

ABR  JI

Monitoring of **attacks** on **Journalists** in Brazil



2022
report

The Brazilian Association of Investigative Journalism (Abraji) is a non-profit organization founded in 2002 by a group of professional journalists interested in improving the quality of Brazilian journalism. The association has as its pillars the professional training of journalists, the defense of freedom of expression, and the right to public information. Its principal activities involve organizing face-to-face and online courses; holding the International Congress of Investigative Journalism; producing content through news, guides for the exercise of the profession, projects that contribute to the full practice of journalism, and monitoring the freedom of expression and press in the country. These actions are combined with legal protection, litigation, and advocacy to promote the defense of the mentioned rights. To learn more, please visit <https://abraji.org.br/>

PRESIDENT **Katia Brembatti**

BOARD OF DIRECTORS **Amanda Rossi, Luiz Fernando Toledo,
Cecília Olliveira, Gabi Coelho,
Patricia Campos Mello, Sérgio Spagnuolo,
Thays Lavor, Tiago Mali e Tiago Rogero**

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY **Cristina Zahar**

EXECUTIVE MANAGER **Maria Cleidejane Esperidião**

REPORT DRAFT **Rafaela Sindferski e Leticia Kleim**

**DATA COLLECTION AND
PROCESSING** **Rafaela Sindferski**

**GRAPHIC DESIGN AND
LAYOUT** **Raquel Prado**

REVIEW **Cristina Zahar e Paula Neiva**

Realization

ABRAJI

Suport

**PADF**
PAN AMERICAN DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION

**VOCES
DEL SUR**

Executive Summary

The Monitoring of Attacks on Journalists conducted by **the Brazilian Association of Investigative Journalism (Abraji)** annually collects, analyzes, and discloses information about freedom of expression and the press in Brazil. It aims to help a better understanding of the situation of violence against journalists, communicators, and media in the country, allowing its causes and impacts to be discussed broadly by press professionals, civil society organizations, public officials, and citizens. This second edition of the report is a product of the systematic work done in 2022 and gathers data and contexts focused on the specific features of the Brazilian scenario.

Throughout 2022, Abraji's monitoring recorded **557¹** attacks on journalists, media, and the press – **23%** more than in 2021. The year was marked by political violence against communication professionals, with **31.6%** of cases directly connected to electoral coverage. In **56.7%** of the cases, one or more perpetrators were state agents, such as legislators, rulers, and public officials. Due to differences in the methodology adopted by the various organizations that monitor violations of press freedom in Brazil, these numbers may vary from one survey to another.

1 After processing the data and writing the report, Abraji became aware of another case of gender violence against a woman journalist. The episode, which falls under the category of “Stigmatizing speech”, took place in the state of São Paulo, in February 2022. The aggressor was a non-state agent. Underreporting and lack of access to cases and complaints are obstacles faced by the monitoring. Abraji values transparency in its methodology and, therefore, considers it important to mention the episode reported in this note. However, the alert was not accounted for in the data presented throughout the report.

Abraji has monitored violations against the press independently since 2013. In 2019, it began working with the Voces del Sur Network (VdS), which brings together 16 Latin American and Caribbean countries, recording their progress toward the 16.10.1 Sustainable Development Goal of the UN 2030 Agenda. Before 2022 – and the launch of Abraji’s first Monitoring Report – data on Brazil was published exclusively in the Shadow Report, an annual VdS publication.

Currently, there are **13** indicators of types of aggression that are the basis of monitoring and that can occur independently or jointly. This and other methodological issues of the project follow a standard matrix developed by the VdS network to allow comparisons between the member countries. It also includes characteristics of the attacks, information about the victim, their work, place of work, gender, and age, and data about the perpetrator, such as name, gender, and classification based on occupation. Cross-sectional variables related to gender attacks and cases that arise or echo on the Internet are also part of the survey.

Due to the 2022 general elections, the monitoring registered political violence against press professionals in particular. During the presidential campaign, **51** attacks were identified involving presidential candidates – Jair Bolsonaro (PL) was the runner who most attacked the press. The then-President and his three sons with political mandates were responsible for **41.6%** of the year’s attacks. The anti-democratic acts that did not accept the result of the presidential election – carried out in support of Bolsonaro – were behind **12%** of all aggression cases.

Stigmatizing discourses are still the most common form of attack, present in **61.2%** of the situations recorded. But physical violence – accompanied by intimidation, harassment, and threats – was also part of the daily lives of journalists: **31.2%** of the total cases were classified as

“aggressions and attacks.” In addition, the Internet remains a hostile ground for journalism professionals. **63.4%** of the attacks collected throughout the year were seeded or fed on online environments, with a negative emphasis on social media platforms. Hence, this data set 2022 as the most violent year for the press since Abrají’s monitoring began.

Given these results, it is recommended that:

- Journalists should seek safer working practices and tools, besides recording and accusing the attacks, contributing to the non-normalization of this type of violence.
- The outlets and media companies support their professionals – hired, contractors, or freelancers – with training and prevention of attacks, providing the necessary support, including legal in case of any aggression, and welcoming and encouraging that these cases be denounced.
- Social media platforms should strengthen processes of identifying and controlling aggressive content and hate speech, updating internal policies and moderation algorithms, following the evolution of online violence, and adapting a procedure for denunciation and mitigation of attacks on journalists and victims of massive campaigns and hate speech.
- The government should strengthen public policies to protect journalists, combat impunity in crimes against journalists, and advance legislation proposals to protect press freedom. In addition to not leading or encouraging attacks on journalists, the government must ensure public transparency and the safety of journalists in the coverage.

Index

1. Introduction, 8
2. Methodology, 11
3. Monitoring Results, 15
 - a. Historical Series, 15
 - b. Regionalization of Attacks, 18
 - c. Types of Aggression, 20
 - d. Perpetrators, 24
 - e. Targets, 26
4. Gender Violence, 29
5. Political Violence During the Elections, 37
6. Conclusions and Recommendations, 41



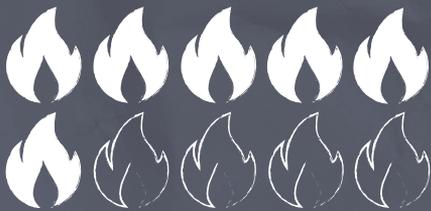
In 2022,

577 alerts of violations of press freedom were recorded in the country.

An increase of **23%** compared to 2021



61.2% of cases were stigmatizing discourses



31.2% of violent episodes involved physical aggression, intimidation, threats, and/or destruction of equipment



56.7% had state agents as perpetrators

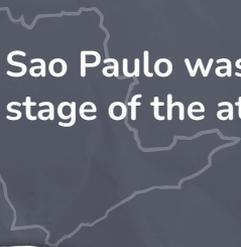


41.6% of the attacks were carried out by members of the Bolsonaro family



31.6% of the attacks were linked to electoral coverage

Sao Paulo was the main stage of the attacks



63.4% of the attacks originated or had repercussions on the Internet

265

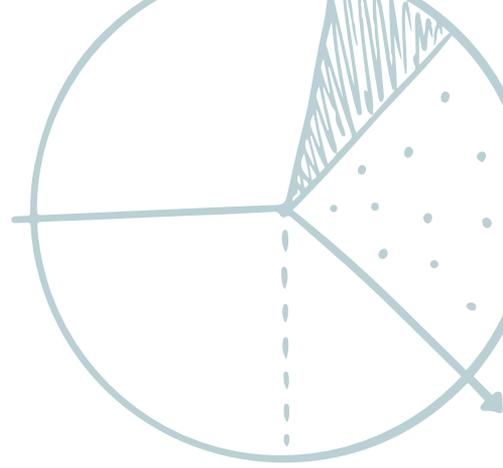
cases targeted media outlets and the media in general

324

targeted individuals, such as journalists, photojournalists, and other press professional



There were **145** explicit gender attacks and/or assaults on women journalists



1. Introduction

For the second consecutive year, the **Brazilian Association of Investigative Journalism (Abraji)** has recorded in an exclusive report the aggressions against journalists in the country. Despite being the result of a work systematized since 2019, it is the second time that Abraji has consolidated data, reports, and analyses on violence against journalists in the country in a publication. Each year, this data has also been part of the Shadow Report produced by the Voces del Sur Network (VdS), which gathers figures collected in 16 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. For the first time, this report brings the results of monitoring of gender-biased attacks, a result of the Gender Violence Against Journalists project¹ launched by Abraji in 2021 with the support of UNESCO.

