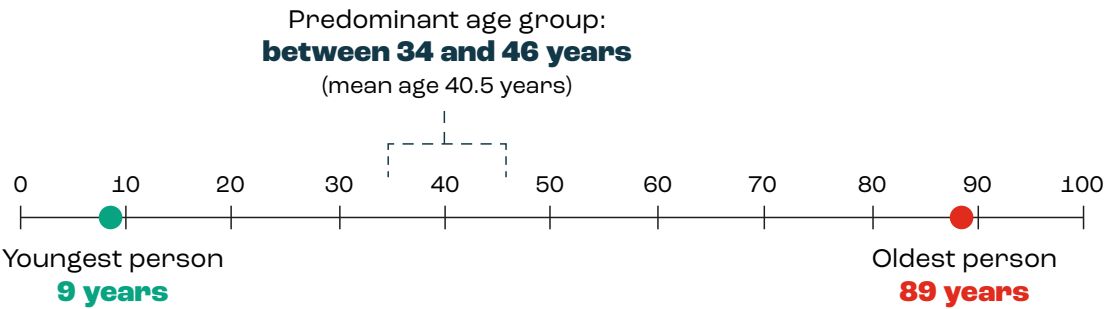
DEFENDER'S PROFILE

In addition to identifying the types of violations committed against those who defend human rights in Brazil, this survey also sought to observe the characteristics of those who are victims of this kind of violence. It is important to highlight that it was not always possible to collect detailed data for the variables related to defenders. The description that follows discusses the limitations and potential inferences using the available information about who are the individuals undergoing threats, attacks, murders, criminalization and delegitimization.

Age

In the age variable, information was identified for 351 defenders. The number of rows in which this characteristic is absent is significant, but the trend found suggests that the predominant age group of people in the fight for human rights who suffer violence in Brazil is between 34 and 46 years old.

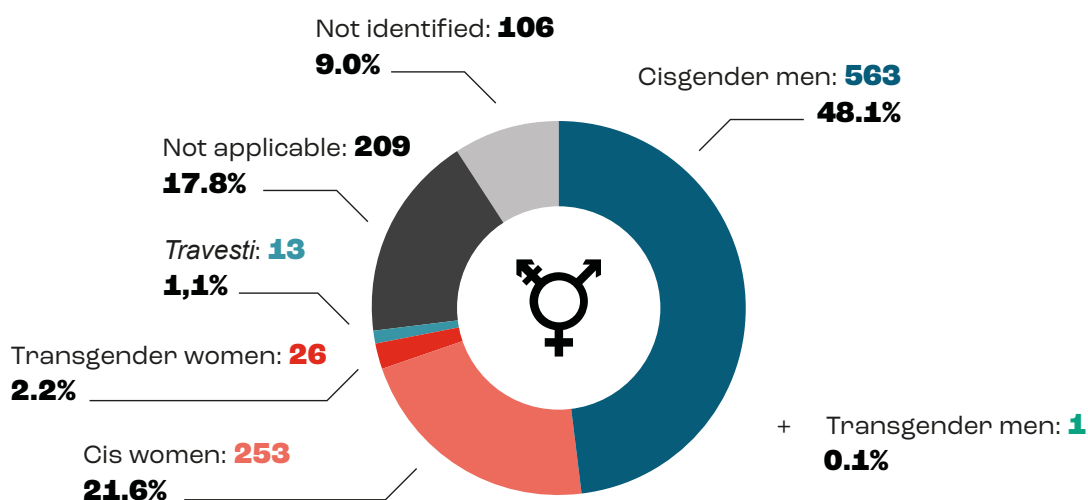
The mean age is 40.5 years. Among those for whom there is information, the youngest person was 9 and the oldest was 89 years old on the date of the violation.⁶



6. In the case of the youngest defender murdered, he was a child, the son of a community leader in a land occupation and president of an association of family farmers. Gunmen invaded the family home to kill the president and, in addition to hitting him, executed the child.

Gender identity

To fill in information about gender identity, we only considered the official information obtained from the cases and from the sources consulted for data collection. Cisgender men are the category that appears most among the group of defenders who are the victims of violence, followed by cisgender women, who do not add up to half of the total number of cisgender men for whom we obtained information.



We chose to designate as “unidentified” when the defender’s gender identity is absent. We did not find this information in 106 episodes of violence. In the case of violence against collectives, in which it was not possible to individualize the victims, we used the category “not applicable” in this variable.

There is a greater number of “not applicable” in the analysis of information regarding gender identity compared to the analysis of the ethnic-racial variable because in the latter the category was filled with an individual attribute that could also be extended to the group. A similar situation happened, for example, in the attack on indigenous collectives or territories.

It is not the case for gender, which is why in almost all collective cases, we chose to class them as “not applicable”.

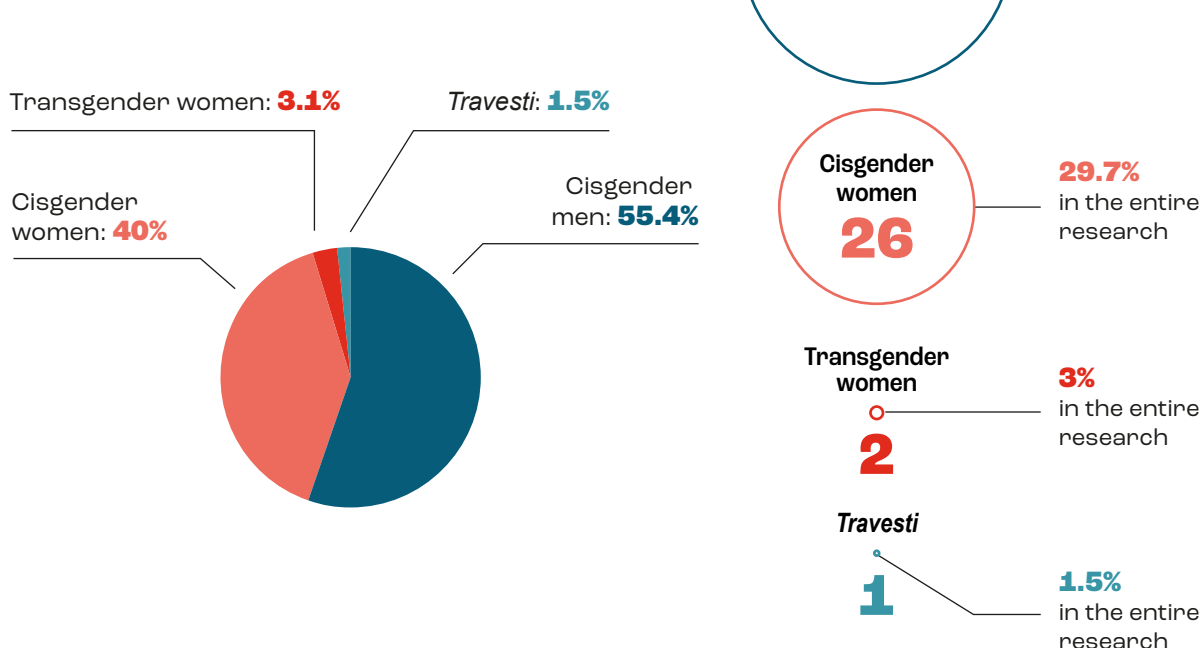
Recurrent victims

Some defenders' names appeared as the victims of several violations throughout the analyzed period. We were able to identify the names of 65 individuals who appeared on at least two different dates over the period from 2019 to 2022, which shows that they were victims of more than one violation.

Together, these defenders appear in 160 rows of the survey in which an individual was named, which corresponds to approximately 17% of individual violations. In this calculation, we did not consider the possibility that a person who has suffered some type of individual violence has also been a victim of some collective violence.

Although men are the victims in most of the cases shown in this research, women are more often victims of more than one episode of violence.

Defenders who were the victims of more than one episode of violence



Many female parliamentarians were the target of political violence, but local female leaders were also threatened, attacked, and criminalized over the period from 2019 to 2022. The challenge of looking after women who fight for their rights will be faced in the coming years, with an eye on the trends found in 2019-2022.

Alessandra Korap



Location: Aldeia Praia do Indió
Itaituba – Pará

Now the president of the Paniri Indigenous Association, Alessandra Korap is an important indigenous leader who works in defense of the Munduruku people's territories. She is one of the leading voices in denouncing the impacts of mining and infrastructure works on the indigenous territories of the Tapajós.

In 2020, Alessandra was named the winner of the Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights Award – she was the second Brazilian to receive the prize. In 2023, she also received the Goldman Prize, considered the “Nobel” prize of environmental activism.

