

The background of the image shows a large, out-of-focus crowd of people, likely at a public event or election. Overlaid on the right side of the image is a complex digital network of white lines and dots, representing a data or communication network. The text is positioned on the left side of the image, overlaid on the crowd.

**THE ROLE OF
DIGITAL PLATFORMS
IN PROTECTING
ELECTORAL
INTEGRITY IN THE
2022 BRAZILIAN
ELECTION**



PROPOSALS FOR CONTENT MODERATION POLICIES

The 2022 Brazilian elections must take place in a fierce and polarized public debate environment. This context increases the risk of disinformation reaching relevant volumes and negatively affecting the democratic process. Although in the past disinformation efforts were spent with electoral intentions, the fact that the speed of dissemination has increased significantly, as well as the possibility of specific targeting, have brought new and relevant challenges to electoral processes.

False or misleading information affects the collective dimension of freedom of expression, recognised by the Inter-American System of Human Rights, which is based on the expectation that society can be well informed.

By affecting the collective dimension of freedom of expression, other rights are also likely to be affected — in the case of the covid-19 pandemic, for example, misinformation and disinformation affected the right to health. This impact has prompted platforms to create content moderation rules to try to prevent the dissemination of false or misleading content with the potential to impact health, individually or collectively. Such rules, however, have not been sufficiently and consistently enforced to prevent mis and disinformation circulation, pushing the number of deaths and the decrease in vaccinated people.

In electoral processes, misinformation and disinformation also have a huge impact, with the potential to affect the democratic order. Digital platforms are therefore expected to make their best efforts to protect, at the same time, the individual and collective dimensions of freedom of expression, as well as the necessary balance between this and other constitutional rights.

Digital platforms should guarantee the protection of fundamental rights provided for in the Federal Constitution of Brazil, taking into account that human rights are indivisible, interdependent and interrelated. Systematic cases of racism and online violence against women and LGBTQIA+ population, for example, reveal that the measures taken by digital platforms have been insufficient to protect vulnerable groups.

In addition, mechanisms need to be provided so that people whose freedom of expression has been unfairly impacted can, within a short period of time, regain their ability to contribute to the democratic process. There are not few records of errors in content moderation and the increased rigor of criteria application should be accompanied by efforts to offer review and analysis of appeal

and right to contradictory. The absence of specific data on the Brazilian national context and the impediment of wider access for researchers affect the possibility of monitoring, by society, of moderation efforts.

We assess that the policies implemented to date by digital platforms are insufficient to protect the healthiness and integrity of the electoral process. While there are differences among them, none of the social media platforms has fully adequate policies for the challenges that are already in place in this ongoing electoral process.

In addition, policies should enable the construction of a safe and peaceful environment for all candidates to express their views, preventing the practice of political violence, especially against women, black men and women, indigenous people, traditional populations, *quilombolas* and the LGBTQIA+ population.

Thus, we present a set of recommendations that we believe should be adopted by platforms to protect individual and collective rights, in particular, to protect the integrity of the electoral process. They are divided into:

- I. General guidelines on electoral integrity**
- II. Transparent and isonomic rules to other countries for ad libraries**
- III. Policies to combat political violence against women, black people, indigenous people, traditional populations, *quilombolas* and LGBTQIA+**
- IV. Policies to combat mis/disinformation affecting the Amazon, the climate, the environment, and the indigenous and traditional peoples' agenda**
- V. Rules for guaranteeing users' rights and mitigating damages arising from platform errors of action**