The objective of this work is to contribute to the understanding of the situation of press freedom in the country, producing knowledge from a methodology that guarantees the comparative and scientific approach of the data. The data collected about different forms in greater or lesser severity of the violence suffered by media professionals,

1 <https://violenciagenerojornalismo.org.br/>

media outlets, or the press enable a reading of the current context. It points to recommendations for the public authorities, journalism companies, the public sector, organized civil society, and social media platforms to minimize violence, prevent future attacks, and deal with them.

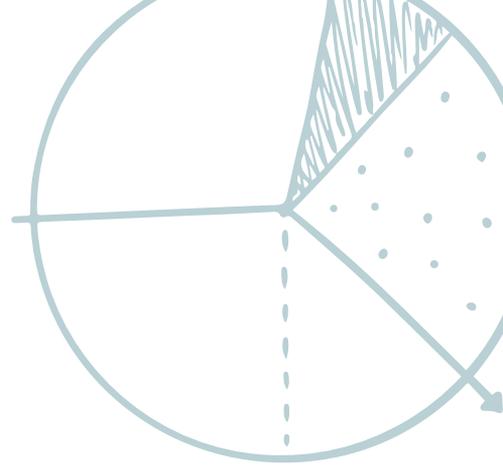
Since it relates to the context of 2022, this report will serve as a record of the closure of Jair Bolsonaro's (PL) government. The change may not mean the end of violence against journalists – which, just as it did not start with Bolsonaro, does not end with his defeat in the elections. But it indeed profoundly changed the scenario and situation of press freedom in the country and altered the path to be followed by the actors involved in combating violations of these rights.

The year 2022 saw a worrying increase of **23%** in the total number of attacks compared to the previous period. We are still witnessing stigmatizing discourses delivered by the now former President and his main supporters – politicians with legislative mandates or influential public figures who have been on the pulpits in recent years, especially on social networks, to propagate a narrative of disbelief and mistreatment of the press. They include direct offenses against journalists, media outlets selected as frequent targets, and speeches that ceaselessly discredited the work of the media in general.

The result is an inflamed audience that propagates hate speech against journalists on and off social media. The violence goes beyond the limit between online and offline. A slight increase in the most severe violent attacks was registered, with more physical aggression, threats, destruction of equipment, and even a growth in the number of murders.

The pre-election and especially the post-election period highlighted how political violence and violence against the press are added to the hands of groups that, to attack democracy, need to validate the silencing of journalists. And

it reinforces that a democratic environment depends on a free and diverse press, safe to provide the population with information on matters of public interest. The monitoring aims to contribute to the defense of a more democratic ecosystem, maintaining vigilance over attacks against journalists.



2. Methodology

This document is the second edition of Abraji's report on monitoring attacks against journalists in the country. The Abraji team has developed it as part of the work to monitor violence against press professionals. It is part of the methodology and the Shadow Report produced by the Voces del Sur Network (VdS), which follows the issue throughout Latin America. Although the methodology applied by Abraji has specificities adopted due to the Brazilian context, the results are calculated in the work developed by the Network and deserve further detailing for a better understanding.

Since its foundation, Abraji has publicly positioned itself on emblematic cases of violence against journalists through repudiation notes. They not only charge actions from public authorities and other people involved to combat these practices but also have the role of registering for their public and society the situation of press freedom in the country. The monitoring began to be carried out constantly from the national protests of 2013 and systematically since 2019, following the VdS methodology.

Created in 2018, the Latin American Network Voces del Sur (VdS) developed its monitoring methodology to collect data about violations of press freedom that are comparable in

time and space. The procedure is currently applied in 16 countries of the region by civil society organizations, just as Abraji does in Brazil. The starting point of this work is the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda created by the UN. SDG 16, which deals with Peace, Justice, and Effective Institutions, is detailed in goals such as 16.10, which involves access to public information and protecting fundamental freedoms. VdS monitoring translated the 16.10.01 indicator into measurable categories of violence against journalists in the region. Currently, there are 13 indicators of different types of aggression. They are:

1. murders
2. torture
3. enforced disappearance
4. arbitrary detention
5. kidnapping
6. aggression and attacks
7. abusive use of state power
8. civil and criminal judicial proceedings
9. legal framework contrary to international parameters
10. restrictions on access to information
11. stigmatizing discourses
12. restrictions on the Internet
13. sexual violence

New Indicator

The 13th indicator, on sexual violence, was new to the VdS methodology in the last year, which is constantly under discussion and is updated to better adapt to the reality of countries and organizations. This indicator is part of a process of awareness of the Network for the gender issue that acts in a transversal way concerning other forms of violence against press professionals. Abraji contributed to this process with the specific monitoring of gender violence in journalism started in 2021 - this work will be further detailed.

As well as the categorization of types of violence, the methodology brings definitions and categorizations about victims, perpetrators, and circumstances of the case. They include whether aggressions can be understood as a gender

attack in the case of being observed and the use of some aspect related to gender or sexuality as a form of violence.

The cases are counted as “alerts,” and the most serious ones are disclosed as repudiation notes on the Abraji website. All of them are registered and categorized for the production of the report. In this report, each case is considered a specific circumstance that may involve one or more victims, types of aggression, and more than one aggressor, but which are counted as one – different from the count performed by the Voces del Sur network in the annual Shadow Reports.

Abraji’s team adopts some specificities to record the cases, such as special monitoring of the attacks that occurred in the electoral context and gender monitoring, which has its methodology designed under the Gender Violence Against Journalists project carried out in 2021 with UNESCO funding. In this report, gender monitoring has its chapter since the methodology brings more detailed and in-depth variables and analysis to the question.

In addition to recording cases, the methodology applied by Abraji brings detailed parameters on how the data should be collected and processed to enable the numbers to be comparable over time, ensuring the scientific approach of the analysis. To underreport cases is a problem that generally affects the violence monitoring surveys, considering the dimensions of a country such as Brazil, the risk situation of the victims, and even the stigmatization that follows the act of disclosing the attack, especially in cases of gender violence.

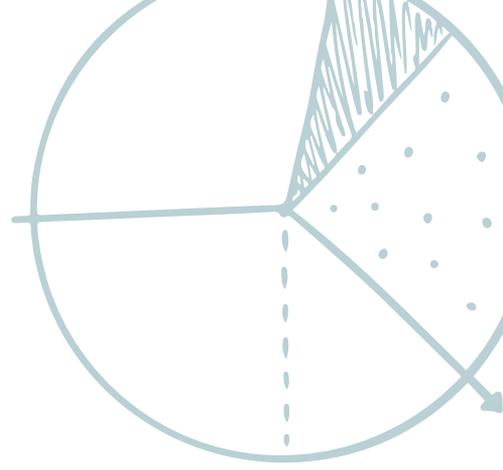
Therefore, it is necessary to combine different sources of information to minimize underreporting and meet the limitations of one or the other. Data is collected through the monitoring of news and exposures in the press, the continuous monitoring of social networks by key words of aggression and by usual aggressors, and the sharing of information by partner organizations, in addition to complaints made

directly to Abrajil and through forms of [gender](#) and [political violence](#) cases. Still, it should be noted that the survey has blind spots – it may not have recorded other instances of violence against journalists in the country, which does not invalidate the analysis due to its methodology.

After being collected, the cases are determined by the team that will first identify whether the aggression occurred due to the exercise of the profession, besides checking if the victim fits the definition of journalist and communicator used by the UN. It is essential to note that, in addition to reporters, the methodology also includes as victims photojournalists, media editors and executives, press workers in general (drivers and other professionals involved in the coverage), journalistic content producers, and other targets such as the media outlets themselves.