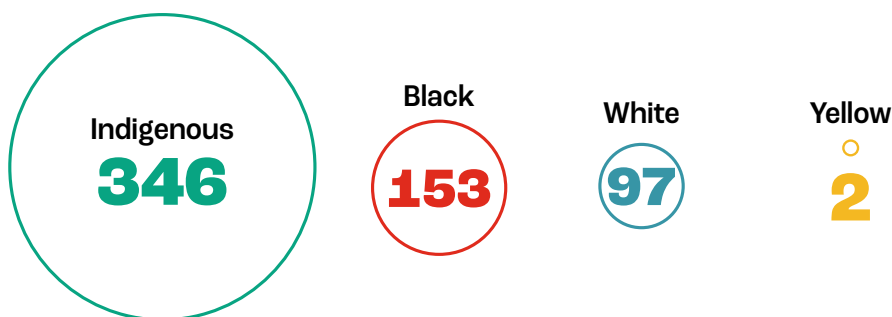
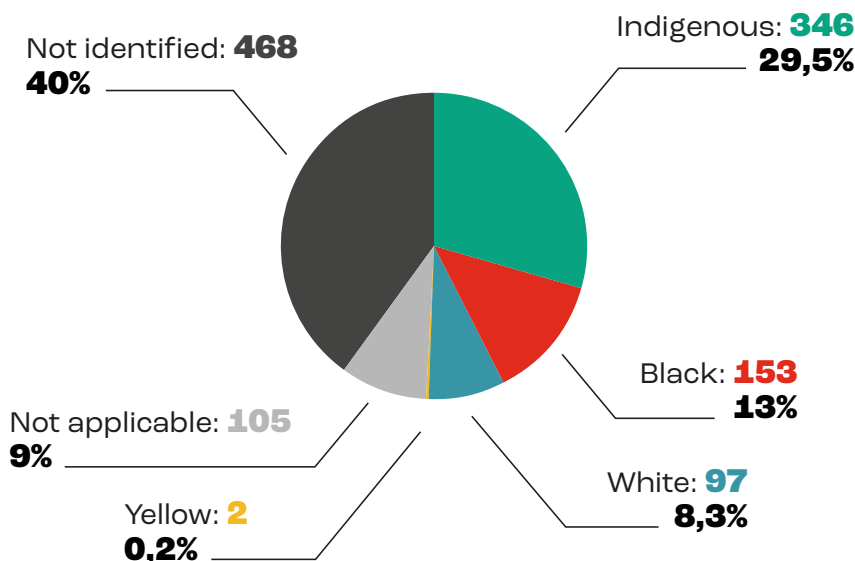
Because of her work, Alessandra is the victim of a number of threats. Her house was invaded twice, and her social media accounts were hacked more than once.

Currently, Alessandra is included in the Pará Program for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders.

Ethnic-racial

We obtained information on the racial classification of 598 recorded violations. Of all the cases mapped in this survey, we were not able to identify the ethnic-racial classification of the defender in 468 of the individual cases, and in collective cases, it was not possible to apply this type of analysis, with some exceptions, as in cases of attacks on indigenous communities.

Color/race of victims

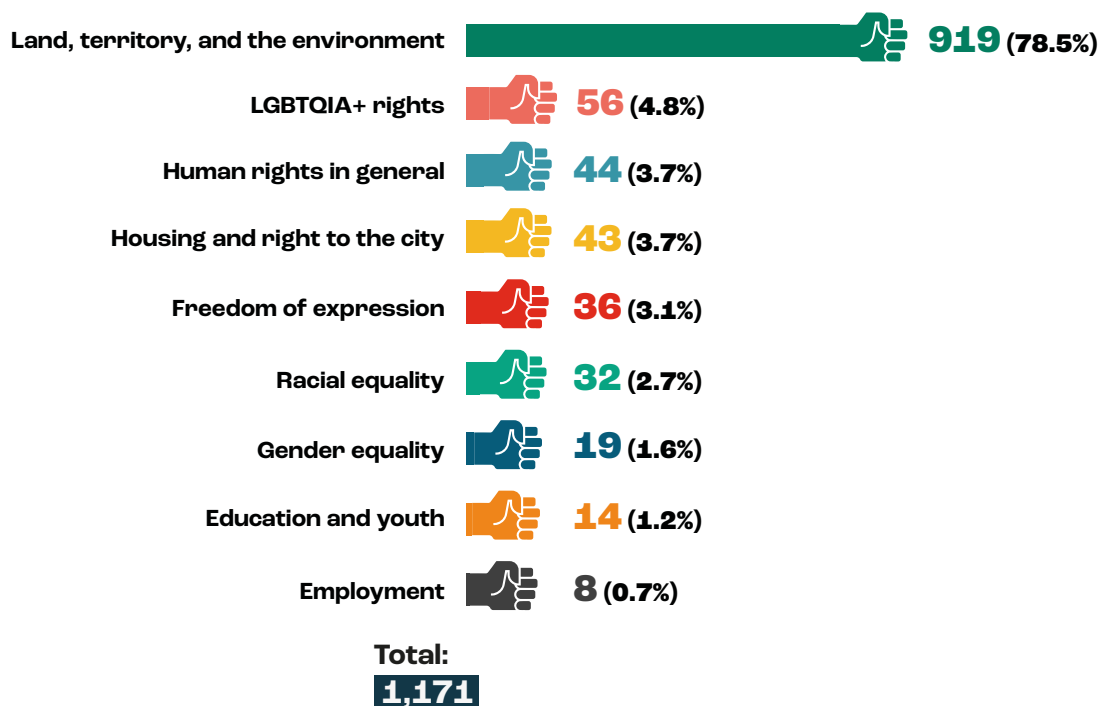


Regarding ethnic-racial classification, most defenders are indigenous, with 30 ethnic groups and subgroups specified, including Arara, Temb  Tenetehara, Xikrin, Uru-eu-wau-wau, Awa Guaj , Guajajara, Xavante, Bororo, Tupiniquim, Patax , Guarani, La-Kl no, Wai Wai, Yanomami, Gamela, Pankararu, Irantxe, Takaguek, Mebengokr , Guat s, Guarani Kaiow , Av -Guarani, Guarani Mbya, Munduruku, Akro  Gamella, Warao and Xakriab .

Quilombolas and traditional peoples and communities also appear in the study, such as *geraizeiros*, *fundo e fecho de pasto* farmers, rubber tappers, and *ribeirinhos* (riverside dwellers).

Rights advocated by defenders

Defenders advocate for a series of different themes. The main category mapped is the struggle for land, territory, and the environment.



The classification we used analyzes the predominant right advocated by the defenders, or rather, the one that was highlighted in the material that denounced the violation they suffered. This classification considers the activism in defense of the territory carried out by an indigenous person who was attacked in his village as an indication that he is part of the fight for the Land, Territory, and Environment. A defender fighting for people without homes

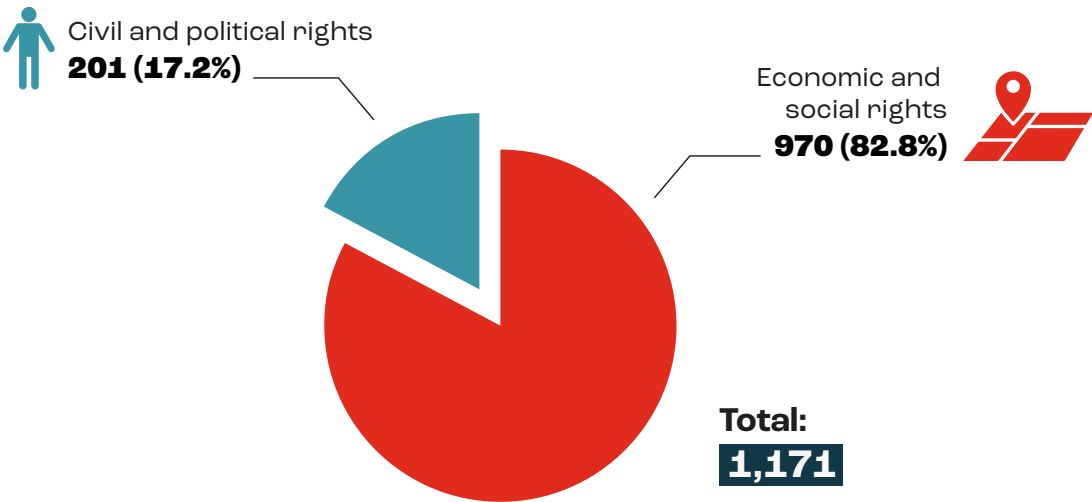
is included in the struggle for Housing and the Right to the City. In the Education and Youth category are student activists or members of youth wings of political parties. In the group of people fighting for Employment, there are union leaders, teachers, and sweepers, defending the rights of workers in their trades. We grouped under the General Human Rights category what did not fit into others. In this category are people engaged in the fight for culture, for

people deprived of liberty and religious freedom, for example. We understand that the same person can be engaged in the fight for Gender Equality, and for Land, Territory, and the Environment or any other combination.

If we reduced the categories to two, the first encompassing human rights in general and civil and political rights, and the second comprising economic and social rights, the categories Hous-

ing and Right to the City, Land, Territory, and the Environment, and Employment would become one. We decided to do this to reduce the complexity of the data in the search for patterns in the violence against these two types of defenders. The first type of struggle is more associated with individuals, and the second, with collectives or groups.

The survey is mostly composed of people fighting for economic and social rights.



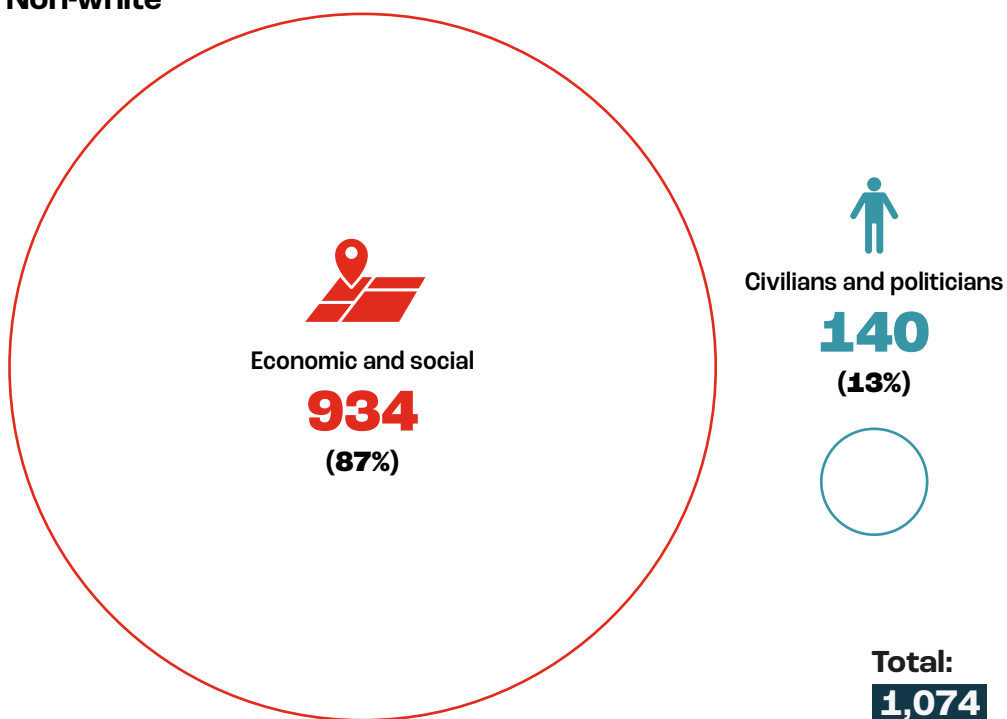
Just as we can see the strong association between conflicts over land and murdered defenders when we discuss the themes of their struggles, here too we notice the importance of disputes around socio-environmental rights in the research on violence from 2019 to 2022.