I. GENERAL GUIDELINES ON ELECTORAL INTEGRITY

1. Platforms must have the protection of electoral integrity as a value reflected in their content moderation policies and in their terms of use. This protection should not only apply to the moment of voting and counting, but to the entire electoral process, in order to guarantee its integrity and healthiness.
2. The platforms should ensure the adequacy of the policies to the Brazilian context and should establish protocols for managing possible major institutional crises with the indication of responsible contacts directly to the Electoral Public Prosecutor and to the Electoral Justice.
3. Platforms should ensure transparency and a right of appeal on content that has suffered restrictive measures, in particular in the case of user removal and blocking, as well as an agile reversal in the case of errors in the application of policies by platforms.
4. Platforms should not allow the dissemination of content with unfounded allegations of electoral fraud or direct attacks on the integrity of the electoral system, given their capacity to undermine confidence in the electoral system and the democratic process¹.
5. Unfounded manifestations questioning the electoral result (or incitement to such manifestations) should not be permitted after the announcement of the final results by the Superior Electoral Court.
6. Content that sows distrust in the electoral system by indirect attacks (insinuations, deduction and manipulations of facts, etc.), even without allegations of fraud, should not be eligible for boosting or monetisation, nor should they be recommended by the platforms.
7. Search terms that can be redirected to specific pages with verified information should be established (as provided for in the agreement signed by the platforms with the Superior Electoral Court).
In the case of the sale of keywords in search engines, platforms should disable those used mostly for the promotion of fake news or misleading content.
8. When there is the publication of contents identical to those that have already been removed by determination of the Electoral Justice, there shall be the application of analogous moderation measures, whenever the same context is involved². A specific channel shall be created for notification, by the users, of such situations.

¹ Partnerships can be created with fact-checking agencies and/or the Electoral Justice so that verifiably fabricated news on this issue can be identified and help speed up removals.

² Exceptions are applicable when the content is the subject of journalistic commentary or is in a context of criticism.

9. On exceptions regarding platforms' policies on disinformation:
 - a) Platforms should not give exceptional treatment to posts made by political actors.
 - b) Exceptions for journalistic content should not include opinion articles that involve allegations that are known to be false or untruthful.
10. On deadlines and temporality of measures:
 - a) Specify clear time frames regarding the speed with which the platform promises to act in case of complaints sent from Superior Electoral Court or other bodies, both for removal and reversal of errors.
 - b) Adjustments to the terms of service and community norms made during the election period to preserve electoral and democratic integrity should not be subject to a grace period for their implementation, but should be disclosed immediately and notified to the Electoral Justice system and to the political parties.
 - c) The policies and the operational effort that the electoral moment requires must be maintained until the inauguration of the elected.
11. The policies must be written in a precise manner, which is not generic, and which contains examples covering the different application situations. Information should be gathered in a single document, easily found, and presented in a clear and intelligible way.
12. Platforms must be transparent and make public information on **a)** how many people they have dedicated to protecting electoral integrity who speak Portuguese and understand the local context; **b)** what are the internal external moderation mechanisms, including partnerships with fact-checking agencies.
13. Open platforms and messaging apps should have clear and effective mechanisms to enforce their policies against disinformation.
14. Make data available, via API, to independent researchers and civil organizations carrying out research related to the application of the terms of use, and the community norms, as well as establishing possible partnerships between platforms and research in general, paying attention to the data protection of users.
15. The platforms should prohibit advertisements and content promotion of electoral propaganda that is not carried out by those legitimized by the electoral legislation.





II. TRANSPARENT AND ISONOMIC RULES TO OTHER COUNTRIES FOR AD LIBRARIES

1. Inclusion of all paid content that quotes a candidate, party or coalition (including images) and, as sensitive content (so that they appear in the library), ads that deal with political agendas, which will also be the agenda of the candidates in the 2022 election:
 - Civil and social rights
 - Crime
 - Economy
 - Education
 - Climate agenda, environment, traditional and indigenous peoples
 - Guns
 - Health
 - Political values and governance
 - Security and foreign affairs
 - Civic and electoral integrity
 - Questioning the electoral process
 - Sexual and reproductive rights
2. Ensure that all ads with sensitive and political content are classified as such and are available in the ad library repository.
3. Ensure all information on sensitive ads is complete and available in the library, both in consolidated reports and individually per ad for access via API.
4. Provide referral channels for political advertisements that do not appear in the libraries (that have not been classified as political, although they are).
5. Specific to Google: inclusion in the transparency report of political advertising in Brazil, the municipal, state and federal spheres, considering as electoral ads those that refer to a political party, a holder of an elective mandate or a candidate to the Presidency, Vice-Presidency, Federal Senate, Chamber of Deputies, State Government and Legislative Assembly.
6. Specific to Facebook: Include Brazilian researchers in the [Facebook Open Research and Transparency](#) platform, launched in May 2022 in the US and UK, so that they can access more detailed information about how political ads have been targeted on their platform, providing information about the ways in which politicians, campaign agents and political strategists buy and use ads during the election campaign.
7. Specific to Facebook: Include summaries of targeting information for ads in Brazil in its Ad Library and make this information publicly visible, [as will be implemented in the Library version of countries such as the US from July 2022](#).
8. Include, among possible measures to be taken in the event of an institutional crisis, the banning of political advertising in the days following voting days.