Perpetrators may be people or entities that violate the freedom of the press of their targets from any of the forms of aggression detailed above and are classified among state actors, non-state actors, quasi-governmental actors, unlawful groups, or unidentified agents. In this case, actions may be direct, physical or verbal, or indirect, with judicial proceedings or abusive use of the state power, for example, but always driven to prevent, restrict, or limit the victim's professional activity.

After verifying and selecting those that fit the methodology and indicators used, the cases are recorded and classified according to the variables developed to account for them and qualify them for the production of the analyses brought to follow. The detailing of these variables – as well as the most emblematic cases of the year 2022 – are shown in the next topic, together with the results and numbers extracted from the monitoring.



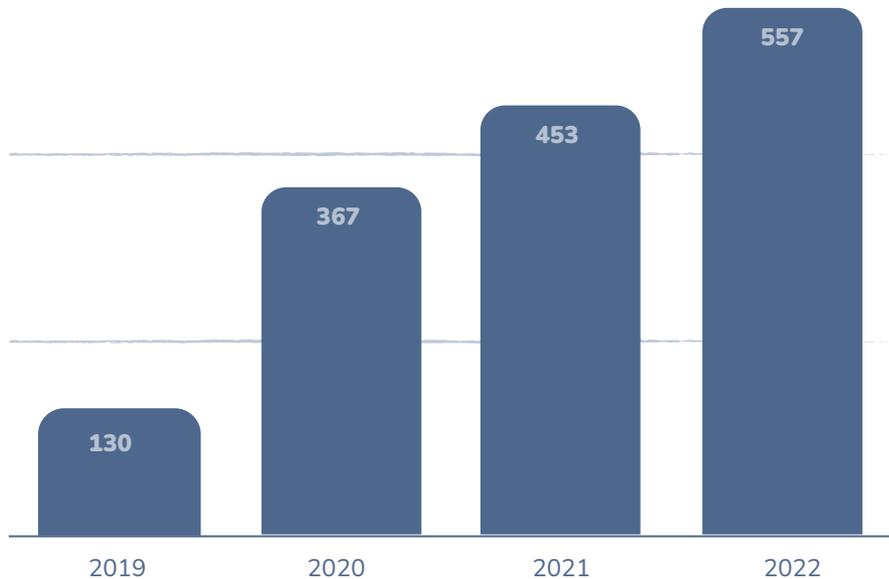
3. Monitoring Results

a. Historical Series

As detailed in the methodological chapter, this is the second edition of Abrají's report on violence against journalists based on a continuous monitoring work carried out by the association since 2019. Over four years of daily follow-up to attacks on the press and its professionals, the trend of increasing numbers of registered cases has remained.

The historical series recorded by Abrají begins with **130** cases in 2019, followed by **367** cases in 2020, **453** in 2021, and finally, in 2022, reaches **557** alerts of press freedom violations. Thus, it means that, from 2019 to now, there was a total increase of **328%** – only between 2021 and 2022, a 23% increase was observed. The following chart highlights these points.

Attacks on Journalists Over the Years



When we compare the information collected with a brief context of the social and political situation of the country and its influence on press freedom, we can better understand what has allowed such growth over time. The four years of monitoring overlap with the term of Jair Bolsonaro (PL), who left the presidential office after the election of Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva (PT) in October 2022.

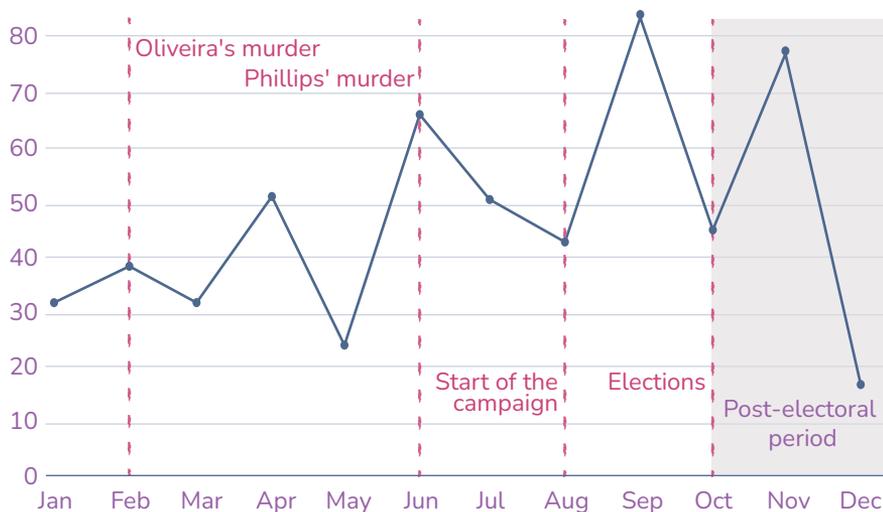
This cycle, which left marks of precariousness and weakening in the protection of various fundamental human rights, had a devastating effect on the protection of press freedom. Even before being elected, Jair Bolsonaro (PL) routinely included in his speeches comments that – in addition to discrediting and de-legitimizing the work of the press – tend to offend or insult media workers.

The year 2022 was marked by a high-ranking effort of the federal government, including the former President's main supporters, sons, and allied politicians, to inflate the

population against journalists and the press. As a result, there was a more significant number of attacks and an increase in severe aggressions. The graph below shows the number of alerts month by month.

Attacks over the year

Number of cases and main events of 2022



[CLICK HERE TO ACCESS THE INTERACTIVE CHART](#)

Although there is a considerable monthly variation, it is possible to identify a growing upward trend throughout the year that culminated in September and November, corresponding to the pre- and post-election periods.

The data visualization shows how attacks against journalists can be viewed as political violence. To begin with, they are led or mobilized by state or non-state actors who aim to silence these professionals and reduce their participation in the public debate. At the same time, they must be classified as attacks on democracy because they restrict access to information from society at a time when, to validate its political choice, it needs to be more equipped with the information provided by journalism.

Unlike in 2021, when no murders were registered, two professionals were killed in cases linked to the exercise of their profession: Givanildo Oliveira and Dom Phillips. Oliveira, 46 years old, was shot in his home in Pirambu, near Fortaleza, the state of Ceara. He was one of the founders of the local website Pirambu News and had received threats due to his reporting on local criminals. The murder occurred hours after the publication on the website of a story on the arrest of a homicide suspect².

British journalist Dom Phillips was killed in the Javari Valley region, in the west of the Brazilian Amazon, during an expedition alongside the Indigenous expert Bruno Pereira, also murdered³. Still unsolved, the crime has been reported in Brazil and worldwide, drawing attention to the unsafe conditions of journalists working in the country and risk and precariousness imposed on Indigenous people and those who work defending them, primarily due to permissiveness with the illegalities that abound in the region.

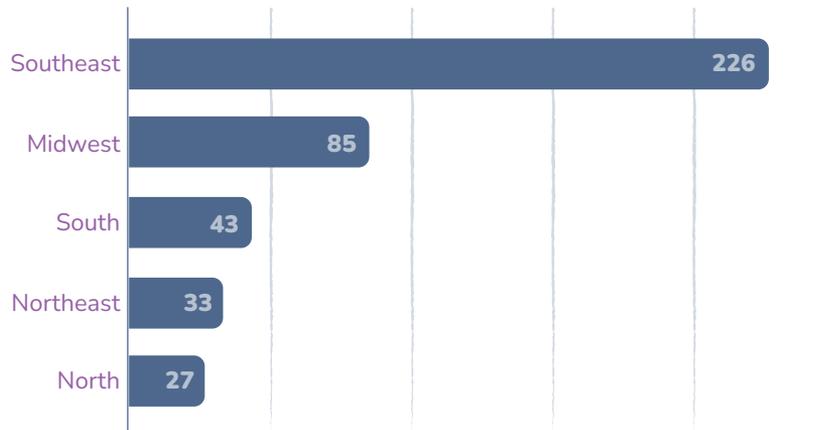
b. Regionalization of Attacks

The country's Southeast and Midwest regions concentrated most attacks recorded in 2022, with **226 (40.6%** of the total) and **85 (15.3%)** cases, respectively. In **143 (25.7%)** episodes of aggression, the region was registered as “not applicable” because they occurred on the Internet or reached professionals and media from different places. The other regions of Brazil accumulated less than 50 cases each.