In order to look for signs of intersectionality, it is interesting to observe how the defender's profile and theme of struggle are articulated. Most black (black and brown) and indigenous defenders are fighting for land rights. Among those fighting for individual rights, there are more whites than among those fighting for economic and social rights.

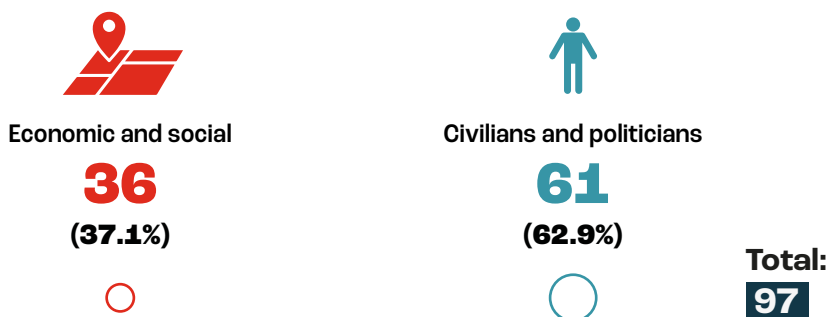


As can be seen, most non-white people fight for economic and social rights, such as the **right to land, territory, housing, and employment.**

Non-white

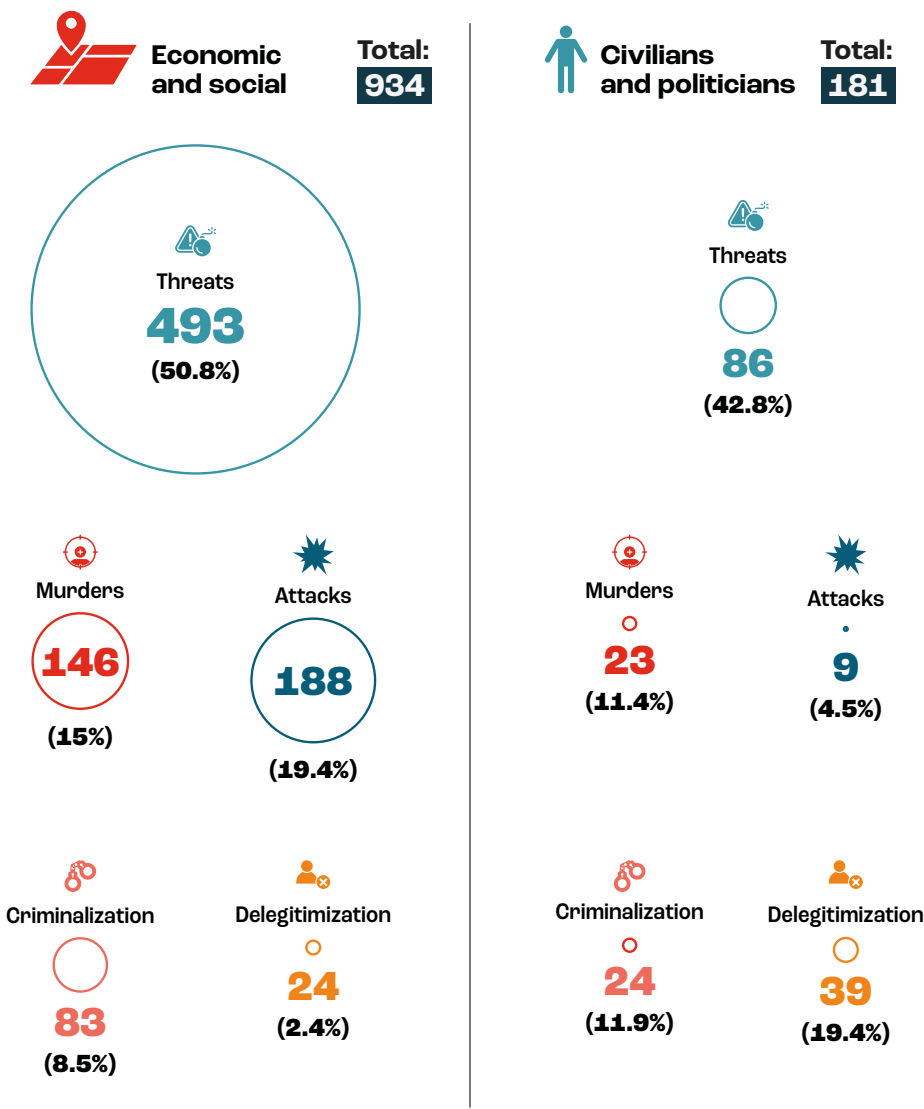


White



Struggle and violations

If we group the murders defenders who fought for the most numerous category — Land, Territory, and the Environment, and Housing and Right to the City — to consider people who fight for urban or rural land, the results are:



*The table omits the less frequent categories such as physical assault and suicide, so the total does not correspond to the total 1,171 violations in the survey, but only to the five most recurrent types of violations against defenders.

Defenders engaged in the fight for land are more threatened, attacked and murdered than those fighting for civil and political rights. This shows that people at the forefront of the struggle for land, whether in the context of traditionally occupied territories, rural, or urban territories, are particularly exposed to attacks against their physical integrity and their lives. There is statistical significance in the difference in means found.

Delegitimization, however, exhibits a different trend: people fighting for civil and political rights are more subjected to it than those fighting for economic and social rights. Defenders fighting for

individual human rights, categorized in opposition to defenders engaged with collective rights, are more recurrently victims of delegitimization than defenders fighting for land, territory, housing, environment, and employment. This type of violence affects their physical, psychological, and symbolic bodies, even if the aggression is only verbal.

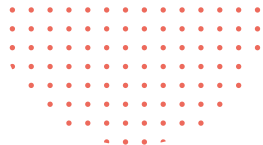
It is important to separate physical assaults from other forms of violence for reflection purposes, but the goal of this report was to present the general trends found in the survey. The individual contributions in specific chapters intend to deepen the subject and qualitatively discuss the findings.

Collective and individual cases

The research registered 1,171 identifiable victims in 843 episodes of violence.

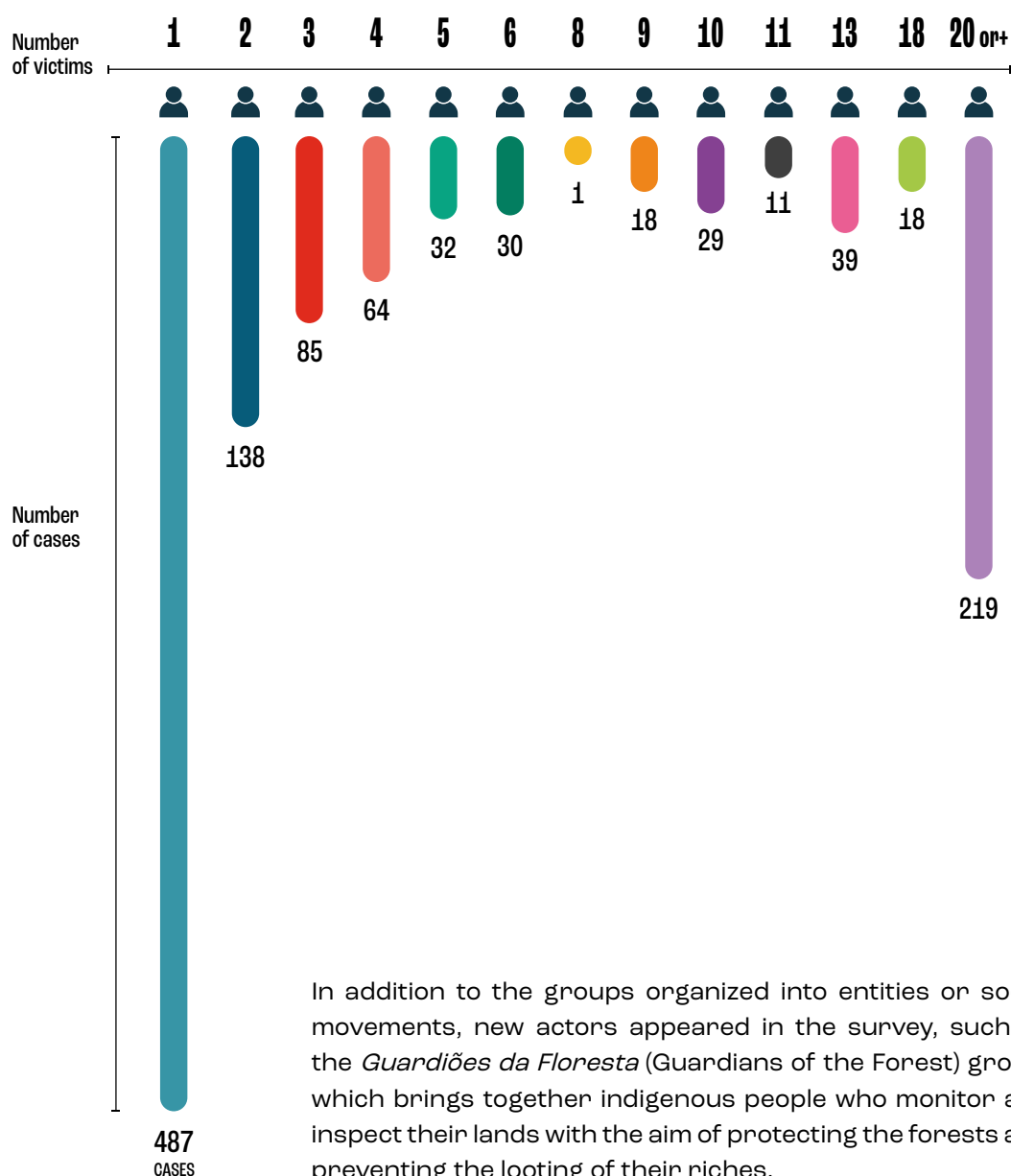
Violations against more than one individual, in the rural or urban context, were recurrent in the survey. Most of the cases involved violence against individuals, and in a quarter of the total cases, violence was directed against a group, such as many attacks on indigenous lands or settlements.

