




# MONITORING

ATTACKS AGAINST PRESS FREEDOM

2024 ELECTIONS

BRAZIL

BETWEEN:  
AUGUST 15 AND OCTOBER 27, 2024

COALIZÃO  
EM DEFESA DO  
JORNALISMO 

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



This report examines the challenges facing press freedom in Brazil during the 2024 municipal elections, which were marked by intense political polarization and growing hostility towards journalists and media outlets. Produced by the Coalition in Defense of Journalism (CDJor), in partnership with the Internet and Data Science Lab (Labic) of the Federal University of Espírito Santo (UFES) and ITS Rio, the document provides detailed analysis based on monitoring conducted between August 15, the eve of the official start of the electoral campaign, and October 27, the date of the second round. Covering both digital —focusing on X, Instagram and TikTok— and offline attacks, the analyses reveal patterns of aggression that threaten journalism in the country and the media's fundamental role as a watchdog of public power.

In the digital environment, social media emerged as the primary space for the dissemination of violence. X was the platform with the highest concentration of hostile discourse, recording 35,876 attacks, or 17.7% of all posts collected on the network. TikTok, with 10,239 attacks, stood out as an emerging platform for the dissemination of aggression, while Instagram had 10,889 comments containing insults. The posts analyzed frequently used terms such as “trash,” “activist,” and “fake news” to discredit journalists and news outlets, reinforcing a rhetoric of press delegitimization that permeated debates and election campaigns.

A pattern of concern was identified in the gender and race dimensions of attacks. Female journalists were more targeted, receiving 50.8% of all attacks, even though they represented 45.9% of the professionals attacked. On Instagram, they were the target of 68.3% of the attacks, while on X, the percentage was 53%. The attacks combined professional criticism with misogynistic insults, including derogatory terms and disparaging comments about appearance. Journalist Vera Magalhães, from TV Cultura and CNN Brasil political analyst, received 32.3% of the attacks on Instagram, illustrating the severity of misogyny on social networks. In addition, episodes of racism, such as the attacks against Pedro Borges, co-founder of Alma Preta Journalism, highlight how intersectional violence affects black journalists in the country.

Outside the digital environment, the report recorded 11 cases of physical or verbal violence against journalists, including threats (45.4%), physical assaults (27.3%), harassment (18.2%), intimidation (9.1%), stigmatizing speeches (9.1%), theft of equipment (9.1%) and attacks on media headquarters (9.1%). Many of these attacks were perpetrated by political or state actors, putting journalists at immediate risk and creating a climate of fear that can lead to self-censorship. In addition, the instrumentalization of the judiciary has emerged as a tool of censorship. Six cases of lawsuits and court decisions were documented as being used to intimidate journalists and restrict press activities, including orders to get content down (66.6%), suspension of news portals and social media profiles (16.6%), and other forms of intimidation (16.6%).

The state capitals São Paulo (São Paulo), Fortaleza (Ceará), Cuiabá (Mato Grosso) and Porto Alegre (Rio Grande do Sul) were the main hotspots of attacks, reflecting the intensity of their electoral contests. In São Paulo, the campaign of right-wing candidate Pablo Marçal (PRTB) played a central role in the dynamics of hostility, with direct attacks on the press and encouragement of violence against journalists and media outlets. In Fortaleza, outlets such as Diário do Nordeste and O Povo Online were accused of bias and favoring candidates. These episodes underscore the vulnerability of local journalistic organizations in polarized contexts.

The report's recommendations highlight the urgent need for coordinated action to address these challenges. Suggested measures include strengthening public policies to protect journalists, holding aggressors accountable both online and offline, reviewing abusive judicial practices, and developing more effective mechanisms by digital platforms to curb online attacks. Media organizations are also urged to adopt security and support policies that provide institutional and psychological assistance to media professionals.

The report concludes that violence against journalists or journalistic organizations —whether physical, digital, or judicial— is not an isolated attack but a direct threat to democracy. Ensuring a safe environment for the practice of journalism is essential to protect society's right to reliable and diverse information, which is fundamental to strengthening public debate and building a more just and democratic future.

Read the full report in Portuguese [here](#).