2 <http://vocesdelsurunidas.org/incidentes/abraji-condena-el-asesinato-de-periodista-en-ceara/>

3 <https://www.abraji.org.br/abraji-se-une-aos-esforcos-para-localizar-jornalista-ingles-e-indigenista-desaparecidos-no-am>

Cases per region in Brazil

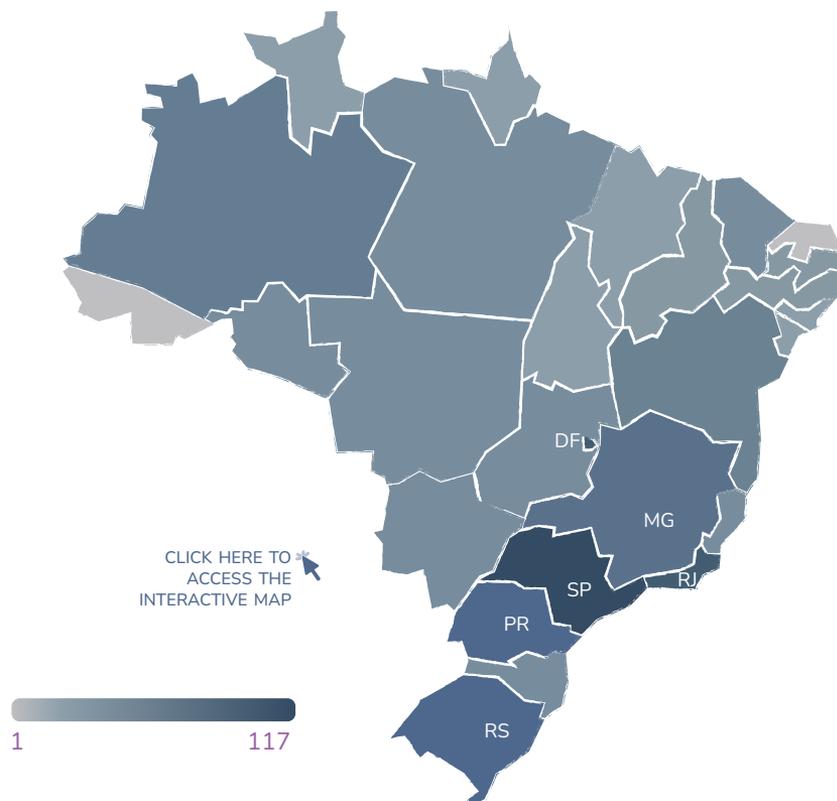


Among the states, Sao Paulo (**117, 21%** of the total) and Rio de Janeiro (**88, 15.8%**) emerge as the prominent locations regarding aggression to the press. These data repeat the 2021 trend, so their caveats should also be repeated. The concentration of journalists and media outlets in Southeast states influences the result. In addition to having more media companies in these places, the outlets with greater national reach, such as Rede Globo, Folha de S.Paulo, O Estado de S.Paulo, among others, have their headquarters in Sao Paulo or Rio de Janeiro. Therefore, the attacks suffered by professionals in the region are usually more reported. Due to the monitoring methodology, aggressions that receive more visibility and projection are more easily identified and recorded. Therefore, it is possible and probable that episodes that occurred in smaller cities, distant from the major centers, have remained out of the survey.

Brasilia appears as the third city in the ranking of attacks. There were **65 (11.7%)** cases in the country's capital due to the political manifestations and anti-democratic acts carried out in the city throughout the year, especially in the months of September, October, and November.

Attacks on the Press in Brazil

Number of cases recorded per state



c. Types of Aggression

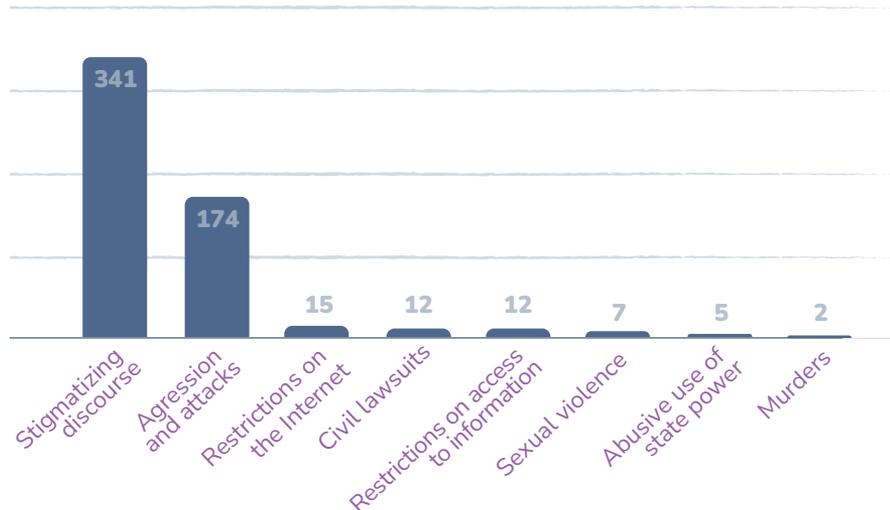
Data on the main forms of attack on the press in 2022 confirm a somber tradition: For the fourth year in a row, stigmatizing discourses lead the list of aggressions. The category covers public manifestations of verbal violence that arise to discredit and demoralize journalists and other press professionals. In 2022, 341 cases of this type were recorded – **61.2%** of the total, almost **one verbal attack per day**.

In **75.7% (285)** of stigmatizing discourses, perpetrators were state agents, such as public officials and politicians with active mandates. Internet users were involved

in **34.6% (118)** of recorded episodes of verbal violence. Another proof that the attacks are strongly related to the online environment, mainly social media platforms, is in this issue: **87.4% (298)** of stigmatizing discourses originated or had repercussions on the Internet.

In addition to offensive narratives, there are other forms of aggression involving the digital world, such as cyber threats and restrictions on the Internet – hacking, doxing, phishing, denial of service attacks, and other situations in which technology is used to restrict online participation or access to information. In all, 353 cases connected to the Internet were found, accounting for **63.4%** of the general attacks of 2022.

Types of Attacks



Coming second after the stigmatizing discourses, among the most common forms of violence in 2022 is the category “aggression and attacks,” which involves physical aggression, destruction of equipment, threats, and hostilities. It appeared in **31.2%** of the alerts recorded and represented

an increase of **102.3%** compared to 2021 when 86 episodes of this type were identified. This upsurge is worrying and mainly due to the electoral period, which began on August 16 and ended on October 30, 2022, but was the subject of debates and conflicts throughout the year.

By comparing the amount of “aggression and attacks” month by month, it is possible to realize that the peak of the category happened in the post-election period, after the second round of the presidential election, held on October 30. Before the first round, there was a high of stigmatizing discourses, showing that verbal violence became physical with the result of the elections.

Severe cases and verbal violence in 2022



In the seven days following the second round of the elections, 51 cases were recorded, and **94.1%** were considered severe situations of “aggression and attacks.” Most of the episodes occurred in the coverage of the

demonstrations of supporters of former President Jair Bolsonaro (PL), who was defeated at the polls. The “bolsonarists” camped in front of military bases and blocked highways – acts considered by the Supreme Federal Court (STF) as anti-democratic, illegal, and promoters of an attempt of a coup.

On October 30, for example, Nelson Garrone, a correspondent for CNN Portugal, and his team, composed of an audio operator and a video reporter, were physically assaulted while covering the camp in front of the Army headquarters in Brasilia. The next day, a reporter was intimidated and had his professional equipment damaged by truck drivers who blocked a road in Itaperuna (RJ). Political violence directed at journalists was intense, reaching legacy and independent media with no restrictions on gender, region, or type of vehicle.