In less than half of the surveyed cases, a single victim suffered violence, with the remaining being cases against two or more human rights defenders.



We considered collective cases, without detailing the exact number of victims or families affected, in the last category, which includes cases that affected 20 or more individuals.

The table below represents the number of victims mentioned in each violation included in the survey:

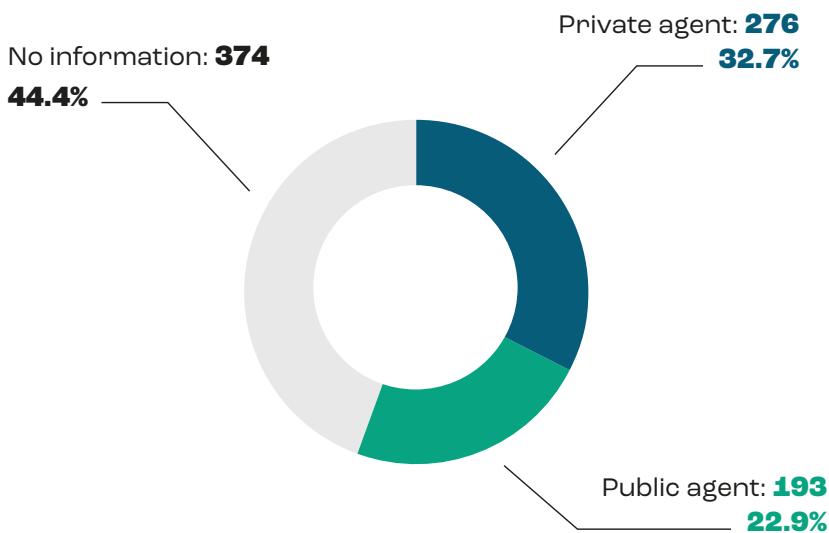


In addition to the groups organized into entities or social movements, new actors appeared in the survey, such as the *Guardiões da Floresta* (Guardians of the Forest) group, which brings together indigenous people who monitor and inspect their lands with the aim of protecting the forests and preventing the looting of their riches.

PERPETRATOR AGENT

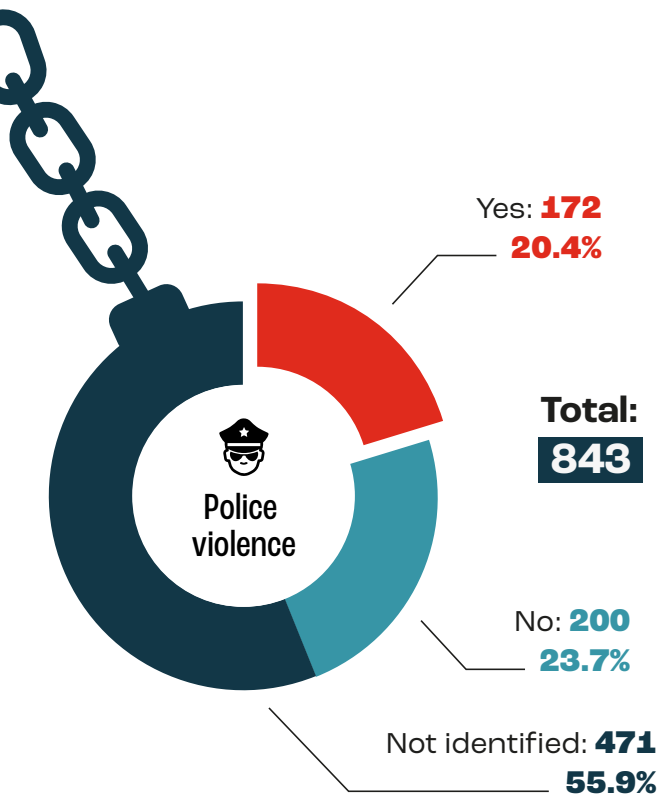
The description of the agent responsible for the violation was not always included in the survey. In 44.4% of all cases, it was not possible to identify this information. For cases where there are details about the perpetrating agent, we categorized them as public and private agents. We considered, for example, institutional criminalization (a case of arbitrary arrest of the leader of an urban settlement) as being perpetrated by a public agent, while an attack on a settlement carried out by landowners and private security guards of a company as being perpetrated by a private agent.

Most violence is perpetrated by a private agent, as shown in the table below.



For these data (which answer the question of who was the perpetrating agent), we will consider only singular cases and not the repetitions in the count of the total cases. The justification is that the characteristic is common to all affected people.

Information on police violence in surveyed cases was recorded. In 15% of the total number of rows, there was police violence, in most cases perpetrated by the Military Police. If we look at the aggregated cases, excluding repeated rows, we have:

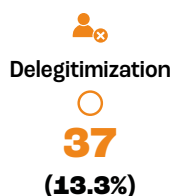


Perpetrating agent and types of violation

Private agents are the main perpetrators of murders, attacks, and threats to human rights defenders. In most murders, farm owners, prospectors, private security guards, or other private agents have committed the crime. In the 26 murders in which the presence of a public agent is mentioned, this agent is part of the police force. In some of these, the police are cited as co-perpetrators, along with farm owners and *jagunços**.

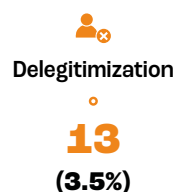
Public agents are most frequently associated with cases of criminalization and delegitimization. This trend is shown in the graph:

Public agent



Total:
244

Private agent



Total:
360

*Jagunços are hitmen hired by land owners to enforce security and commit crimes on their behalf.

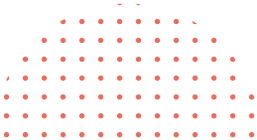
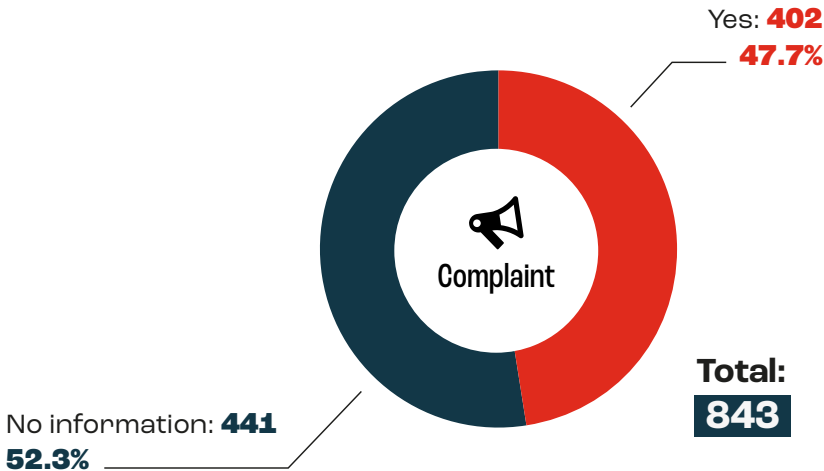
**The graph omits the less frequent categories such as physical assault and suicide. In this graph, we consider the participation of public and private agents in all episodes of violence, whether singular or multiple (when there is more than one victim in the same episode of violence registered in the survey).*

As for violations such as criminalization, which may involve the arbitrary arrest of people engaged in struggles for human rights, for example, and delegitimization, the trend changes. Institutional criminalization is the type of violation most associated with public agents.

Also, in cases of delegitimization, the average number of public agents (13.3%) exceeds that of private agents (3.5%). This type of violence is linked to the state apparatus, so the association with non-private perpetrators.

REPORTING

For a considerable portion of the data, there is information available on whether violence was reported. Due to the challenge of mapping cases of violations that occurred over a four-year period, the verification of the existence of a complaint was carried out by the group of organizations and researchers that conducted this research. We cannot rule out, however, that those cases that are not indicated here due to lack of information have not been the object of a complaint at some point by people or entities involved in the violence. That is why the table below indicates only the rows for which we have registered information that a complaint was filed.



We were able to discover that almost half of the unique violations were reported. Although we have not monitored the progression of cases over time — which could suggest an even higher number of complaints — almost 50% already serves as an indication of the level of organization of human rights defenders. It is estimated that for every two episodes of violence, one is officially reported to public authorities.

In collecting information about the authority to which the complaint was taken, the following were mentioned: the Civil and Federal Police, State and Federal Public Prosecutor's Office, Federal Public Defender's Office, State Secretariat for Public Security, National Human Rights Council, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, Committee on Human and Minorities Rights (CDHM) of the Chamber of Deputies and ethics boards of some entities.