III. POLICIES TO COMBAT POLITICAL VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, BLACK, INDIGENOUS, *QUILOMBOLA* AND LGBTQIA+ PEOPLE

The Organisation of American States (OAS) characterises political violence as an action, conduct or omission carried out directly or through third parties, and can materialise through physical, psychological, moral, sexual, virtual, institutional, racial, gender, LGBTQI+-phobic aggression, among others, and can be committed against candidates, elected, appointed or in the activity of public service. In Brazil, Law No. 14.192/2021, approved in August 2021, defines political violence against women as “*every action, conduct or omission with the purpose of preventing, hindering or restricting women’s political rights*”.

We work with the category of political violence of *gender and race* to highlight the importance of foregrounding the experiences of black women, indigenous women, *quilombolas*, cis women, transsexuals, transvestites, intersex people and other invisible and neglected women’s identities. Demarcating the dimension of race is also important, due to the way racism presents itself in the operationalization of political violence.

The phenomenon of gender and racial political violence in Brazil is historical and structures the bases of the country’s formation. Nevertheless, in recent times, there has been an advance in the participation of black women in institutional politics. In line with this Brazilian conjuncture, there is an upsurge in political violence against black and indigenous women, whose mandates and exercise of political rights are at risk. We understand that mis/disinformation against black, cis, trans and transvestite women, politicians and human rights defenders, is thus one of the forms of gender and race political violence.

In this respect, we propose:

1. Update the platforms’ terms of use, including their policies to combat hate speech, and political violence, observing the Law on Political Violence (Law No. 14.192/21) and the Law of Crimes against the Democratic State of Law (Law No. 14.197/21). Political violence, especially when directed at historically marginalized groups, such as women, blacks, indigenous, *quilombola* and LGBTQIA+ people, hurts electoral integrity since attacks directed at female candidates in the electoral period tend to silence them, denying them space in the digital ecosystem.

2. Ensure that content moderation policies are updated to deal with cases of political violence in order to consider Brazilian contexts, with special attention to candidates who come from historically marginalized groups (women, blacks, indigenous, *quilombola* and LGBTQIA+ people, human rights defenders). Ensure:
 - **Expedited removal of posts that threaten** candidates with physical violence, sexual violence or death, and that glorify, incite or praise violence against women, black, indigenous, *quilombola* and LGBTQIA+ people;
 - **Elimination of hate speech** directed at women, black, indigenous, *quilombola* and LGBTQIA+ people, including violent, objectifying or dehumanising speech, statements of inferiority and derogatory sexual terms;
 - **Removal of accounts that repeatedly violate the terms of service** by threatening, harassing, doxing and attacking women, black, indigenous, *quilombola* and LGBTQIA+ people who are candidates or public leaders;
 - **Removal of manipulated images or videos that make use of hate speech or political violence** to misrepresent public figures, women, black, indigenous, *quilombola* and LGBTQIA+ people.
3. Offer training courses for candidates and their teams on how to make denunciations in cases where they are victims of political violence.
4. Commit to training for their content moderation teams and product development to optimize, reduce or not the visibility and organization of information for the Brazilian context and Portuguese language, understanding which are the main groups that are targets of gender and race political violence, paying attention to how misinformation can be instrumentalized to feed narratives of political violence.
5. Create task forces to ensure that responses to cases of political violence directed at the candidacies of persons belonging to historically marginalized groups are swift and that damage to candidacies is kept to a minimum.
6. Creation of an advisory committee composed of researchers and members of civil society to evaluate cases and actions and to guide platform updates regarding the dynamics of political violence against historically marginalized groups.
7. Carry out targeted advertising campaigns for different types of users, considering age groups, gender identity and sexuality, to combat political violence against women, indigenous people, *quilombolas*, black people and LGBTQIA+ people.