For the first time, monitoring attacks on the press included in its methodology a category to record forms of sexual violence against communication professionals. In this group, cases of sexual harassment and harassment were included, as well as threats of rape. In 2022, **7** alerts, or **1.3%** of the registered cases, were classified this way. An emblematic episode occurred in June when journalist Vanessa Lippelt, then an editor for Congresso em Foco, suffered death and rape threats and had her data leaked on the Internet after publishing a report on pro-Bolsonaro fake news schemes organized in a forum on the website 1500chan.

Unlike 2021, as highlighted above, two murders of journalists were recorded in 2022. The data is yet another proof that the year was highly violent for professionals in the Brazilian press.

d. Perpetrators

Like in 2021, the main perpetrators in the alerts recorded in 2022 were classified as state agents. The group includes politicians, members of the Judiciary branch, institutions, government bodies, and public officials. These actors were involved in **56.7%** of the year's cases, issuing and frequently participating in stigmatizing discourses and campaigns against communicators.

Among the state agents who participated most in attacks throughout the year, stand out former President Jair Bolsonaro (PL) and his sons with legislative mandates, Eduardo Bolsonaro (PL-SP), Flavio Bolsonaro (PL-RJ), and Carlos Bolsonaro (Republicanos-SP). Their names appear among the perpetrators of aggression in **41.6%** of the total cases recorded in 2022. Their role is not new, as members of the Bolsonaro family also appeared as frequent aggressors in 2021. In general, the number of attacks they perpetrated remained stable, with a slight increase of **1.7%** in 2022. Most episodes were classified as “stigmatizing discourse” and shared on their social media accounts.

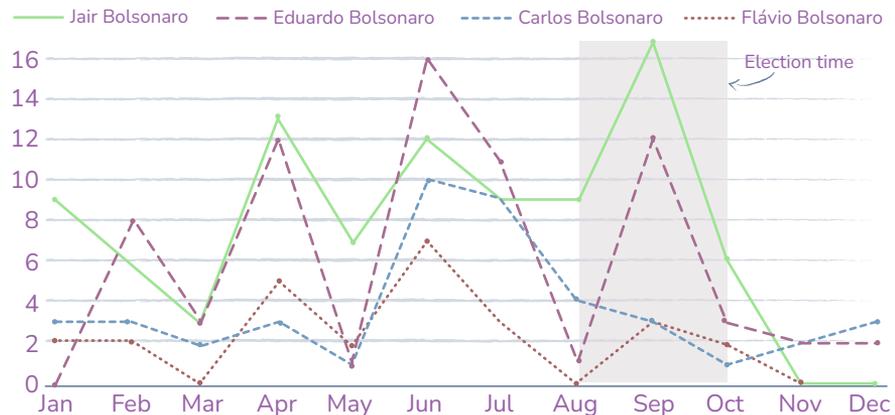
As 2022 was an electoral year, with these four members of the Bolsonaro family running for public office, their attacks on the press were expected to rise during the campaign from August 16 to September 30. The data partially proved the case because there was a peak of aggression linked to Jair Bolsonaro (PL), then candidate for re-election in September – but the same did not happen to the other family members. Starting in November, after the second round results, Bolsonaro and his sons were almost entirely absent from social media, leading to a fall in the number of attacks.

Attacks of the Bolsonaro family on the press

Number of cases involving its members in 2021 and 2022

Perpetrator	Position in 2022	Attacks in 2021 and 2022	Variation
Jair Bolsonaro	President (PL)	89 → 91	2
Eduardo Bolsonaro	Congressman (PL-SP)	64 → 71	7
Carlos Bolsonaro	Councilman (Republicanos-RJ)	72 → 44	-28
Flávio Bolsonaro	Senator (PL-RJ)	3 → 26	23

Attacks of the Bolsonaro family month-by-month



[CLICK HERE TO ACCESS THE INTERACTIVE CHART](#)

After the state agents, the second most frequent perpetrators in the monitoring were classified as “unidentified,” appearing in **43.6%** of the alerts. In this group, there are Internet users who are usually connected to massive campaigns of online disbelief. The group also includes protesters such as Jair Bolsonaro (PL) supporters involved in anti-democratic activities after the second round of the elections. The category of non-state agents – encompassing identified citizens, prominent figures without public positions, businesspeople, sports team fans, and other press professionals – appears in

22.1% of the monitored episodes. Only **0.5%** of the attacks were perpetrated by unlawful groups.

Types of perpetrators



e. Targets

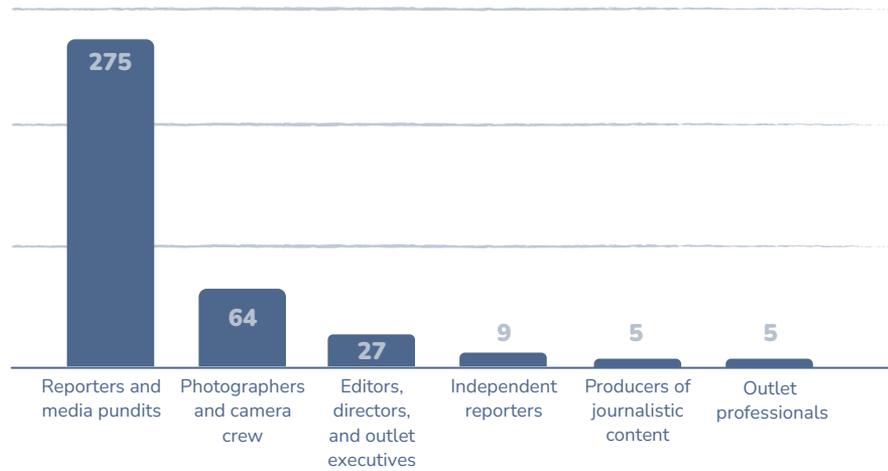
In 2022, the main targets of attacks were reporters and media analysts, with **276** cases recorded, or **49.4%** of the total alerts. Media and the press – widely and generically treated, such as “the media” or “the press” – were also targeted by the aggressors: among the **265 (47.7%)** episodes of this type, **179** were registered as attacks on the press in general, and **118** were attacks directed to specific means.

Among the most attacked outlets and communication conglomerates are Rede Globo (**34** attacks), followed by Folha de S. Paulo (**30**) and O Globo (**18**) – frequent targets of stigmatizing discourses. The aggressors that stood out most were Internet users and state agents, such as Jair Bolsonaro (PL) and his sons, who spread anti-press speeches, fueling the population’s distrust in journalism, journalists, and the media.

Of the total alerts of 2022, **58.2% (324)** were cases that victimized individuals, not companies or entities. In **62.6%**

(203) of the episodes, the victim was male; **43.5% (141)** were female. As for the positions, as already mentioned, there is a predominance of reporters and media pundits. Photographers and videographers were also recurrent targets.

Main targets – Individuals



Collecting information on the gender of victims allows for comparing the differences between aggressions directed at men and women journalists, either cis or transgender⁴. While male communicators were most affected by “aggressions and attacks,” with **63%** of cases with male victims classified in this way, women are present in the main category of attack stigmatizing discourses, especially those based on appearance, gender, and sexuality to offend and discredit. **49%** of the aggressions suffered by them involve verbal violence.

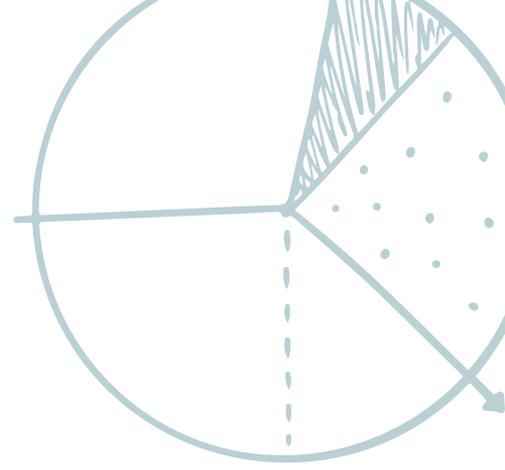
⁴ In monitoring, there are no recorded cases of violence against non-binary media workers.