A large, stylized magnifying glass graphic is centered on the page. The handle of the magnifying glass extends from the bottom right towards the center, and the lens is a large circle that frames the main text. The entire graphic is rendered in a dark blue color.

Analyzing some aspects of the **context of violence** against human rights defenders in Brazil

The situation of human rights defenders in Brazil is serious. Defending human rights often involves the police, the judiciary, and, in many cases, death.

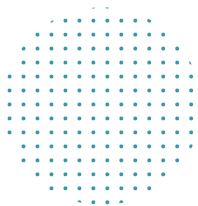
This report is a sample of the violence that impacts those who defend rights and of the profile of people who are victims of this type of violence — even though it is a great challenge to find more information about these people. In most of the cases analyzed, we could not state the color or race, or sexual orientation of the victims, for example. The cases in which these characteristics were identified, however, already provide us with good indications of how this violence operates. We were able to understand that black women, transgender women, and *travestis** who occupy positions of power — as in the case of parliamentarians — tend to be recurrent victims of threats and delegitimization.

The data presented in this survey show that indigenous and black people are more vulnerable to being victims of violence when they are human rights defenders. Records also show that black people who defend rights were more frequently victims of murder than of other types of violence.

This study is an important diagnosis of the violence perpetrated against those defending rights during Jair Bolsonaro's government, although the surveying —

and the treatment — of these situations meets some difficulties. The distance and the difficult access to territories located in the countryside of states make it difficult to get help to populations at risk and to obtain information about the murders and threats that occur in these places for a later denunciation of these acts of violence. Even the cases recorded in urban areas have limitations. Episodes in which violence is described as another case of urban violence — without establishing a causal link between this violence and those committed against human rights defenders — are not rare. This kind of situation is of great concern, as it belittles or makes violence directed against human rights defenders invisible.

Even so, the survey makes it possible to identify trends and small oscillations over the analyzed period. Despite 2022 being the year with the lowest number of cases, in absolute numbers, the analysis of the violence committed in that period shows that it is not possible to state that there has been a reduction in violence against human rights defenders. human rights throughout Bolsonaro's government. The number of murders in 2022 is higher than that recorded in 2019, the year with the highest total number of episodes of violence against defenders. The last year of Bolsonaro's government, moreover, was the most lethal for indigenous people, as this survey shows.



It is important to evaluate the changes in the scenario that contributed to the oscillation of the data over the period. The year 2022, for example, was marked by the holding of general elections, and it is no accident that it was the year with the highest number of cases of delegitimization of human rights defenders. This category – which covers episodes of slander, insult, defamation, and detraction – presented more cases precisely in this period, since delegitimizing a human rights defender, or their struggle, is a strategy to prevent these people and groups from occupying spaces of power and decision-making.

The number of murders, for example, showed a slight drop in the second half of 2020 and in the first half of 2021. This was precisely the worst moment of the Covid-19 pandemic health crisis, with a peak in cases and deaths.

The very work of human rights defenders underwent changes during this period. With health limitations and, at the same time, emergencies caused by an economic crisis, social movements adapted their activities and focused their efforts on providing sustenance and security not only for the families in their groups but also for families in general.

The adaptation of the struggles and resistance strategies of human rights defenders throughout the period analyzed was a self-protection strategy. It was necessary during a government founded upon a narrative of attacks on defenders and that proposed a series of measures that heightened conflicts that made defenders vulnerable.

The Bolsonaro government acted to withdraw socio-environmental rights and guarantees enshrined in the Federal Constitution of 1988 and the International Labor Organization (ILO) Convention 169. His government abandoned public institutions dedicated to the defense of the environment and the rights of traditional peoples and communities, altered and extinguished environmental norms and participatory councils, failed to monitor and combat illegalities and crimes, and promoted explicit anti-environmentalism and racism in State rhetoric and actions.

Among these actions, it is the interruption of the titling policy of *quilombola* territories and demarcation of indigenous lands and the dismantling of agrarian reform policies, with budget cuts at the National Institute for Colonization and Agrarian Reform (Incra) and waiver of expropriations or cancellation of agrarian debt bonds.

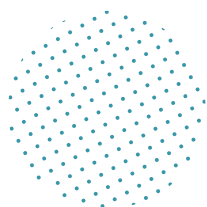
The circumstances are further aggravated by the processing of several bills (PLs) in the National Congress that represent a series of setbacks, such as PL 3,283/2021, which aims to make the Anti-Terrorism Law approved in 2016 more flexible. This project expands the definition and the list of acts considered terrorist acts, which puts law enforcement and the right to protest at risk.

In addition, the government promoted a wide relaxation of the legislation that deals with the possession and use of weapons, such as Decrees No. 9,845/2019, 9,846/2019, and 9,847/2019.

The outbreak of the pandemic in 2020 further aggravated the situation of human rights defenders. This situation was not considered in the study, but it is noteworthy that these individuals were victims of the government's failure to tackle the Covid-19 pandemic. Scientific denialism, lack of investments in health-care, and delayed vaccination against Covid-19 took the lives of many who defended rights.

It is no coincidence that the civil society organizations that participated in the Universal Periodic Review process⁸ assessed, in 2022, that Brazil had retrogressed in the guarantee of human rights in the last period. According to the entities that make up the UPR Brazil Coalition, the country did not comply and retrogressed in virtually half of the recommendations made in the last cycle⁹.

In the following pages, we will analyze different aspects of violence against human rights defenders.



8. The Universal Periodic Review is an international mechanism in which countries report on the situation of human rights before the Human Rights Council of the United Nations (UN). During this review, countries are evaluated in cycles, which occur every four and a half years, and accept or reject recommendations — that will be the basis for the next periodic review — made by other countries.

9. Learn more at www.plataformarpu.org.br.

Disinformation: Fake news against those defending rights

Fake news is information created to deceive or manipulate the audience. Regardless of the term used, its objective is the same: to spread disinformation. Among its goals, disinformation can have economic purposes, with financial gain through clicks; political purposes, affording influence in elections and damaging the image of opponents; and social purposes, with the dissemination of hate speech against certain groups. With the advent of social media and the easy, instantaneous sharing of information it provides, disinformation, which has always existed, a breeding ground to develop uncontrollably, which has had dire consequences for society.

In several countries, a close relationship can be observed between the dissemination of false or distorted information and the far right. In the United States, former President Donald Trump was one of the prominent people responsible for consolidating disinformation as a political strategy, using the State's institutional structure to cast doubt on the electoral process. In Europe, far-right parties have become popular, often spreading conspiracy theories and xenophobia disguised as opinion.

In Brazil, the spread of fake news and the rise of the far-right became more evident in the 2018 presidential elections. Then-candidate Jair Bolsonaro benefited greatly from the dissemination of fake news on social media, much of it created and shared by supporters of his campaign or by himself. Since then, the Bolsonaro government has been marked by controversial statements, attacks on the press and democracy, and measures that violate rights.

The deceitful statements by Bolsonaro and some of his ministers and advisors during the 2022 election campaign, in particular about the vulnerability of the electronic voting process and the alleged fraud in the 2018 elections – an argument that was repeated after the results of the 2022 elections, without presenting evidence – caused countless of his followers and supporters to march in front of army barracks asking for military intervention months before the fateful January 8, 2023.

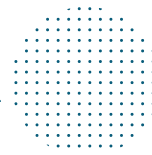
The disinformation strategy aims to target the human rights agenda and those who defend it. In 2018, councilwoman and human rights defender Marielle Franco was killed, and after her physical death, her reputation was also murdered. Several statements emerged to try to delegitimize her political and social struggle, associating her with drug trafficking and calling her a “defender of bandits.” Even public authorities repeated such lies, as was the case of Marília Castro Neves, a judge of the Rio de Janeiro Court of Justice, and federal deputy Alberto Fraga (DF). In 2018, professor and anthropologist Débora Diniz had to exile from the country due

to threats she had been receiving as a result of her work in defense of women's reproductive and sexual rights. Débora was the victim of hatred fueled by *machismo* and dishonest, out-of-context information that was spread about her. Like her, in early 2019, Jean Wyllys, a defender of LGBTQIA+ rights, had to leave the country and resign from his seat as a federal deputy because of death threats and constant violence. According to Wyllys, the fake news associated with him did not aim only to defame him or attack the human rights agenda, but also to serve as a false justification to spread hatred and violence:



A human rights defender can be killed not only through organized groups, such as the militias.

When there is a systematic campaign to destroy a person's reputation with fake news to demonize him and turn him into a public enemy, any madman poisoned by this hatred can act individually¹⁰.



10. Excerpt taken from an interview given by Jean Wyllys to journalist Gil Alessi, for El País, in 2018. Available at: https://brasil.elpais.com/brasil/2018/12/14/politica/1544825670_895192.html. Accessed on: 14 Mar. 2023.

Since the rise of Bolsonaro and the far-right, MST (Brazilian Landless Workers Movement" — Brazil's largest producer of organic food — has been the target of a smear campaign, which portrays the movement as a criminal organization. Disinformation also has had a profound influence on the election race. In the last elections, there was the dissemination of fake news against candidates connected to grassroots movements, whose leaders were associated with crimes as a way of delegitimizing that movement and its candidates. In a way, it resulted in an imbalance of the information conveyed during the electoral process. It became evident that the dissemination of news does not originate only in groups chats at instant messaging applications, but also through institutional means, with the spread of fake information by politicians and au-

thorities holding public offices.

Disinformation represents, in itself, an attack on freedom of expression and the rights to information and communication, as well as on human rights and their defenders. In addition to spreading false or distorted information, smear campaigns put the physical integrity of those affected at risk, especially when campaigns are directed at vulnerable groups, such as indigenous peoples¹¹, women, black populations, and LGBTQIA+ people. In this sense, the various entities of society must take joint action in adopting measures, such as recommendations 04/2018 and 09/2020 of the National Human Rights Council, and, above all, in combating the information monopoly based on profit that attacks the progressive human rights agenda and those who defend it.