IV. POLICIES TO COMBAT MIS/DISINFORMATION AFFECTING THE AMAZON, THE CLIMATE AGENDA, THE ENVIRONMENT, INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND *QUILOMBOLAS*

The serious problem of deforestation and the existence of sectoral groups that amplify misinformation about the main cause of forest fires, climate pseudo-science, as well as hate speech and the defamation of those who protect the Amazon forest and other Brazilian biomes, is nothing new.

However, the murder of the Brazilian indigenous activist Bruno Pereira and British journalist Dom Phillips has left civil society and the entire country even more on alert about the scenario of violence in the Amazon and disregard for indigenous peoples. A policy to combat disinformation affecting the Amazon and people who defend the standing forest is necessary to prevent social media platforms from being used by malicious actors as machines for amplifying hate speech and disinformation in periods of political and social crises, such as the one that occasioned the 2018 ethnic genocide in Myanmar³.

The situation of the Amazon and the impact of mis/disinformation in the territories of the Legal Amazon imply physical violence, defamation of local leaders and an environment of insecurity for the freedom of expression of civil society and the press. In the elections, the Amazon and deforestation will be central themes in the dispute of candidates for the presidency and other posts such as governor, senator and deputy.

According to data recently published by [Global Forest Watch](#), the largest forest monitoring platform on the planet, Brazil led the way in the clearing of primary forests in the tropics in 2021. Another survey, by [INPE](#) (National Institute for Space Research), linked to the Brazilian Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovations, shows that between August 2020 and July 2021 deforestation in the Amazon reached 13,000 km², equivalent to the area of 9 cities in São Paulo. It was the highest rate in 15 years, with an increase of 76% compared to 2018. Today, the Amazon emits more greenhouse gasses per year than the United Kingdom and Spain combined.

The protection of the Amazon is fundamental and urgent to combat the climate crisis, said the United Nations (UN) Secretary-General [António Guterres](#). However, in the [government discourse](#) and on YouTube channels the reality is another, of a Brazil that preserves and defends the Amazon.

A survey carried out by the data company Novelo and analysed by the [InfoAmazonia](#) and [FALA](#) teams for the [“Amazonas: mentira tem preço”](#) project mapped, between 2019 and 2021, more than a hundred videos that share negative information as if it were true.

³ Marzuki Darusman, chair of the UN Independent International Fact-Finding Mission in Myanmar, argued that social media platforms played a “defining role” in Myanmar. Available at: <<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/3/13/un-facebook-had-a-role-in-rohingya-genocide>>

In view of the extremely serious events and the risks for those involved, we suggest:

1. Create a socio-environmental council within the platforms

Create a council dedicated to the climate, socio-environmental and forest guardians agenda, with the inclusion of entities active in Brazilian civil society for data consultation, valuable content and responsible information. The adoption of a council with civil society actors focused on socio-environmental issues could foster new strategies to combat socio-environmental misinformation.

2. Do not monetise negative climate crisis and deforestation content

Google, owner of YouTube, announced in 2021 that it would not monetise content, advertisers, influencers and publishers who deny the climate crisis. In Brazil, the Amazon, the largest tropical forest on the planet, plays a key role in combating climate change worldwide. Despite this, videos are available that misinform about forest protection and defense, and about deforestation. All companies must adopt policies that prevent monetizing negative content on the climate crisis and deforestation on their platforms and all of them should ensure effective enforcement of these policies.