Attacks by gender

Gender	% of cases over total in 2021 and 2022	Main category	% of cases of the main category over gender
Male	47,4 → 62,6	Agressions and attacks	63
Female	43,1 → 43,5	Stigmatizing discourse	49

However, women journalists were also common targets of physical aggression, intimidation, harassment, and threats – actions represented by the category “aggressions and attacks.” The percentage of cases with women victims that fit this group is very close to the proportion of stigmatizing discourses: **45.4%** of attacks on female communicators. This shows that in addition to suffering more from verbal violence – especially on social media – they are not spared the physical violence that terrorizes and oppresses professionals of the Brazilian press.

Finally, data on the age of the victims shows that in 2022, the most attacked professionals were those between 40 and 60 years old – an age group that usually includes journalists with well-established careers and great reach and visibility. The aggressions to this group represented **13.8% (77 cases)** of the total alerts of the year. In the second place, professionals aged between 25 and 39 are involved in **8.6% (48)** of the attacks. Journalists over 60 were attacked **22 times (3.9%)**, and professionals between 18 and 24 years old, only **4 (0.7%)**. In most cases (**31.8%** of the total, **177 episodes**), it was impossible to identify the victims’ age group, either because of anonymity or because of a lack of information during the alert registration phase.



4. Gender Violence

For the second consecutive year, Abraji monitored the attacks on women journalists and the cases of gender violence that hit press professionals. The gender monitoring methodology was created in 2021, when Abraji, with the support of UNESCO, launched the Gender Violence Against Journalists project. This research brings a more sensitized look at the attacks suffered by both women and LGBTQIA+ people journalists, being gender understood more broadly.

Reflecting on how each indicator of aggression could be used in an episode of gender violence, the research developed new variables and parameters for the collection and treatment of cases that will be detailed below, together with the results of monitoring the last period. In addition to the work developed exclusively by Abraji, in 2022, the Voces del Sur network also included the gender perspective in its monitoring, with new cross-sectional categories now applied by all the organizations that comprise the Network.

In 2022, **145** episodes recorded were classified as gender attacks or against women journalists. The number

represents an increase of **13.1%** compared to 2021, when **119** alerts of the same type were identified.

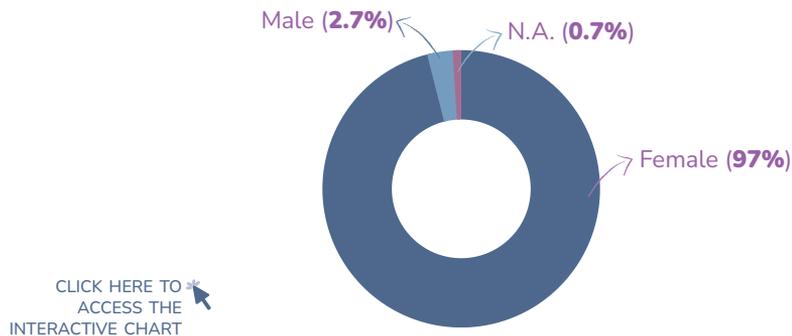
Women, cis or transgender, were victims of a large part (**97%**) of the attacks accompanied by gender monitoring. Among these cases, one victimized a transgender woman. The reporter Alana Rocha, from Radio Gazeta FM, was the subject of transphobia in the City Council of Riachão do Jacuipé (BA). The journalist had their pronouns and identity disrespected by a congressman during the coverage of legislative activities. The episode took place in September.

The attacks that had cisgender men as targets correspond to homophobic situations. In April, photojournalist Eduardo Matysiak, from Curitiba (PR), made a story about the bus “Patriota” used for political activities by Luciano Hang – a businessman close to Bolsonaro – parked in a forbidden spot in the city. The story triggered attacks by Hang’s followers and the businessman himself on social networks. Besides being a victim of stigmatizing discourses, Matysiak received threats and messages of sexual and homophobic nature.

One case had the gender category registered as “Not applicable.” This is the case of the July attack on the websites The Intercept Brasil and Catarinas. The Ministry of Women, Family, and Human Rights opened investigations on the outlets due to a report on the legal abortion procedure carried out by doctors of the state of Santa Catarina in an 11-year-old girl who was raped. In this case, the gender attack is considered because the violation was the reason for silencing a report with gender bias. No cases involving non-binary people have been recorded.

Gender of the victims

Rate of cases recorded in the gender monitoring in 2022



With the data collected, it is possible to draw a general profile of the victims: They are mainly reporters or media pundits (**90.3%**), White (**79.3%**), and broadcast professionals (**52.4%**). However, information on the color and gender of journalists may be the result of underreporting or gaps in case collection. This caveat considers the difficulty in reporting, accusing, and, consequently, identifying situations of racism, transphobia, and other forms of discrimination based on the color, gender, and other physical and cognitive traits of victims.

In December 2022, journalist Karla Lucena, from Rede Globo, suffered racism on Twitter. An Internet user said that the reporter, who is Black, has “very messy and ugly hair.” In response to the racist speech, Lucena tweeted: “You will see Black hair on TV indeed.”⁵ This is an example of how gender violence should be viewed as intersectional. To circumvent the problem of underreporting regarding color and gender in monitoring, Abraji launched in 2021 a [complaint form](#) that can be filled out by journalists who have suffered or witnessed aggression connected to those topics.

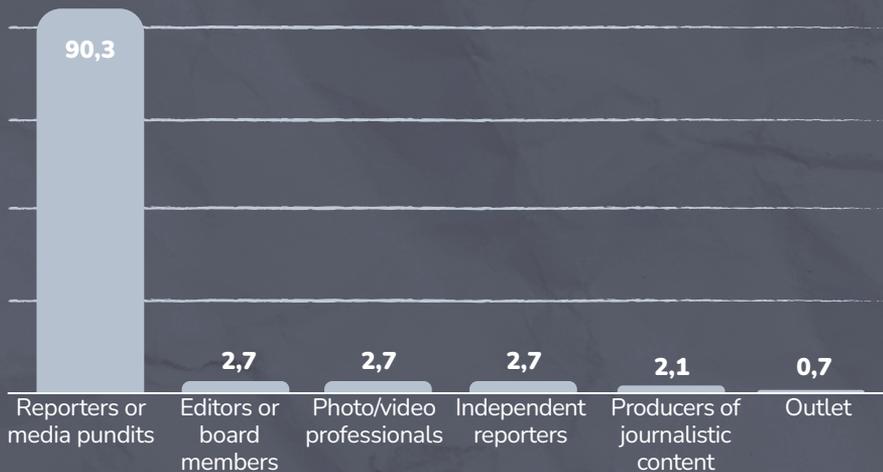
5 <https://www.estadao.com.br/emails/tv/karla-lucena-jornalista-da-globo-responde-a-ataque-racista-vai-ter-cabelo-black-na-tv/>

Color (%)



CLICK HERE TO *
ACCESS THE
INTERACTIVE CHART

Position (%)



CLICK HERE TO *
ACCESS THE
INTERACTIVE CHART

Outlet

	Tipo	% de casos
1	TV Broadcast	52,4
2	Newspaper (digital native)	18,6
3	Newspaper (print native)	14,5
4	Others	6,2
5	Radio	5,5
6	Magazine	3,4
7	Local journalism	2,1
8	Independent journalism	1,4

CLICK HERE TO *
ACCESS THE
INTERACTIVE CHART

The most common aggressions in gender monitoring were stigmatizing discourses (74 cases, 51% of the total). Of the 74 alerts, 67.6% were classified as speeches delivered by prominent authorities and figures, and 45.9% as systematic campaigns of attacks involving Internet users. Often, journalists have been targeted for verbal violence, especially on social networks. When there was the gender factor involved, women and communication professionals generally suffered homophobia, transphobia, and aggressions linked to sexuality, appearance, sexual orientation, and gender identity broadly. Among the 145 alerts recorded in 2022, 45 (31%) presented these and other forms of explicit gender violence – 64.4% were attacks on the reputation and moral stance of the journalist. The other situations involve physical aggression, homophobic attacks, intimidation motivated by the victim’s gender, transphobia, and attempts to censor posts on the Internet.

Main types of aggression



Throughout the year, women journalists were in the sights of aggressors who called them “sluts,” “whores,” “ugly,” “old,” “fat,” “crazy,” and other insults not connected with their professional skills, but with their figures and their personal lives. A survey published by Abraji in December 2022 showed that online misogynist attacks on communicators tripled post-election⁶. The number is yet another indication that the troubled Brazilian political scene has contributed to aggravating the framework of restrictions on press freedom and gender equality.

Data on the topics that most generated attacks on women journalists and gender attacks on communication professionals in 2022 add to this conclusion. Political coverage was connected to **62.7%** of the alerts, followed by public security (**9%**), and sports (**7.6%**)

In September, in Rio de Janeiro, a Flamengo fan was arrested for sexual harassment after forcibly kissing journalist Jéssica Dias, an ESPN reporter, during a live coverage in front of Maracana Stadium⁷. In December, reporter Daniella Dias, from Globo, was attacked with swearing while making a link in front of a police station in Rio de Janeiro. A man approached the reporting team and, screaming, began to speak offenses, intimidating the professional⁸.

6 <https://abraji.org.br/noticias/ataques-misoginos-a-mulheres-jornalistas-triplica-no-periodo-pos-eleicao>

7 <https://ge.globo.com/futebol/times/flamengo/noticia/2022/09/07/flamengo-condena-assedio-sofrido-por-reporter-no-maracana-ato-repugnante.ghtml>

8 <https://www.ofuxico.com.br/televisao/reporter-da-globo-e-atacada-com-xingamentos-em-transmissao-ao-vivo/>

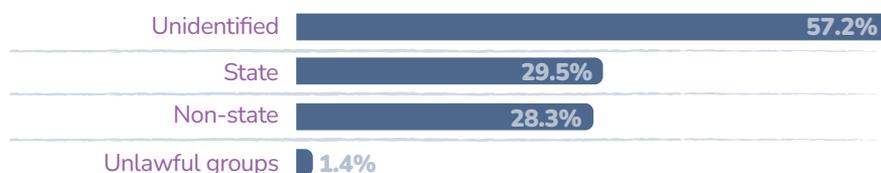
Types of coverage that recorded more attacks

	Tema	% de casos
1	Politics	62,7
2	Law enforcement	9
3	N.A.	9
4	Sports	7.6
5	Economy	5.5
6	Entertainment	4.1
7	Health	2.7
8	Society	2.1

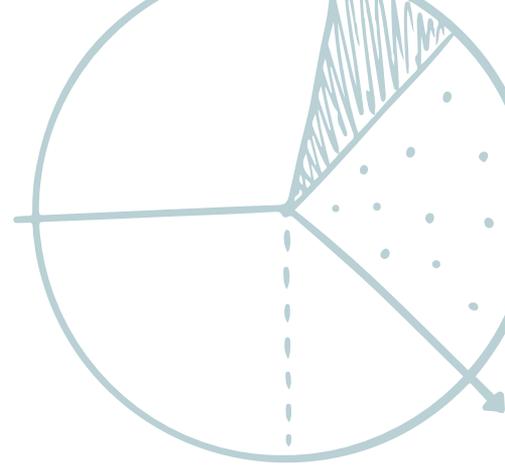
Miriam Leitao (**8** cases) from GloboNews, Vera Magalhaes (**8**) from TV Cultura, Daniela Lima (**6**) from CNN Brasil, and Juliana Dal Piva (**5**) from UOL were the most attacked professionals in gender monitoring in 2022. Not by chance. They are all prominent names in Brazilian political journalism. Leitao, for example, was often offended and demoralized by Jair Bolsonaro (PL), his sons, and his supporters. The same happened with the other journalists. At the end of August, during a televised electoral debate, then-President Bolsonaro called Vera Magalhaes a “shame on journalism” after a question about misinformation about the Covid-19 pandemic. “Bolsonarists” reproduced the insult during demonstrations of support for the former ruler on September 7⁹. Dal Piva, Lima, and Magalhaes had already appeared among the most attacked professionals of 2021.

9 <https://www.abraji.org.br/insulto-de-bolsonaro-a-vera-magalhaes-reitera-pratica-de-ataques-contra-mulheres-jornalistas>

Main types of perpetrators



As for the aggressors, most cases (**57.2%**) involved the participation of unidentified agents, such as demonstrators and Internet users. State actors appear in second place (**29.5%**). In addition, in **57.9%** of gender attacks and women journalists, the aggressors are men.



5. Political Violence During the Elections

Political violence was rampant in the daily lives of press professionals in 2022. Dates such as September 7 – the Bicentennial of the Brazilian Independence –, October 31 – the day after the second presidential round –, and the post-election period more broadly concentrated a large number of attacks on journalists and media because they were milestones in the Brazilian political calendar. The anti-democratic acts that rejected the result of the presidential race were the reason for **12%** of the year's aggressions. Despite being regrettable, the scenario that was formed after the elections is not surprising. The election period as a whole was marked by violence against the press, and **31.6%** of the 2022 alerts were connected to electoral coverage.

September, the election campaign month, presented the highest number of attacks in 2022. There were **83** cases, **48.2%** more than in the same period of 2021. The month also set a new record for violence against women journalists: 28 alerts were recorded, almost **one a day**. The figure represents an increase of **47.7%** compared to September of the previous year. Most attacks are related

to political turbulence in the country. Between August and September, violence against press professionals grew by **250%**. No wonder **64.3%** of the cases were directly connected to electoral coverage, and **50%** of the aggressions had the participation of political and state agents¹⁰.

November was the second most violent month of the year, with **77** general alerts. This was mainly due to demonstrations in support of Jair Bolsonaro (PL), who was defeated at the polls on October 30. The “bolsonarist” acts were based on violence against the press and against the Brazilian democracy itself because they tried to de-legitimize the result of the presidential elections.

The situation was so severe that, in mid-November, the sum of aggressions in 2022 had already exceeded **11.3%** of the **453** alerts recorded throughout 2021¹¹. Only the time frame defined by the last days of October and the first weeks of the following month brought together more than **50** cases of aggression, intimidation, and harassment against press professionals. These figures make 2022 the most violent year for Brazilian journalists and communication professionals since the beginning of Abraji’s monitoring. In 2019, the first year of systematic data collection, **130** attacks were recorded. Since then, there has been a steep increase of **328%** in alerts.

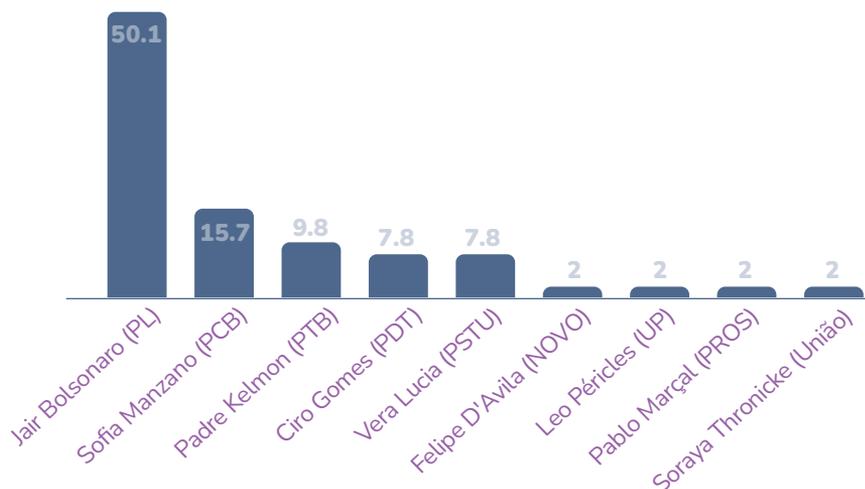
During the election campaign, Abraji closely followed the social media accounts of the presidential candidates – Facebook, Instagram, YouTube channel, Twitter, and TikTok – to identify attacks against the press. Between August 16 and October 1, **51** cases of aggression were recorded involving candidates, all classified as stigmatizing discourses.