Violence against indigenous childrens

The intensification of attacks on indigenous peoples and the interruption of the demarcation of their territories marked the four years of the Jair Bolsonaro government. There was a significant increase in violence against their bodies and territories¹². This research brings alarming data about the violence that devastated indigenous peoples between 2019 and 2022. In the four years of this government, there were 50 murders of indigenous leaders and 172 cases of threats.

11. Some of the attacks on indigenous leaders via fake news are mentioned in a report published in 2022 by InfoAmazônia. Available at: <https://infoamazonia.org/2022/01/26/whatsapp-fake-news-indigena-amazonas/>. Accessed on: 14 Mar. 2023.

12. PONTES, Nádia. Aumentam invasões e crueldade contra indígenas no Brasil. Deutsche Welle, 2022. Available at: <https://www.dw.com/pt-br/aumentam-invas%C3%B5es-de-terras-e-crueldade-contra-ind%C3%ADgenas-no-brasil/a-62831349>. Accessed on: 14 Mar. 2023.

Another disturbing data caught our attention, and we thought it was important to mention it, although the cases were not accounted for in this study. During the research, we came across murders of indigenous children and youths. Some of them were committed with extreme cruelty and brutality. The reports presented below are confirmation of this cruelty.

On August 4, 2021, the body of 14-year-old Kaingang indigenous girl Daiane Gria Sales was found in the municipality of Redentora, in the northwest region of Rio Grande do Sul. A resident of the Bananeiras Sector of the Guarita Indigenous Land, Daiane was found in a field next to a bush, naked and with her body parts torn from the waist down, with pieces beside her. In Acre, a 12-year-old boy was shot dead by a man who was fishing in a lake in the Kulina indigenous area: the body was cut in two, one part thrown into the water, the other left on the ground. In Eirunepé (AM), five men dragged and raped a 14-year-old Kanamari boy and then stabbed him to death. In Mato Grosso do Sul, 11-year-old Guarani Kaiowá girl Raíssa was intoxicated, sexually abused by five people, and thrown off a cliff¹³. In May 2022, a 12-year-old Yanomami girl was raped and killed by miners in Roraima. She was kidnapped by prospectors in the Arakaça community along with her three-year-old cousin, who supposedly fell into the river and died.

In some situations, violence fell against family members of leaders, reproducing a pattern already identified in cases of attacks and threats against human rights defenders.

The murder of indigenous children and youths is the most heinous expression of the violence practiced against indigenous peoples and has an enormous impact on the process of resistance and survival of many peoples throughout the national territory.

We are at the beginning of a new government, which has adopted some important measures that favor indigenous peoples, such as the creation of the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples and the appointment of an indigenous woman to head it, and the creation of a task force to fight the genocide of the Yanomami people. These are undoubtedly important measures, but to overcome this dramatic situation a decent budget is crucial, as well as demilitarizing bodies such as the National Foundation for Indigenous Peoples (Funai) and the Chico Mendes Institute for Biodiversity Conservation (ICMBio), strengthening the public policy for the protection of human rights defenders, ratifying and implementing the Escazú Agreement¹⁴, revoking numerous decrees that make socio-environmental protection and the exploitation of indigenous territories more flexible, among other actions.

13. Brutality marks indigenous murders in 2021 (projeto.colabora.com.br).

14. Learn more about the Escazú Agreement at: <https://www.cepal.org/pt-br/articulos/2018-o-acordo-escazu-conquista-ambiental-america-latina-o-caribe>.

Violence against journalists and communicators

During the four years of the Jair Bolsonaro government, journalists and communicators suffered a series of physical and verbal attacks and censorship. Some attacks were committed by the former President of the Republic himself, which makes us one of the countries that most violate the right to freedom of expression in the world.

According to a report by the National Federation of Journalists (Fenaj)¹⁵, during his government, Jair Bolsonaro directly disrespected more than 500 journalists who were exercising their profession. Many of the episodes of disrespect and name-calling took place during the press conferences he gave in Brasília. “From 2019 to 2022, Bolsonaro carried out 570 attacks on media outlets and journalists, an average of 142.5 attacks per year; one attack every two and a half days.” Data from a monitoring survey carried out by the Brazilian Association of Investigative Journalism (Abraji) are even more frightening: between January and November 2022, there were 504 cases of attacks on the press, an average of 10.9 episodes per week¹⁶.

In addition to censorship, name-calling and verbal attacks directed mainly at women journalists and communicators, the former president encouraged his supporters to do the same. In a monitoring survey carried out by Abraji in the years 2020, 2021, and 2022, in relation to gender violence, there was an increase in cases: “The attacks affect heterosexual cisgender women, as well as communicators who belong to the LGBTQIAP+ community”.

On June 5, 2022, the murders of indigenous expert Bruno Pereira and British journalist Dom Philips shocked the world. They were both traveling through the Javari Valley, the second largest indigenous land in Brazil, in the extreme west of the Amazon.

15. *Violência contra jornalistas e liberdade de imprensa no Brasil: relatório 2022*, published by Fenaj. Available at: <https://fenaj.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/FENAJ-Relat%C3%B3rio-2022.pdf>.

16. Partial data from the monitoring of attacks on the press carried out by the Brazilian Association of Investigative Journalism. Read more at: <https://www.abraji.org.br/noticias/2022-supera-recorde-de-ataques-a-imprensa-registrado-no-ano-anterior>.

Dom was known by human rights organizations and grassroots communicators for producing investigative reports on different types of rights violations throughout the Brazilian territory.

Relatives of Dom and Bruno are fighting in court for the government to answer for the massacre.

It is clear why Jair Bolsonaro used aggressive strategies against journalists and communicators to delegitimize and destabilize communication companies and their employees. An article published in February this year by the TV show *Fantástico* reported that the former president hired Israeli companies specializing in the dissemination of fake news to manipulate elections, in addition to the spread, during the pandemic, of fake news with pseudo-scientific information to deceive the population about vaccines and Covid-19.

According to the Fenaj report, “discrediting the press was a frequent strategy adopted by the Bolsonaro government in 2022, despite having decreased compared to 2021. There were 87 cases of attacks that sought to disqualify journalistic information, a drop of 33,59% compared to 2021 when there were 131 episodes. But there was an increase of 133.33% in cases of threats/harassment/intimidation, which was the second category with the highest number of occurrences in 2022, with 77 cases (44 more than the 33 cases registered in 2021)”.

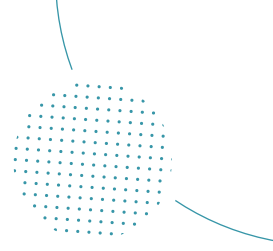
The Bolsonaro government was also a

period of major attacks against EBC - Empresa Brasil de Comunicação. The EBC Employee Commission within the Unions of Journalists and Broadcasters of the Federal District, Rio de Janeiro, and São Paulo issued dossiers denouncing censorship and government influence in the production of content.

Shortly before the beginning of the government in 2018, in order to provide a service focused on attacks against communicators, the Protection Network for Journalists and Communicators was created to receive complaints of harassment, or other physical or verbal assaults suffered by communicators. In August 2022, EBC employees released a dossier with allegations of censorship and government interference in the media companies of the State conglomerate.

In addition to censorship and attacks on communications professionals by the president himself and his followers, cases of persecution, censorship and threats against male and female communicators have grown in general.

The criminalization and even murders committed against communicators are historic, and many of these cases remain underreported. Assaults committed against communicators can be considered institutionalized, ideological political violence, and it is important to emphasize that criminalizing and censoring communication is yet another serious violation of rights, which undermines a full democracy in our country.



Political and electoral violence

All violence in the field of human rights is political, but here we are specifically dealing with electoral political violence¹⁷. We took into account the data/information referring to human rights defenders who ran for office and/or were elected, as well as those who worked in campaigns or served in parliamentary terms and experienced an increase in violations due to their work in the field of human rights.

The routine episodes of political violence constitute a serious violation of human rights. By creating obstacles or preventing political participation and the functioning of public institutions, and thus interfering with or interrupting elective offices, electoral political violence compromises the integrity of democracy itself.

Violence in cases of racism, sexism, and LGBTQIA+ phobia not only affects individuals but disrupts processes of representation and effective political participation of many groups, especially women, the black population, and other historically vulnerable groups.

This can be seen in the recent and numerous registered cases against cis and trans black candidates during the electoral period and which continue after their election, often extending to their advisors and family members.

This research brings alarming data on political violence against defenders of rights. In total, 113 episodes of political and electoral violence were recorded against 72 human rights defenders who held or sought positions in the Executive or Legislative at the federal, state, or municipal levels.

17. All physical acts or psychological intimidation committed, directly or through third parties, by a person or group of people, whether or not holding positions of political representation or elective offices, with the aim of attacking life, assaulting, threatening, offending or illegitimately restricting, by any means, the full development and political participation of party leaders and elected representatives, candidates and pre-candidates, as well as the legitimate and regular functioning of institutions and public services, thus compromising fundamental democratic values of political society. In addition to physical acts, psychological intimidation and/or discrimination, aggression, dissemination of hate speech and offensive content against historically discriminated groups, in particular elected persons, candidates, pre-candidates, or those designated to hold positions of public and/or political representation, with the goal of suspending, interrupting, restricting or destabilizing their free and full exercise of representation and political participation.

Peripheral regions, the countryside, and historically discriminated groups – which face under-representation and obstacles to political participation – are disproportionately affected by political violence, which compromises the quality of representation in a democracy.

With the vertiginous growth of attacks and threats against black cis and trans women parliamentarians and their advisors, we must understand mandates collectively. Political advisors and coordinators have also been the target of political violence; in most cases, they carried out previous work in the field of human rights.