3. Do not allow the boosting of channels that misinform about the Amazon and socio-environmental issues

In Youtube channels, one of the the most viewed video brings a series of misinformation about the Amazon, showed an analysis of the *“Amazonas: mentira tem preço”*, which mapped, monitored and investigated networks of misinformation with a socio-environmental focus. The same video, which falsely suggests that Brazil currently defends and preserves the Amazon, appears as the most-watched on Telegram. One of the ways to reduce the reach is not allowing these channels to boost the negative content of the climate crisis. This requirement also applies to profiles and pages on Instagram and Facebook that bring misinformative content with the theme of Amazon and its defenders.

4. Show warnings and punishments to channels related to socio-environmental disinformation

Youtube’s policy today does not allow the user to recognise channels punished for misinforming about the environment and forest peoples. Channels that offer courses and sell books misinforming about the environment, as shown above. We suggest that the platform adopt a transparency policy, informing the user of channels punished for spreading content that misinforms about socio-environmental issues.

5. Providing transparency and gathering data on climate and environment campaign investments in the ad library (as explicated in II.1)

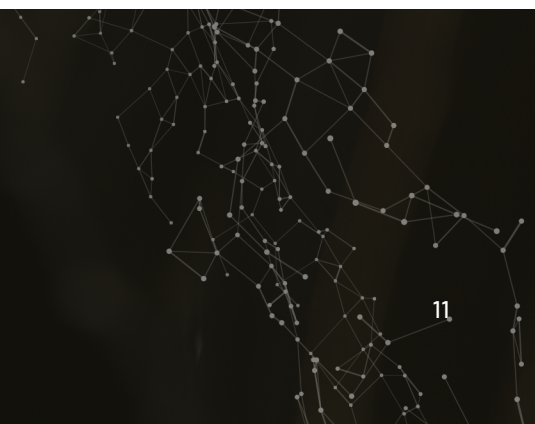
Today, this data is not available in Brazil, but it is a reality in other countries. To combat social and environmental fake news, which will be very strong in elections, it is essential that we are able to see the complete panorama of ads within these categories, with data on who invested, date, amount and the campaign in question. It is also necessary to implement a transparency protocol on programmatic media on climate, environmental policies, land use and indigenous peoples’ and *quilombolas*’ rights in their ad libraries.





V. RULES FOR GUARANTEEING USERS' RIGHTS AND MITIGATING DAMAGES ARISING FROM PLATFORM ERRORS OF ACTION

- 1.** From the beginning of the electoral campaign period in Brazil, the average time for analysis of appeals to content moderation, content flagging, reach reduction and boost blocking and account blocking by Brazilian users should be monitored and should not exceed 72 hours.
- 2.** Notify users about any interference with their social media activities, the reasons and the mechanisms for redress with the link to the same.
- 3.** Carry out a review of its decisions by means of natural persons who speak Portuguese and know the Brazilian context.



SIGNATORY ORGANIZATIONS



List of SIGNATORY ORGANIZATIONS

| | | | |
|--|--|--|---|
| 342Amazônia | Coalizão Negra por Direitos | Instituto de Referência Negra Peregum | Observatório do Clima |
| 342Artes | COESUS – Coalizão Não Fracking Brasil | Instituto de Governo Aberto | Observatório para qualidade da Lei – UFMG |
| 350.org | Compós – Associação Brasileira os Programas de Pós-Graduação em Comunicação | Instituto E se fosse você? | Observatório Político e Eleitoral (OPEL) |
| 4daddy | Conectas Direitos Humanos | Instituto Ethos de Empresas e Responsabilidade Social | OCM – Observatório do Carvão Mineral |
| Abaré Jornalismo | Cooperação da Juventude Amazônica para o Desenvolvimento Sustentável | Instituto Hori Educação e Cultura | OPG – Observatório do Petróleo e Gás |
| Abong | CTI – Centro de Trabalho Indigenista | Instituto Marielle Franco | Oxfam Brasil |
| Abpcom – Associação Brasileira de Pesquisadores e Comunicadores em Comunicação Popular, Comunitária e Cidadã | Diálogo Brasil | Instituto Novos Paradigmas | Plan International Brasil |
| ABRAJI | Digital Const UFMG | Instituto Piracicabano de Estudos e Defesa da Democracia – IPEDD | ponteAponte |
| Abrapcorp – Associação Brasileira de Pesquisadores de Comunicação Organizacional e Relações Públicas | FALA | Instituto Physis – Cultura & Ambiente | Projeto de Combate à Desinformação – Campos Gerais |
| Ação Educativa | Folkcom – Rede de Estudos e Pesquisas em Folkcomunicação | Instituto Talanoa | Projeto Hospitais Saudáveis |
| Agência Ambiental Pick-upau | Frente Favela Brasil | Instituto Terra, Trabalho e Cidadania | Projeto Mentira tem Preço |
| Agência de Jornalismo UEPG (Programa de Extensão) | FBOMS – Forum Brasileiro de Ongs e Movimentos Sociais pelo Meio Ambiente e Desenvolvimento | Instituto Update | Projeto Saúde e Alegria |
| Agência Diadorim | Fundación Avina | Instituto Vamos Juntas | Purpose Campaigns |
| Aláfia Lab | GESTOS | Instituto Vladimir Herzog | Rede Conhecimento Social |
| Aliança Nacional LGBTI+ | Grupo Ambientalista da Bahia | INTERCOM – Sociedade Brasileira de Estudos Interdisciplinares da Comunicação | Rede GTA |
| Aprec – Ecossistemas Costeiros | Grupo de Pesquisa Cnpq Narrativas Tecnológicas | Intervozes | Rede Nacional de Combate à Desinformação |
| Apremavi | Grupo de Pesquisa em Mídia e estudos do imaginário | IPAD SEJA DEMOCRACIA | SBPC – Sociedade Brasileira para o Progresso da Ciência |
| Arayara.org | IEB – Instituto Internacional de Educação do Brasil | Ipê – Instituto de Pesquisas Ecológicas | SBPJOR – Associação Brasileira de Pesquisadores em Jornalismo |
| Articulação dos Povos Indígenas do Brasil | lepé-RCA | ISPN | Site Avoador da Universidade Estadual do Sudoeste da Bahia |
| ABRAFH – Associação Brasileira de Famílias Homotransafetivas | Im.pulsa | Jornalistas Livres | Sleeping Giants Brasil |
| Associação de Moradores da Vila Mariana | International Center for Information Ethics | Kurytiba Metropole | Socicom – Federação das Associações Científicas e Acadêmicas da Comunicação |
| Associação roraimense pela diversidade sexual – Grupo Diversidade | Instituto 5 Elementos | Marcha Mundial por Justiça Climática | SOS Amazônia |
| A Tenda | Instituto Alziras | Mater Natura | SPVS – Sociedade de Pesquisa em Vida Selvagem e Educação Ambiental |
| Casa Galileia | Instituto Arueras | Movimento Político pela Unidade – MPpU | TerraAzul |
| Centro de Defesa dos Direitos Humanos de Petrópolis | Instituto Clima de Eleição | Mulheres Negras Decidem | Think Olga |
| Centro de Estudos da Mídia Alternativa Barão de Itararé | Instituto Cultura e Democracia – Desinformante | Netlab – UFRJ | Uma Gota no Oceano |
| Centro Popular de Direitos Humanos – CPDH | Instituto de Desenvolvimento Sustentável Baiano – IDSB | NOSSAS | UniBrasil |
| Coalizão Direitos na Rede | Instituto de Direitos Humanos, Econômicos e Sociais – IDhES | Novelo Data | Via Goietê |
| | | Núcleo de Pesquisa Mídia, Conhecimento e Meio Ambiente da UFRR | Washington Brazil Office |
| | | Observatório da Política nacional de Resíduos Sólidos | WWF Brasil |