10 <https://abraji.org.br/noticias/ataques-contra-mulheres-jornalistas-crescem-250-em-setembro>

11 <https://abraji.org.br/noticias/2022-supera-recorde-de-ataques-a-imprensa-registrado-no-ano-anterior>

Attacks from presidential candidates

Candidates who attacked the press, journalists, or media outlets during the campaign (%)



Once again, Jair Bolsonaro (PL) stood out as the primary aggressor, responsible for **50.1%** of the cases. The former President was followed by PCB candidate Sofia Manzano (PCB) (**15.7%**), who frequently accused the press of lying and boycotting her campaign. Stigmatizing discourses published during the electoral period were not identified in the profiles of Lula (PT), Simone Tebet (MDB), and José Maria Eymael (DC)¹².

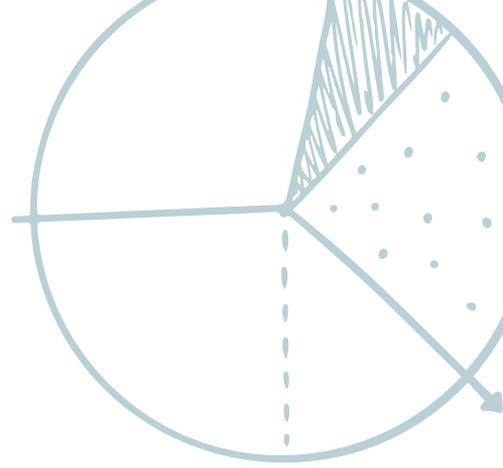
In general, the tone of the attack speeches was dominated by fake news and boycott claims. The narratives echoed an idea of a lying and partial press, inflaming a picture of disrespect and distrust against journalists that only worsens over the years, as Abraji's monitoring has shown.

¹² Politicians that left the presidential race had their networks analyzed until the date of the official renunciation statement, such as Pablo Marçal (Pros) and Roberto Jefferson (PTB). Padre Kelmon (PTB) was included in the monitoring later, as he entered the dispute after the challenge of Jefferson's candidacy in mid-September.

In September, for example, Bolsonaro (PL) made a misogynistic comment involving the personal life of journalist Amanda Klein to escape a question about his family wealth during an interview with Jovem Pan broadcast. The attack migrated to social media, especially Twitter, mobilizing the President's followers, who offended and humiliated Klein. In the same month, Padre Kelmon (PTB) used his Twitter and Instagram accounts to accuse the Brazilian media of being "hypocritical" and carrying out religious persecution.

The attacks of presidential candidates on the press are severe not only because of the visibility and influence that these political actors have or because of the position they occupy as members of a dispute that is following democratic rules but mainly because of the public commitment they have assumed to defend freedom of the press.

At the official start of the election campaign in August, Abraji and ten other media freedom organizations sent a letter of commitment to those running for the presidency. In the document, among other recommendations, candidates were asked to publicly condemn violence against journalists, communicators, and the press and not to directly or indirectly stimulate offenses and attacks. Lula (PT), Ciro Gomes (PDF), Simone Tebet (MDB), Leo Pericles (UP), Sofia Manzano (PCB), and Vera Lucia (PSTU) signed the commitment. Jair Bolsonaro (PL) did not speak about it.



6. Conclusions and Recommendations

To say that 2022 was a challenging year for the Brazilian press is a euphemism: Journalists and communication professionals were assaulted, threatened, harassed, intimidated, offended, persecuted, and even murdered during 2022. Political violence was part of the daily lives of these professionals, and anti-democratic acts and speeches constantly threatened press freedom.

Every year, the polarized political and social scenario makes the work of Brazilian journalists more dangerous. Political actors and their supporters create and propagate anti-media discourses that hinder journalistic activity and put their professionals at constant risk. The numbers confirm this: **61.2%** of the cases recorded by Abraji monitoring in 2022 are stigmatizing discourses, and **31.2%** of general alerts involve physical aggression, intimidation, threats, or destruction of equipment – making it clear that physical violence is the step that follows verbal aggression and disbelief campaigns.

The data presented in this report prove that the attempt to draw the press as an enemy in people's minds persists. In 2021, malicious narratives about fake news and

side-ism were used by state agents to undermine journalistic credibility. These tactics continued to be applied in 2022 on a larger scale. Former President Jair Bolsonaro (PL) and his family members were involved in **41.6%** of the year's alerts – a very high number, considering that there are almost **300** aggressors recorded in the monitoring of 2022. His policy of “attacking the messenger” was a constant throughout his four-year term.

For women journalists and press professionals belonging to the LGBTQIA+ community, the past year was even more challenging. There were **145** direct gender attacks and/or aggressions against communicators, representing an increase of **21.8%** compared to 2021. In gender attacks, sexuality, sexual orientation, appearance, and gender identity were used to offend and demoralize journalists. This violence was explicit in **31%** of the **145** cases and **8.1%** of the general alerts. The data is a reminder that misogyny, homophobia, transphobia, and other forms of discrimination are part of the daily lives of media workers in Brazil.

The information that **63.4%** of the total attacks have a connection to the online environment shows that a problem pointed out in the 2021 report has not been solved or mitigated: leading social media platforms remain inactive in the face of violence against the press. There are still no practical actions to deal with the attacks or to hold the perpetrators accountable.

Given this context, Abraji recommends:

To journalists:

- Adopting more secure work tools such as data encryption and practices such as separation of personal and professional accounts;

- Keeping a record of any attacks suffered with prints and access links for the production of evidence and grounds for complaints;
- Denouncing the aggressions suffered within and outside social media, letting authorities and the organizations for which they work know about it, and combating the normalization and stigmatization of this type of violence; and
- Seeking and requiring the proper application of public policies and mechanisms of protection of responsibility of the public authorities.

To the media:

- Providing the necessary support to its professionals, contractors, or freelancers, including physical and digital security protection and support measures, thus avoiding the occurrence of self-censorship;
- Supporting professionals by providing training on digital security and prevention, as well as legal guidance and support;
- Being open and having welcoming mechanisms for receiving complaints, encouraging professionals to disclose attacks or risk situations they have faced; and
- Ensuring the integrity of journalists and fighting self-censorship in the daily life of newsrooms.

To social media platforms:

- Investing in processes of identification and control of aggressive content and hate speech;

- Seeking to adapt the monitoring of online violence with the reality and the local language, training their teams in the protection of human rights;
- Reviewing their internal policies and moderation algorithms to keep them up to date with the constant evolution of forms of online violence; and
- Adapting their policies of denunciation and mitigation of attacks to suit better the needs of journalists and other victims of massive campaigns and hate speech.

To the public authorities:

- Strengthening public policies for protecting journalists, such as the Protection Program for Human Rights Defenders, Communicators and Environmentalists (PDDH), easing the inclusion of press professionals, including those suffering from persecution and the threat of politicians and influential local actors;
- Combating impunity in crimes against journalists by developing mechanisms that boost speed and impartiality in the investigation by security agents, the Public Prosecutor's Office, and the Judiciary branch;
- taking steps to enable accountability of public agents for attacks against journalists;
- strengthening dialog with organized civil society for coordination and joint action in the realization and improvement of public policies for the protection of press freedom;
- defending the freedom of the press, not restricting access to information, ensuring public transparency and the safety of journalists in coverage;

- Avoiding being part of attacks against journalists, media, or the disbelief of the press in general, and in particular, not propagating misogynistic, racist, and homo/transphobic speeches against journalists;
- Monitoring together with organized civil society violations of press freedom, making available tools to sanction cases and prevent more severe aggression; and
- Advancing legislation proposals to protect the work of press professionals, with attention to international parameters for protecting human rights.

ABR  JI