It is important to remember that Brazil is one of the most violent countries against those who defend rights. Combating political and electoral violence requires specific instruments and spaces, with conditions for verification, investigation, and accountability, but above all, conditions to develop and adopt preventive and non-repetition measures, which take into account the

specificities of each parliamentarian and the need to maintain and continue their work.

The lack of accountability in episodes of political violence implies, on the one hand, that victims are not adequately treated nor receive any kind of justice. On the other hand, there is the message that the law of the strongest has won, that is, a tacit authorization for violent processes to be triggered or encouraged, as they will not be interrupted or sanctioned.

Many of the parliamentarians who have endured political violence in the electoral process had to bear the expenses to increase their security and many ended up in debt, since they did not have support from the State or from their own parties. In the process of monitoring threat situations, human rights organizations encountered obstacles in accessing international emergency funds, because these funds understand that the State must be the guarantor of the protection and security of parliamentarians.

Violence against defenders in forced evictions

In recent years, there has been a major dismantling of public policies that are central to tackling inequality in the access to urban and rural land and tenure security. The interruption of agrarian reform policies, housing production, and land regularization of social interest, as well as the titling of traditional, indigenous and *quilombola* territories, meant huge social retrocession and placed entire populations in a situation of insecurity and greater vulnerability to land grabbers, real estate speculation, judicial evictions, and even illegal evictions without a court order.

There was an impressive deterioration of social ills amid the Covid-19 pandemic, which was the health crisis with the greatest impact in recent history. Despite the scientific consensus that protection required everyone to stay at home — especially when there was no vaccine and hospitals were overcrowded — many families did not have this option, being subject to the violence of eviction.

Forced evictions deprive low-income populations in rural and urban areas of housing, a fundamental need for a dignified human life. Evictions also jeopardize their access to a range of other rights, such as health, food, education, employment, and security, with serious harm to children, the elderly, people with disabilities, pregnant women, and others. People are subjected to frequent physical and property violence by public security forces or in private illegal actions. In addition, evictions most often occur without providing adequate housing alternatives or any type of compensation, leaving people homeless and in a position of great vulnerability. These practices harm entire communities, often destroying social and economic ties established over the years.

It was in this context that the *Zero Eviction Campaign - in defense of life in the countryside and the city* was articulated, heir to a legacy of social struggles that have been built over decades by popular social movements, especially in the context of re-democratization, such as rural social movements fighting for land and the various national urban reform movements. Officially launched on July 23,

2020, the campaign brought together other national and local movements, civil society and class organizations, college groups, associations, national networks such as the National Forum for Urban Reform (FNRU) and BR Cidades, as well as public institutions, such as the Federal and State Public Defender's Offices.

This powerful popular coalition made it possible to secure several victories in the face of an end-of-the-world scenario. Based on the intense work of the Mapping Group that was set up within the campaign, it was possible to bring perspective and visibility to the issue of evictions — a tragedy that, although the reality of thousands of families, is a highly invisible social problem.

The National Mapping of Conflicts for Land and Housing shows that, today, more than one million people are threatened with eviction in the country (DESPEJO ZERO, 2023). From March 2020 — the beginning of the pandemic — to October 2022, the number of evictions grew by more than 350% (CAMPANHA DESPEJO ZERO, 2022, p. 9). There were at least 36,566 families evicted in the period. Making up the total contingent of families evicted and under threat of eviction there are 162,595 children, 159,742 elderly people, 570,509 women, and 627,560 black people affected.

This reveals a situation of intense dispute over urban and rural land and

of violation of the right to housing. Human rights defenders who defend communities affected by evictions suffer specific impacts.

They face threats, hostilities, and violence from public and private agents who seek to delegitimize their work and silence their activities. Many, such as community leaders and social lawyers, are arbitrarily detained, criminalized, intimidated, or judicially persecuted for defending the rights of communities in the face of evictions and other threats to their territories.

At the same time, human rights defenders who are under threat of eviction or are actually evicted end up prevented, at least temporarily, from continuing the collective struggle for rights, as they have the material need to make their own existence viable by finding another place to live.

The impacts also extend to their work and activities. Threats and repressive actions limit their ability to defend communities' rights, which in turn challenges their collective capacity to address threats of evictions and related human rights violations.

The criminalization of human rights defenders can discourage others from getting involved in defending these rights, causing silencing and fear.

Therefore, territorial protection with the demarcation and titling of territories or other ways of guaranteeing the



tenure of human rights defenders and affected communities, combined with individual and collective security measures, is essential for the free claim of rights.

Brazil has been condemned on different occasions by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights for violations in collective land conflicts in which there was violence and death of human

rights defenders, such as community leaders (Xukuru Indigenous People and its members vs. Brazil) and lawyers (Gabriel Sales Pimenta vs. Brazil).

Thus, we reiterate that the defense of human rights is essential for a fair, democratic society, and the right to adequate housing, land, and territory is central to the fulfillment of life and claiming of rights.

Violence and impunity

Human rights defenders play an essential role in building a free, democratic, fair, and solidary society that promotes justice and the well-being of all.

However, this defense always faces numerous aggressions, threats, delegitimization, and violations. The lack of accountability of agents who propagate violence against human rights defenders is an obstacle to justice and equality.

In the year 2022, the Brazilian State was condemned internationally due to the impunity for the murder of human rights defender Gabriel Pimenta, on July 18, 1982, more than forty years ago.

The Inter-American Court of Human Rights concluded that the State “*failed to fulfill its obligation of acting with due diligence to seriously and thoroughly investigate the violent death of the human rights defender.*” It also understood that the State violated the reasonable time for investigation and processing of criminal and civil proceedings. The Court highlighted the collective impact of the unresolved crimes committed against human rights defenders, which have a frightening effect on others who, as a result, may give up fighting for their rights.

Impunity is one of the obstacles to seeking protection for human rights defenders. Brazil is among the four countries in the world with the highest rates of murder of defenders, while the homicide clearance rate is 37%, according to a study carried out by the Sou da Paz Institute.

Many cases are emblematic demonstrations of the existing structural impunity, because, despite intense social mobilization, there is no accountability for the perpetrators of the violations.

The murder of human rights defender and councilwoman Marielle Franco completed five years without a solution. Even her family members were only able to access the investigation files after five years and after intense mobilization, by the decision of the Superior Court of Justice.

Failure to guarantee the right of victims and their families to participate in the investigation stages violates the right of access to justice. According to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, in the case **Favela Nova Brasília v. Brazil**, ensuring the right of participation of family members “*means the possibility of making suggestions, receiving information, adding evidence, formulating allegations and, in short, asserting their rights.*” Also, according to the Court, “*The purpose of such participation must be access to justice, knowledge of the truth of the facts, and the eventual granting of fair reparation.*”

Continued impunity regarding violations sends a message to society. The lack of accountability is one of the causes of the persisting violations and attacks, indicating which bodies can be killed.

As organizations that work to protect the right to defend rights, we consider it important to always remember the names of human rights defenders who fight for justice.

Antônio Tavares, human rights defender who fought for the right to land in Paraná, was murdered in 2000. After 23 years of international litigation, he is still waiting for the State to guarantee his right to justice, as is **Sebastião Camargo**, a landless worker murdered in 1998, also in Paraná. His murderer, the landowner and then president of the Rural Democratic Union (UDR), managed three times to annul his conviction by a jury. After 24 years, the crime remains unaccountable.

As is the case of **Guarani-Nhandevá leader Marçal de Souza**, who fought so hard for his people and was cowardly slain with five shots at close range in his home in Campestre village, in Bela Vista (MS), on November 25, 1983. Those responsible for the crime were acquitted, even in the face of countless evidence.

Maria do Espírito Santo and her partner José Cláudio Ribeiro da Silva were killed in an ambush by gunmen at the Extractive Settlement Praia Alta-Piranheira, where they lived, in the municipality of Nova Ipixuna (PA), on May 24, 2011.

The couple worked in defense of the forest as a means of subsistence and for the creation of an extractive reserve in the settlement, where there was one of the last native areas of Brazil nuts in the region. The mastermind, sentenced to 60 years, is still at large.

On the same May 24th, but in 2017, the Pau D'Arco Massacre, in Pará, resulted in the brutal murder of 10 peasants, including **Jane Júlia**, the main target and leader of rural workers. Later, the main witness to the massacre was also murdered. The investigations did not identify the masterminds.

More than five years have passed since the murder of *quilombola* **Flávio Gabriel Pacífico dos Santos, known as Binho do Quilombo**, who was killed for fighting for the rights of his Pitanga dos Palmares community, in the metropolitan region of Salvador.

The year 2022 began with the terrible news of a family of environmentalists murdered for their activism. On January 9, **José Gomes**, 61, known as “Zé do Lago”; his wife, **Márcia Nunes Lisboa**, 39; and daughter, **Joene Nunes Lisboa**, 17, were found with gunshot wounds on the family property, a farm located in Cachoeira do Mucura, on the banks of the Xingu River, in the municipality of

São Félix do Xingu (PA). More than a year later, the killers have not been identified.

On behalf of these defenders, systematically attacked, threatened, murdered, stigmatized, and criminalized, as well as on behalf of the defenders murdered during the period of this research, namely **Paulo Paulino Guajajara, Dilma Ferreira, Dom Phillips, Bruno Pereira**, and **Fernando dos Santos Araújo**, we ask for justice.

Impunity is one aspect of both the criminalization of the struggle and the perpetuation of violence against human rights defenders.

In addition to the brutal physical death, there is also moral death, that is, the disqualification and criminalization of the legitimacy of their struggles. Thus, the State must urgently create a sphere that honors the memory and truth of human rights defenders murdered, criminalized, and threatened for their trajectory in the defense of human rights.

The State has the obligation to create specific laws so that there is due respect for the activity of human rights defenders, considering the importance of their work for the fulfillment of citizenship for all people.

Public protection policy during the Bolsonaro government

The public policy for the protection of human rights defenders emerged in Brazil in 2004, thanks to the actions of civil society and popular movements and given the State's obligation to guarantee special protection to defenders. This is an essential public policy, as the continuity of the struggle of those who defend human rights depends on it. Ensuring the protection of human rights defenders means ensuring the continuity of democracy and the achievement of rights.

In the last four years, the retrocession of rights and the implementation of austerity policies represented the aggravation of human rights violations: interruption of the demarcation of indigenous lands, the titling of *quilombola* territories, and the implementation of agrarian reform, in addition to the absence of urban housing policies and the intensification of political violence, with human rights defenders as the main targets of hate speech and attacks.

The period we analyzed was marked by the increase in systematic violence against human rights defenders, the retrocession of rights, and by public statements by political authorities further fomenting attacks, such as those by the then-president Jair Bolsonaro, who said about the legislation that facilitates the carrying of guns:



My fellow rural worker who owns a farm, you no longer have to worry about waking up to your farm being demarcated as an indigenous or *quilombola* land. [...] I believe you already own a gun; you can now use the weapon you already have; you can use it within the entire perimeter of your farm.¹⁸



18. Statement made by Jair Bolsonaro in a conversation with supporters on July 26, 2021.

Besides the atmosphere of insecurity in the defense of rights and the retrocessions in the last four years, the Protection Policy went through a process of absolute dismantling during this period, having its existence threatened by several factors such as a) low budget execution; b) lack of social participation and transparency; c) low institutionalization; d) lack of structure and staff to meet the demands; e) decrease in cases referred to the federal level; f) political insecurity in management; g) inadequacy regarding gender, race, and class in the policy; and h) delayed, insufficient, and inadequate protective measures.

The participation of civil society in the Program's National Coordination was abolished by Decree No. 8,724/2016, which established the Deliberative Council, without any social participation. In 2019, communicators and environmentalists were included by Decree No. 9,937 in the program's protection list.

In 2021, Decree No. 10,815 amended Article 5 of Decree No. 9,937, modifying the composition of the Deliberative Council (ConDel), including three seats for civil society participation, while adding another three seats to the state composition. An abysmal gap remained, with only 30% of seats destined for civil society.

It should be noted that the allocation of seats to civil society until the end of the period, December 2022, was never carried out. There was a public call launched by the Ministry in the first half of 2022, but the process lacked transparency and was suspended after

criticism, due to permanent advocacy of civil society through its articula-

tions, such as the Brazilian Committee of HRDs, or the continuous monitoring of the policy by the CNDH, through the HRDs Commission.

In addition to reiterating the problematic points of the decree, Ordinance 507 of February 21, 2022, which replaced Ordinance 300/2018 and regulates the Protection Program, brings other retrogressions. One of them is the inclusion of a new phase in the procedure for joining the PPDDH, which consists of the admissibility examination being carried out by the executing entity, and not by the Deliberative Council. Another is the increase in circumstances that restrict people from being able to benefit from the PPDDH.

The report on the public policy released by Terra de Direitos and Justiça Global at the end of 2022 details the many existing problems, including a) the aforementioned regulatory retrocessions within the scope of the program; b) the utter lack of transparency, which makes it necessary to file requests based on the Access to Information Law (Law 12,527, of November 18, 2011) in order to obtain basic information such as which states have accredited teams and their contacts; c) the lack of social participation, which makes it difficult to advance the discussion towards a more comprehensive understanding of what a protection policy should be; d) programs and mechanisms do not have adequate resources to think about more structural and less symbolic protective measures; e) the lack of resources hinders the possibility of training and the programs lack trained personnel.

We must not forget that, during this period, the protection policy was under the command of the then Minister Damares Alves, one of the main voices supporting Jair Bolsonaro and responsible for numerous attacks on human rights.

In the first half of Bolsonaro's term – 2019 and 2020 – budget execution was 62.1% and 52%, respectively. In 2021, after the release of the report “The beginning of the end”, which criticized the budget execution of the program, the government executed, in the last two months of the year, the equivalent of what was paid until the middle of the year, ending with a budget execution of 146.7%. The payment at the end of the year impairs the assistance given to the defenders since it is a period of recess or vacation, when the structures and services of the State and society are largely suspended, causing a delay in the implementation of protective actions.

The budget is one of the main challenges of the Protection Program that needs to be overcome so that it can move from this position called “The beginning of the end.”

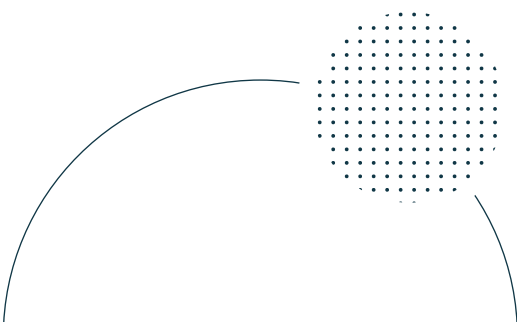
In this sense, in the next period, public managers should prioritize overcoming

structural problems in this area, through the approval of a national protection plan, as well as of a legal framework that deals with the public policy.

Broad participation of civil society in all building processes must be guaranteed, implementing a policy that respects society's autonomy when choosing its own representatives in the spaces for discussion and decision-making.

The challenges of building concrete protections must be tackled, considering the perspective of integral protection (physical, digital, psychological/emotional, legal), as well as understanding the individual, family and community protective policy. Intersectional discussions on gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, and regions must also be considered for a broader understanding of the issues that affect the lives of protected communities and individuals.

It is also crucial to face the structural causes of violations, carrying out public policies for the demarcation of indigenous lands, titling of *quilombola* territories, implementation of agrarian reform, and creation of urban housing policies, among others.



Recommendations

Based on the analysis of the data presented in this report and based on other surveys carried out by Justiça Global and Terra de Direitos, a set of recommendations was prepared with the aim of supporting the construction of a mobilization and political advocacy agenda that seeks to strengthen public policies aimed at protecting human rights defenders. We hope that it encourages the organization of public policies to face the structural issues that generate threats, attacks, and murders and strengthens human rights defenders' work in their territories.

Justiça Global and Terra de Direitos also corroborate numerous other recommendations made by civil society organizations and networks such as the Brazilian Committee of Human Rights Defenders, the Pastoral Land Commission (CPT), the Missionary Council for Indigenous Peoples (CIMI), and by international organizations, such as those produced by the United Nations Universal Periodic Review (UPR) and the decision of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights in the case of Sales Pimenta v. Brazil and the Esperanza Protocol (PLE).

1

To strengthen federal and state programs for the protection of human rights defenders, communicators, and environmentalists to ensure their structuring, qualification, and continuity of action in all federative units and the Federal District.

2

to approve a federal legal framework for the protection policy for human rights defenders, communicators, and environmentalists and its regulation, in broad consultation with civil society.

3

to ensure social participation in the construction of the National Plan for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, Communicators, and Environmentalists, including civil society entities and social movements in the process of developing, debating, and defining the policy, at the federal, state and district levels.

4

to expand the representation of civil society in Deliberative Councils, ensuring parity of seats between State bodies and entities operating in the thematic field, in order to effect social participation in decision-making spaces of the policy and federal, state and district programs.

5

to strengthen the institutionalization process of state programs through the establishment of specific actions, aimed at facilitating the dialogues and connections necessary to promote and edit state and district laws that create programs in the territories.

6

to develop actions focused on the production of data related to federal, state and district programs, which allow the monitoring of the implementation of the public policy for the protection of human rights defenders in programs implemented by the respective governments.

7

to continuously contribute resources to enable the permanent execution of state programs accredited with the federal government.

8

to promote the transparency of information regarding the implementation of the PPDDH in the states, in particular, to publicize the following data: entity executing the program; details of the allocated, committed and paid budget, considering the Federal Government and states compensation; composition of the technical team (not by appointing names, just informing the number of employees and their area of specialization/operation); up-to-date disclosure of applicable regulations, including state regulations; composition of the Deliberative Council; the number of requests filed, granted, rejected and archived per month, observing their distribution by gender, race and area of advocacy; requirements for joining the program and protective measures made available;

9

to promote the transparency of information regarding the enforcement of the federal PPDDH, in particular, to publicize the following data: details of the allocated, committed, and paid budget; composition of the technical team (not by appointing names, just informing the number of employees and their area of specialization/operation); disclosure of applicable regulations, including ordinances/decrees/resolutions; composition of the Deliberative Council; the number of requests filed, granted, rejected and archived per month, observing their distribution by gender, race, and area of advocacy;

10

to build and publicize the methodology for risk analysis by the PPDDH at the state and federal levels, as well as train technical teams and other agents working with the programs.

11

continuity of state programs, to avoid gaps, periods in which the program will be without a hired team, available resources and signed agreement.

12

monitoring and standardizing requirements for admission of individuals to the program, avoiding conditions not supported by federal legislation.

13

to understand the threats and those who fight from the perspectives of race and gender, in order to qualify the protective policy.

14

to create a stage in the proceedings with the purpose of articulating public policies to face the structural issues that generate threats, attacks, criminalization, and murder.

15

to create a specialized stage to investigate cases of threats, attacks, and homicides related to the work of human rights defenders.

16

complaints or information about threats must always be received by the authorities of the criminal justice system and by the Programs for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, Communicators, and Environmentalists, regardless of the internal division of attribution and competence, and the receiving body must forward the complaint or information to the body with attribution or competence for its proper processing;

17

investigations of threats, attacks, and homicides must be thorough. To ratify and implement ECLAC's (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean) Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean – the Escazú Agreement.



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Accomplishment:

