



Home Office

# **Country Policy and Information Note**

## **Brazil: Actors of protection**

**Version 2.0**

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# Executive summary

Brazil has taken reasonable steps to establish and operate an effective legal system for the detection, prosecution and punishment of acts constituting persecution or serious harm. This includes enacting criminal law and judicial procedural codes, and operating functioning law enforcement agencies and judiciary. The legal system is generally accessible.

A person who fears a rogue state actor and/or a non-state actor is, in general, likely to obtain protection from the state. The onus is on the person to demonstrate otherwise.

For guidance and information on protection relating to specific groups, such as those fearing organised criminal groups or LGBTI individuals, see the relevant [Country Policy and Information Notes](#).

All cases must be considered on their individual facts, with the onus on the person to demonstrate they face persecution or serious harm.

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# Assessment

Section updated: 24 June 2025

## About the assessment

This section considers the evidence relevant to this note – that is the [country information](#), refugee/human rights laws and policies, and applicable caselaw – and provides an assessment of **whether, in general**:

- the state (or quasi state bodies) can provide effective protection

Decision makers **must**, however, consider all claims on an individual basis, taking into account each case's specific facts.

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## 1. Material facts, credibility and other checks/referrals

### 1.1 Credibility

- 1.1.1 For information on assessing credibility, see the instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).
- 1.1.2 Decision makers must also check if there has been a previous application for a UK visa or another form of leave. Asylum applications matched to visas should be investigated prior to the asylum interview (see the [Asylum Instruction on Visa Matches, Asylum Claims from UK Visa Applicants](#)).
- 1.1.3 Decision makers must also consider making an international biometric data-sharing check, when such a check has not already been undertaken (see [Biometric data-sharing process \(Migration 5 biometric data-sharing process\)](#)).
- 1.1.4 In cases where there are doubts surrounding a person's claimed place of origin, decision makers should also consider language analysis testing, where available (see the [Asylum Instruction on Language Analysis](#)).

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### 1.2 Exclusion

- 1.2.1 Decision makers must consider whether there are serious reasons for considering whether one (or more) of the exclusion clauses is applicable. Each case must be considered on its individual facts.
- 1.2.2 If the person is excluded from the Refugee Convention, they will also be excluded from a grant of humanitarian protection (which has a wider range of exclusions than refugee status).

- 1.2.3 For guidance on exclusion and restricted leave, see the Asylum Instruction on [Exclusion under Articles 1F and 33\(2\) of the Refugee Convention](#), [Humanitarian Protection](#) and the instruction on [Restricted Leave](#).

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## **2. Protection**

- 2.1.1 In general, the state is both willing and able to offer sufficient protection to persons fearing non-state actors, including ‘rogue’ state actors. The onus is on the person to demonstrate otherwise.
- 2.1.2 In general, the state is willing and able to provide protection to persons who fear militias and other organised criminal groups (OCGs), but there may be exceptions to this. Consideration must be given to the circumstances of the case and the OCG a person claims to fear. The onus is on the person to demonstrate that they would not be able to obtain effective protection (see [Country Policy and Information Note: Organised Criminal Groups, Brazil](#), [Report of a fact-finding mission: Organised criminal groups \(OCGs\), Brazil](#)).
- 2.1.3 Brazil has a framework of laws to penalise various forms of criminal activity and a functioning criminal justice system as established by the Constitution. The state has taken reasonable steps to establish and operate a legal system for the detection, prosecution and punishment of acts constituting persecution or serious harm and to which persons in general have access. This includes enacting criminal law and judicial procedural codes, and operating functioning law enforcement agencies and judiciary (see [Legal framework](#)).
- 2.1.4 The police have primary responsibility for maintaining law and order and investigating crimes. The federal police are responsible for investigating crimes against federal institutions as well as terrorism, organised crime, public corruption, money laundering and immigration. At state level, each state has 2 police forces: the civil police, which perform an investigative role and the military police, which maintain law and order (the Brazilian military police are not part of the armed forces). Some municipalities have a municipal guard, which is responsible for law enforcement on a localised level, such as traffic enforcement and protecting public facilities.
- 2.1.5 Brazil has formal systems in place for training both military and civil police officers. Courses combine theoretical instruction in areas such as law, human rights, and police procedures with practical training in self-defence, firearms, first aid, and investigation techniques. Some states, including São Paulo, also provide ongoing training aimed at improving policing standards and reducing excessive use of force (see [State police \(civil and military\)](#)).
- 2.1.6 Police capability to handle and respond to crime varies from state to state and within cities. In urban areas, such as in southern Brazil, there are reportedly greater security resources and more developed law enforcement

infrastructure compared to counterparts in rural areas, such as in northern Brazil. Low-income areas known as ‘favelas’ are often outside of police control and are instead controlled and contested by criminal gangs and vigilante militias, reportedly formed of off-duty police and former police and security officials. Residents of these areas may not be willing or able to access law enforcement, for fear of violent reprisals (see [Accessibility, Country Policy and Information Note: Organised Criminal Groups, Brazil, Report of a fact-finding mission: Organised criminal groups \(OCGs\), Brazil](#)).

- 2.1.7 Perpetrators of crimes are arrested and detained, with the total number of warrant-based arrests rising yearly since 2022. Brazil has 5 high security federal prisons, in which the most dangerous offenders are placed. Generally, persons were not reported to be arrested or detained arbitrarily and were given the right to challenge the legality of their detention (see [Arrest and detention](#)).
- 2.1.8 The federal police, whilst limited by resource constraints, are generally seen to be effective and trusted by the population and have opened over 1.5 million investigations since 2000, with particular focus on tax crimes, drug trafficking and corruption. Although a backlog of unresolved cases exists, improvements in data systems and a recent rise in concluded inquiries reflect efforts to strengthen investigative capacity. State police also conduct criminal investigations, including into homicides and financial crimes, and actively work to combat serious and organised crime. While resolution rates are low and vary between states, ongoing reforms aim to improve effectiveness and independence (see [Accessibility and effectiveness of security forces, Investigations, Country Policy and Information Note: Organised Criminal Groups, Brazil, Country Policy and Information Note: Internal relocation, Brazil, Report of a fact-finding mission: Organised criminal groups \(OCGs\), Brazil](#)).
- 2.1.9 The total number of deaths resulting from police intervention has been decreasing yearly since 2022, with 6,137 total deaths from police intervention reported in 2024. Whilst this number includes deaths resulting from excessive use of force, and although state police are sometimes reported to commit arbitrary or extrajudicial killings when responding to crime, it also includes those resulting from self-defence; sources did not disaggregate the data accordingly. In 2024, the states with the highest number of deaths as a result of police intervention per 100,000 inhabitants were Amapa, Bahia and Para (all in the Northeast region) and the states with the lowest number of deaths per 100,000 inhabitants were the Federal District, Rondonia and Pernambuco. Those most affected by police lethality lived in impoverished areas which are generally comprised of higher proportions of young, black, poor males, and which are more likely to be controlled by OCGs. Some deaths were noted to occur in the context of shoot-outs with OCGs (see [Human rights violations, Country Policy and Information Note: Organised Criminal Groups, Brazil, Report of a fact-finding mission: Organised criminal groups \(OCGs\), Brazil](#)).
- 2.1.10 Police are often responsible for investigating other officers which can compromise impartiality. There have been reports of officers intimidating witnesses and failing to conduct adequate investigations. Challenges remain in holding security forces fully accountable, and impunity persists. However, there have been increasing efforts to address this, for example through

drafting resolutions on investigations into police abuses. Since the beginning of 2023, more than 300 police officers have been dismissed and more than 450 officers have been arrested. Whilst processes are lengthy, sources reported that corrupt officials are commonly brought to justice (see [Accountability](#), [Corruption](#)).

- 2.1.11 Brazil has established a functioning judiciary based on civil law which operates at state and federal levels, comprised of lower courts, specialised courts and ultimately the Supreme Federal Court and the Superior Court of Justice. Due process and defendants' rights are mostly upheld. However, many persons who are arrested and prosecuted are unable to afford lawyers and there are staffing deficits which may affect the provision of free legal assistance. The courts operate largely independently of government influence. Whilst there are reports that the judiciary is overburdened, inefficient and can reportedly be subject to intimidation, especially in rural areas, the evidence does not suggest systemic failings or that the system is not functioning reasonably in the circumstances. In 2023, there were millions of backlogged cases at state and federal levels and cases often took years to be concluded. Those living in remote areas may face issues accessing the justice system due to geographical and financial limitations. However, the state has introduced online digital judicial services to assist these groups (see [Judiciary](#)).
- 2.1.12 There is a witness protection programme offering support, health care and psychological assistance to hundreds of people annually. However, the programme has been criticised for not providing adequate guidance and support, particularly for victims of organised crime. Various NGOs exist that can assist vulnerable persons with access to justice (see [Witness protection](#), [NGO support](#), [Country Policy and Information Note: Organised Criminal Groups, Brazil](#)).
- 2.1.13 Judicial and prosecutorial oversight in Brazil is managed through various ombudspersons and internal affairs offices. The National Councils of Justice and the Public Prosecutor's Office handle complaints against judges and prosecutors, respectively. Most courts and public prosecutor's offices, as well as some state governments, maintain their own Ombudspersons. Additionally, a centralised national Ombudspersons network allows citizens to report public service issues or misconduct online, by phone, mail, or in person (see [Oversight and accountability](#)). In the sources consulted (see [Bibliography](#)), CPIT was unable to find information relating to the effectiveness of the Ombudspersons' offices.
- 2.1.14 Decision makers must consider each case on its facts, noting that a person's reluctance to seek protection does not necessarily mean that effective protection is not available. The onus is on the person to demonstrate that the state would not be willing and able to provide effective protection.
- 2.1.15 For further guidance on assessing state protection, see the Asylum Instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#) [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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# Country information

## About the country information

This section contains publicly available or disclosable country of origin information (COI) which has been gathered, collated and analysed in line with the [research methodology](#). It provides the evidence base for the assessment.

The structure and content follow a [terms of reference](#) which sets out the general and specific topics relevant to the scope of this note.

This document is intended to be comprehensive but not exhaustive. If a particular event, person or organisation is not mentioned this does not mean that the event did or did not take place or that the person or organisation does or does not exist.

The COI included was published or made publicly available on or before **29 May 2025**. Any event taking place or report published after this date will not be included.

Decision makers must use relevant COI as the evidential basis for decisions.

**Some country information quoted in this CPIN was published in Portuguese and has been translated using free online translation tools. Translated information is clearly signposted throughout.**

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## 3. Legal framework

### 3.1 Constitution

3.1.1 The Institute of Advanced Legal Studies of the University of London stated in a guide on legal research on Brazil that:

‘Brazil is a civil law country with a legal system based on codes and legislation...

‘The Constitution is the supreme law in Brazil and the current version was ratified in 1988. The 26 federate states have the power to adopt their own constitutions and laws, subject to the principles of the federal Constitution. Municipalities can also pass their own legislation subject to their state Constitution and to the federal Constitution.’<sup>1</sup>

3.1.2 The current [Constitution of Brazil](#) (in Portuguese) has been amended regularly since its ratification in 1988<sup>2</sup>.

3.1.3 For an English translation including amendments up to 2017, see [Constitution of Brazil \(English\)](#)<sup>3</sup>.

3.1.4 The Constitution of Brazil states that one of the ‘fundamental objectives of the Federative Republic of Brazil’ is ‘to promote the well-being of all, without prejudice as to origin, race, sex, color, age and any other forms of discrimination.’<sup>4</sup>

3.1.5 The Constitution also provides, among other things, that:

- ‘Everyone is equal before the law, with no distinction whatsoever, guaranteeing... the inviolability of the rights to life, liberty, equality,

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<sup>1</sup> University of London, [Brazil: IALS Library Guides](#), last updated September 2022

<sup>2</sup> Government of Brazil, [Constitution of Brazil](#), 5 October 1988

<sup>3</sup> Constitute Project, [Constitution of Brazil](#), 5 October 1988

<sup>4</sup> Constitute Project, [Constitution of Brazil](#) (Article 3), 5 October 1988

security and property...'<sup>5</sup>

- 'men and women have equal rights and duties...'<sup>6</sup>
- 'no one shall be submitted to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment...'<sup>7</sup>
- 'the law shall punish any discrimination attacking fundamental rights and liberties'<sup>8</sup>
- 'the practice of racism is a non-bailable crime...'<sup>9</sup>
- 'there shall be no penalties... of death, except in case of declared war, in the terms of art. 84, XIX...'<sup>10</sup>

3.1.6 At Article 144, the Constitution of Brazil provides for the creation and duties of the federal, military and civil police forces<sup>11</sup>, and Chapter 3 of Title IV sets out rules regarding the structure, composition and conduct of the judiciary<sup>12</sup>. Article 5 XLIX contains arrest and detention rights<sup>13</sup> (see also [Security forces](#), [Arrest and detention](#), [Judiciary](#)).

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## 3.2 Penal code

3.2.1 See the current Brazilian [Penal Code](#) (in Portuguese only), promulgated in 1940 and last updated in 2024, for the legal definitions and penalties related to acts against the person<sup>14</sup>.

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## 3.3 International law

3.3.1 Brazil is a party to the following United Nations international human rights treaties:

- Convention against Torture and Other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and its Optional Protocol
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights aiming to the abolition of the death penalty
- Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

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<sup>5</sup> Constituent Project, [Constitution of Brazil](#) (Article 5), 5 October 1988

<sup>6</sup> Constituent Project, [Constitution of Brazil](#) (Article 5 I), 5 October 1988

<sup>7</sup> Constituent Project, [Constitution of Brazil](#) (Article 5 III), 5 October 1988

<sup>8</sup> Constituent Project, [Constitution of Brazil](#) (Article 5 XLI), 5 October 1988

<sup>9</sup> Constituent Project, [Constitution of Brazil](#) (Article 5 XLII), 5 October 1988

<sup>10</sup> Constituent Project, [Constitution of Brazil](#) (Article 5 XLVII a), 5 October 1988

<sup>11</sup> Constituent Project, [Constitution of Brazil](#) (Article 144), 5 October 1988

<sup>12</sup> Constituent Project, [Constitution of Brazil](#) (Chapter III, Title IV), 5 October 1988

<sup>13</sup> Constituent Project, [Constitution of Brazil](#) (Article 5 XLIX), 5 October 1988

<sup>14</sup> Government of Brazil, [Penal Code](#), 7 December 1940

- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
  - Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols
  - Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities<sup>15</sup>
- 3.3.2 Brazil has also ratified the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide, and the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime<sup>16</sup>.
- 3.3.3 The Global Organized Crime Index is a 'multi-dimensional tool that assesses the level of criminality and resilience to organized crime for 193 countries'<sup>17</sup>. Its 2023 iteration (Global Organized Crime Index 2023), based on data from 2022<sup>18</sup>, noted that 'Brazil has been actively participating in international cooperation efforts to tackle organized crime, including signing and ratifying treaties and conventions on drugs, arms and human trafficking, and having extradition treaties with many countries. It... also... has several cooperation agreements with international agencies and governments to exchange experiences on public-security policies and strategies to fight crime.'<sup>19</sup>

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## 4. Security forces

### 4.1 Overview of security forces

4.1.1 In 2024, the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), the Brazilian government's statistical agency, estimated Brazil's population to be 212,583,750<sup>20</sup>. Unless otherwise stated, references to the population of Brazil throughout this CPIN are based on this figure.

4.1.2 The United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC)'s International Independent Expert Mechanism to Advance Racial Justice and Equality in Law Enforcement visited Brazil from 27 November 2023 to 8 December 2023. The purpose of the visit was to assess 'good practices and challenges faced by Brazil in upholding its human rights obligations on non-discrimination in the context of law enforcement and the criminal justice system.'<sup>21</sup> Its report on the visit, published on 27 September 2024 (UNHRC 2024 report), stated that:

'The organization of the Brazilian police is complex and reflects the country's size and diversity. Brazil has multiple law enforcement agencies, each with distinct roles and responsibilities at the federal, state and municipal levels. With each federal unit having at least its own military and civil police... and many municipalities having their own municipal guard, Brazil has 1,595 different law enforcement agencies with 796,180 officials on duty, including 404,871 military police officers, 95,908 civil police agents, 94,673 prison police officers...

'At the federal level, Brazil has the Federal Police, responsible for a wide range of duties, including border control, immigration, customs, and investigations related to federal crimes; the Federal Highway Police, which

<sup>15</sup> OHCHR, [UN Treaty Body Database](#), no date

<sup>16</sup> University of Minnesota Human Rights Library, [Ratification... Brazil](#), no date

<sup>17</sup> Global Organized Crime Index, [About](#), no date

<sup>18</sup> Global Organized Crime Index, [About](#), no date

<sup>19</sup> Global Organized Crime Index, [Brazil Profile](#) (Leadership and governance), 2023

<sup>20</sup> IBGE, [Population Estimates](#), updated 30 December 2024

<sup>21</sup> UNHRC, [...Visit to Brazil...](#) (page 1), 27 September 2024

focuses on patrolling highways and enforcing traffic laws; the Federal Railroad Police; and the National Public Security Force, created to support state governments during security crises and emergencies.

‘The state-level police are responsible for maintaining law and order within their respective state jurisdictions. Each of the 26 states and the Federal District has its own state police force, known as the Military Police. These forces are responsible for general law enforcement duties, including patrolling streets, responding to emergencies, and maintaining public safety. Each Military Police has a militarised structure and functioning. In addition, states also have the Civil Police, which is mostly responsible for criminal investigations. Both the military and civil police are under the overall authority of the state governor, and if existing, they also report to the state's secretary of public security.

‘The municipal police forces, known as the Municipal Guard or Civil Guard, are responsible for local law enforcement and maintaining order within the boundaries of a specific city or municipality. Their responsibilities often include traffic enforcement, public safety, and protecting public facilities.’<sup>22</sup>

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## 4.2 Federal police

### 4.2.1 The Brazilian Constitution stated at Article 144 that:

‘1. The federal police... is designed:

‘I. to detect criminal offenses against the political and social order... as well as other offenses with interstate or international repercussions...

‘II. to prevent and repress illegal traffic in narcotics and similar drugs, contraband and smuggling...

‘III. to perform the functions of maritime, airport and border police...

‘2. The federal highway police is a permanent body, organized and maintained by the Union... designed to patrol the federal highways...

‘3. The federal railway police, [is] a permanent body, organized and maintained by the Union... and designed to patrol the federal railways ostensibly, as provided by law.’<sup>23</sup>

### 4.2.2 In September 2024, officials from the UK Home Office (UK HO) conducted a Fact Finding Mission (FFM) to Brazil. Members of the Brazilian Federal Police working in the Serious and Organised Crime Division told the UK HO FFM team that:

‘We have an office in each of the 27 states as well as 20 intelligence bases. Officers in the Federal police have more training, are more prepared, handle bigger cases and use specific investigation techniques such as wiretapping, internet tracking, drones and accessing banking records...

‘We have one central anti human trafficking office and 27 more around the country - one in each Brazilian state, to carry out investigations. We provide victim assistance... There is a lot of international cooperation and

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<sup>22</sup> UNHRC, [...Visit to Brazil...](#) (page 6), 27 September 2024

<sup>23</sup> Constituent Project, [Constitution of Brazil](#) (Article 144), 5 October 1988

contact...'<sup>24</sup>

4.2.3 The Brazilian Forum on Public Security (Forum Brasileiro de Seguranca Publica, FBSP) is 'a non-governmental... organization... dedicated to building an environment of reference and technical cooperation in the area of Public Security'<sup>25</sup>. In the Executive Summary of a 2024 report, originally published in Portuguese, entitled 'X-ray of public security forces in Brazil' (FBSP 2024 report), and based on data from March 2023<sup>26</sup>, the FBSP stated that: '...the Federal Police has a staff of 12,900 [approximately 0.06 officers per 1,000 of the total population of Brazil], the Federal Highway Police employs 12,882 [approximately 0.06 officers per 1,000 of the total population of Brazil], Federal Prison Police totals 1,141 personnel [approximately 2.2 guards per federal prisoner<sup>27</sup>]...' <sup>28</sup>

4.2.4 Regarding training, the Government of Brazil stated on an undated webpage, originally in Portuguese, that 'The National Police Academy – ANP is a government school specialized in professional training and training in public security. Created in 1960 with the initial objective of training and preparing new federal police officers...

'...it is also responsible for the continuous qualification of the institution's employees...' <sup>29</sup>

4.2.5 Originally in Portuguese, the website of Brazil's National Police Academy stated that:

'Although for each professional profile there is a specific disciplinary matrix, the training has an average duration of 850 class hours and its completion takes place over a period of approximately five months...

'The teaching activities are... conducted by a highly specialized faculty, composed of Federal Police Officers recruited from among those endowed with expertise in each topic to be taught and previously trained for teaching...

'...throughout their career, the Federal Police Officer is given the opportunity to participate in transversal training actions, aimed at all federal police officers, e.g., training with new equipment integrated into the collection, and in specific actions, linked to the daily performance of the police officer, e.g., Crisis Management Course Involving Indigenous Communities for police officers assigned to units where there is a history of confrontations and conflicts over land ownership.'<sup>30</sup>

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## 4.3 State police (civil and military)

4.3.1 The Brazilian Constitution stated at Article 144 that: '4. ...the civil police... has the duty to act as judicial police and to investigate criminal offenses, with the exception of military offenses.

'5. The military police is responsible for ostensibly policing and preserving

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<sup>24</sup> UK Home Office, [Report of a FFM: OCGs](#) (page 24), September 2024

<sup>25</sup> FBSP, [About Us](#), no date

<sup>26</sup> FBSP, [X-ray of public security forces in Brazil](#) (page 102), February 2024

<sup>27</sup> SENAPPEN, [RELIPEN 1st Semester 2024](#) (page 12), 2024

<sup>28</sup> FBSP, [X-ray of public security forces in Brazil: Executive summary](#) (page 3), February 2024

<sup>29</sup> Government of Brazil, [Directorate of Education of the National Police Academy](#), no date

<sup>30</sup> Academia Nacional de Policia, [Who We Are](#), no date

public order...

'6. The military police... together with the civilian police, are under the control of the Governors of the State, Federal District and Territories.'<sup>31</sup>

- 4.3.2 The USSD's Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC) provides 'insights on baseline security conditions for every country in the world.'<sup>32</sup> Its Country Security Report on Brazil, published in February 2025 (OSAC 2025 report), stated that '...military police forces do not report to the Defense Ministry; they are... uniformed state police officers...'<sup>33</sup>
- 4.3.3 Members of the Brazilian Federal Police Immigration Division told the UK HO FFM team that 'The military police are responsible for extensive repression and preventative work. The civil police investigate crimes. These are limited to the state they are in...'<sup>34</sup>
- 4.3.4 Regarding personnel, the FBSP 2024 Report stated that 'The largest police force in Brazil is the Military Police, with a total of 404,871 men and women [approximately 1.9 officers per 1,000 of the population]. Following this, the second-largest force is the Civil Police, with 95,908 officers [approximately 0.45 officers per 1,000 of the population], and the Prison Police, with a workforce of 94,673 individuals [approximately 1 staff member for every 7 state prisoners<sup>35</sup>].'<sup>36</sup>
- 4.3.5 The same report stated that:
- 'In Brazil, most police personnel fall under the jurisdiction of the states, leaving it to each state legislature to draft laws defining the anticipated workforce for their police forces. Although many states have such legislation, most lack objective and publicly available criteria to determine staffing and roles within police institutions...
- '...Brazil averages 2 military police officers per 1,000 inhabitants. Seventeen states exceed this average, with Amapá leading at 4.2 officers per 1,000 inhabitants, followed by Roraima with 3.9 officers per 1,000 inhabitants. Conversely, Santa Catarina has the lowest proportion, at 1.3 officers per 1,000 inhabitants...
- 'Considering territorial distribution, on a national level, there is one military police officer for every 21 km<sup>2</sup>, while for... civil police officers, there is one professional for every... 89 km<sup>2</sup>... The most critical scenario is in the state of Amazonas, where there is one military police officer for every 189 km<sup>2</sup>... and one civil police officer for every 835 km<sup>2</sup>. The state of Mato Grosso also presents a critical scenario in terms of the distribution of security force personnel across its territory, with one military police officer for every 134 km<sup>2</sup>... and one civil police officer for every 313 km<sup>2</sup>...
- 'Brazil has a planned contingent of at least 152,769 civil police officers [approximately 0.7 officers per 1,000 of the population], according to police organizations. However, the actual contingent in 2023 is 95,908 officers, meaning only 63% of the planned positions are filled.

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<sup>31</sup> Constitute Project, [Constitution of Brazil](#) (Article 144), 5 October 1988

<sup>32</sup> USSD OSAC, [About Us](#), no date

<sup>33</sup> USSD OSAC, [Brazil Country Security Report](#) (Law Enforcement), 5 February 2025

<sup>34</sup> UK Home Office, [Report of a FFM: OCGs](#) (page 22), September 2024

<sup>35</sup> SENAPPEN, [RELIPEN 1st Semester 2024](#) (page 12), 2024

<sup>36</sup> FBSP, [X-ray of public security forces in Brazil: Executive summary](#) (page 3), February 2024



‘For the Military Police, there is a planned contingent of at least 584,462 officers [approximately 2.7 officers per 1,000 of the population], while the actual force comprises 404,871 officers, indicating that 69.3% of the planned positions are effectively occupied.’<sup>37</sup>

- 4.3.6 The below table was created by CPIT based on 2024 population data from the IBGE and 2023 data on police personnel from the FBSP<sup>38 39</sup>. It shows the states of Brazil, absolute numbers of civil and military police officers per state and an approximate number of officers per 1,000 of each state’s population:

States	Military police officers	Military police officers per 1,000 of the population	Civil police officers	Civil police officers per 1,000 of the population
Acre	2,540	2.9	893	1.0
Alagoas	6,960	2.2	1,810	0.6
Amapá	3,109	3.9	1,010	1.3
Amazonas	8,250	1.9	1,867	0.4
Bahia	29,887	2.0	4,370	0.3
Ceará	22,427	2.4	4,149	0.4
Distrito Federal	10,567	3.5	3,440	1.2
Espírito Santo	7,890	1.9	1,867	0.5
Goiás	10,987	1.5	2,884	0.4
Maranhão	11,022	1.6	1,782	0.3
Mato Grosso	6,752	1.8	2,887	0.8
Mato Grosso do Sul	5,237	1.8	1,971	0.7
Minas Gerais	36,362	1.7	8,957	0.4
Pará	17,734	2.0	3,476	0.4
Paraíba	8,865	2.1	1,640	0.4
Paraná	17,036	1.4	3,716	0.3
Pernambuco	16,563	1.7	4,663	0.5
Piauí	6,707	2.0	1,621	0.5
Rio de Janeiro	43,362 (2022 data)	3.0	6,694	0.4
Rio Grande do Norte	8,191	2.4	1,561	0.5
Rio Grande do Sul	17,962	1.6	5,711	0.5
Rondônia	4,955	2.8	1,332	0.8
Roraima	2,485	3.5	673	0.9
Santa Catarina	9,580	1.2	3,408	0.4
São Paulo	80,037	1.7	21,089	0.5
Sergipe	5,870	2.6	1,308	0.6
Tocantins	3,534	2.2	1,129	0.7
<b>Brazil</b>	<b>404,871</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>95,908</b>	<b>0.5</b>

- 4.3.7 In the sources consulted (see [Bibliography](#)), CPIT was unable to find information relating to the average ratio of police officers to population in the Latin America region generally. However, a 2024 World Bank report stated that ‘Police forces in LAC [Latin America and the Caribbean] range in size from 173 per 100,000 people in Honduras to 968 per 100,000 people in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. The region displays the widest variation in police force sizes across countries and the highest regional median in the world.’<sup>40</sup>

- 4.3.8 Advocacia dos Concursos, a ‘blog... dedicated to debating the rights of

<sup>37</sup> FBSP, [X-ray of public security forces in Brazil: Executive summary](#) (pages 4-6), February 2024

<sup>38</sup> IBGE, [Population Estimates](#), updated 30 December 2024

<sup>39</sup> FBSP, [X-ray of public security forces in Brazil \(Excel spreadsheet\)](#), February 2024

<sup>40</sup> World Bank, [Latin America and the Caribbean Economic Review](#) (page 61), 28 April 2025

candidates for public office'<sup>41</sup>, stated in a December 2024 post, originally in Portuguese, describing the training of the military police that: 'The training course for Military Police Officers... lasts about a year full-time...

'...theoretical classes cover law, ethics, human rights and criminology...

'The practical part includes self-defense, weapon handling, patrolling techniques, approach, first aid and physical conditioning...'<sup>42</sup>

- 4.3.9 Regarding training for the civil police, Estrategia Concursos, a company providing tuition for those seeking public sector employment in Brazil<sup>43</sup>, stated in a 2023 blog post, originally in Portuguese, that:

'...the Training Course varies from one state to another.

'This is because each Civil Police has its own internal regulations...

'...the Civil Police Training Course comprises, as a rule:

'Theoretical classes on police techniques and weapons;

'Police training with weapons;

'Theoretical classes on legislation, investigation and police action (depending on the position there is a focus on specific procedures...)

'Physical Training (exercise and self-defense techniques);

'First aid instructions.'<sup>44</sup>

- 4.3.10 In a September 2024 article, originally in Portuguese, on civil police training in Sao Paulo state, the news agency of the Sao Paulo state government reported that:

'Once approved in the Civil Police competition, aspirants to the position enter the Police Academy (Acadepol). The course for civil police officers lasts six months for delegates and three and a half months for other careers...

'At Acadepol, those approved in the Civil Police exam deepen their knowledge with studies on criminology, target shooting, science, technology, investigation, public service management, among other disciplines. The course also includes teachings on human rights and police investigation.'<sup>45</sup>

- 4.3.11 In a January 2025 article, originally in Portuguese, Brazilian news agency Agencia Brasil<sup>46</sup> quoted Sao Paulo's Secretariat of Public Security: '...“to reduce police lethality, the corporation continues to invest in the improvement of personnel through its continuing education program, with practical and theoretical training, and in the acquisition of equipment with less offensive potential. In addition, targeted commissions analyze cases of this nature and adjust approach procedures.”'<sup>47</sup>

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## 4.4 Municipal guards

- 4.4.1 The Brazilian Constitution stated at Article 144 that 'The Counties

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<sup>41</sup> Advocacia dos Concursos, [About](#), no date

<sup>42</sup> Advocacia dos Concursos, [Military Police training course...](#), 3 December 2024

<sup>43</sup> Estrategia Concursos, [About Us](#), no date

<sup>44</sup> Estrategia Concursos, [What is the training course like in the Civil Police?](#), 6 August 2023

<sup>45</sup> Agencia SP, [...see how the training of civil police officers in SP works...](#), 27 September 2024

<sup>46</sup> Agencia Brasil, [Homepage](#), no date

<sup>47</sup> Agencia Brasil, [Lethality of the São Paulo military police increased in 2024](#), 15 January 2025



[municipalities] may organize county guards in order to protect county property, services and facilities, as provided by law.<sup>48</sup>

4.4.2 Originally in Portuguese, the Statute of the Municipal Guards of 8 August 2014 stated that:

‘Art. 3 The minimum principles of action of the municipal guards are:

‘I - protection of fundamental human rights... and public freedoms;

‘II - preservation of life, reduction of suffering and reduction of losses;

‘III - preventive patrol...

‘Art. 5 The specific competencies of the municipal guards... are...

‘II - to prevent and inhibit, by presence and surveillance, as well as to restrict, criminal or administrative infractions...

‘III - to act, preventively and permanently, in the territory of the Municipality, for the systemic protection of the population...

‘V - to collaborate with the pacification of conflicts that its members witness, paying attention to the respect for the fundamental rights of people...

‘IX – to interact with civil society to discuss solutions to local problems and projects aimed at improving the security conditions of the communities...

‘XIV - to forward the perpetrator of the offense to the police chief, in the event of a flagrante delicto...

‘XVI – to develop actions for the primary prevention of violence, alone or in conjunction with other bodies of the municipality itself, of other municipalities or of the state and federal spheres...

‘Art. 7 - The municipal guards may not have a staff greater than:

‘I - 0.4%... of the population, in Municipalities with up to 50,000... inhabitants

‘II - 0.3%... of the population, in Municipalities with more than 50,000... and less than 500,000... inhabitants...

‘III - 0.2%... of the population, in Municipalities with more than 500,000... inhabitants...

‘Article 16. Municipal guards are authorized to carry firearms, as provided for by law.<sup>49</sup>

4.4.3 Regarding personnel, the FBSP 2024 report stated that ‘Municipal Guards have an estimated workforce of 95,175 individuals [approximately 0.45 employees per 1,000 of the total population of Brazil], operating within 1,467 agencies...

‘...in 2022, Brazil had at least 1,467 [municipalities with] municipal guards, an increase of 23.5% compared to 2019.<sup>50</sup>

4.4.4 The below table was created by CPIT based on 2024 population data from the IBGE and 2022 data on the municipal guards from the FBSP<sup>51 52</sup>. It

<sup>48</sup> Constituent Project, [Constitution of Brazil](#) (Article 144), 5 October 1988

<sup>49</sup> Government of Brazil, [Law No. 13,022](#), 8 August 2014

<sup>50</sup> FBSP, [X-ray of public security forces in Brazil: Executive summary](#) (page 3), February 2024

<sup>51</sup> IBGE, [Population Estimates](#), updated 30 December 2024

<sup>52</sup> FBSP, [X-ray of public security forces in Brazil \(Excel spreadsheet\)](#), February 2024

shows the states of Brazil, absolute numbers of municipal guard officers per state and an estimate of the number of officers per 1,000 of the state's population:

<b>Brazil and states</b>	<b>Officers of municipal guards (2022 data)</b>	<b>Officers of municipal guards per 1,000 of the population</b>
Acre	No municipal guard	-
Alagoas	2,777	0.86
Amapá	246	0.31
Amazonas	2,118	0.49
Bahia	10,143	0.68
Ceará	4,798	0.52
Distrito Federal	No municipal guard	-
Espírito Santo	1,543	0.38
Goiás	2,298	0.31
Maranhão	2,766	0.39
Mato Grosso	468	0.12
Mato Grosso do Sul	1,524	0.53
Minas Gerais	5,001	0.23
Pará	3,202	0.37
Paraíba	1,740	0.42
Paraná	4,175	0.35
Pernambuco	4,210	0.44
Piauí	506	0.15
Rio de Janeiro	15,088	0.88
Rio Grande do Norte	1,118	0.32
Rio Grande do Sul	2,221	0.20
Rondônia	26	0.01
Roraima	421	0.59
Santa Catarina	1,058	0.13
São Paulo	26,079	0.57
Sergipe	1,328	0.58
Tocantins	321	0.20
<b>Brazil</b>	<b>95,175</b>	<b>0.45</b>

- 4.4.5 In a January 2025 article, originally in Portuguese, Brazilian news agency O Dia<sup>53</sup> reported on the training of municipal guards in the city of Nova Iguaçu, in Rio de Janeiro state: 'Before starting to work, the new agents will undergo intensive training of approximately three months.

'The training course... will have more than 400 hours of class. Subjects of basic legislation, first aid, self-defense, notions of the history of the municipality, approaches to people, crowd control, human rights and others will be taught.'<sup>54</sup>

- 4.4.6 Originally in Portuguese, a November 2022 article on the webpage of the prefecture of Umuarama (in the state of Parana) stated that refresher training of the municipal guards:

'...is to comply with standards established by the Federal Police. "Armed corporations, such as our Municipal Guard, need to hold refresher courses

<sup>53</sup> O Dia, [About Us](#), no date

<sup>54</sup> O Dia, [New agents of the Municipal Guard of Nova Iguaçu start training course](#), 22 January 2025

annually. The training – with a total of 80 hours of activities – consists of first aid, community police, traffic and self-defense courses, but most of the load (52 hours) is completed with practical shooting”, he [Valdiney Roberto Rissato, commander of the municipal guard of Umuarama<sup>55</sup>] details.

‘Rissato notes that all 28 municipal guards undergo courses throughout the year. “In addition to complying with the rules determined by the PF [polícia federal, federal police], the update also aims to improve the efficiency of agents, in case of the need to use weapons or interventions in any situations to defend the population,”...’<sup>56</sup>

- 4.4.7 Originally in Portuguese, the Chamber of Deputies of the Brazilian Congress stated, in a 2023 article on a bill proposing an amendment to the Statute of the Municipal Guard, that:

‘Bill 1109/23 authorizes education, training, qualification and improvement of municipal guards through agreements with the Armed Forces or state military institutions...

“There is no plausible basis for why municipal guards cannot be trained and perfected by the military, as long as the fundamental precepts and principles of the Municipal Guard are respected,” said the author of the proposal, Deputy Sargento Portugal (Piode-RJ), when defending the change.’<sup>57</sup>

- 4.4.8 In 2024, Brazilian news agency The Rio Times<sup>58</sup> reported the following:

‘Across Brazil, a notable shift is occurring in how cities manage public safety, directly responding to the growing concerns about violence.

‘Municipalities, driven by mayors from north to south, are not only establishing but also significantly enhancing their municipal guards.

‘These developments are unfolding in an atmosphere where the majority of these forces operate without adherence to existing legal frameworks. Now, they are on the verge of transforming into formal police forces...

‘With over 100,000 officers, these municipal guards are gaining momentum. However, their operations often lack proper oversight and are heavily influenced by political agendas.

‘Although a 2014 law established the legal foundation for municipal guards, an estimated 70% do not fully comply with its stipulations. This includes necessary training, career planning, and the establishment of control mechanisms.

‘This widespread noncompliance underscores the irregularity of their function. It also highlights the absence of mandatory municipal legislation defining their roles.

‘...mayors are progressively relying on these guards to fill the gaps left by the overstretched military police, aiming to establish a robust local deterrent against crime...

‘The federal government’s lack of precise data on the operational specifics and training standards of these forces further complicates this scenario. This

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<sup>55</sup> Prefecture of Umuarama, [Municipal Guard agents undergo... training](#), 28 November 2022

<sup>56</sup> Prefecture of Umuarama, [Municipal Guard agents undergo... training](#), 28 November 2022

<sup>57</sup> Chamber of Deputies, [Project allows military forces to train municipal guards](#), 7 July 2023

<sup>58</sup> The Rio Times, [Homepage](#), no date

gap has led to a policy-making void.’<sup>59</sup>

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## 5. Accessibility and effectiveness of security forces

### 5.1 Accessibility

5.1.1 The Wilson Center, a US regional studies think-tank<sup>60</sup>, stated in a 2023 blog post that:

‘With fewer security resources and law enforcement infrastructure, it is much more difficult to report violent crimes in Brazil’s northern states.

“In some states, the quality of information is poor, the cause of the homicide is unknown, the police do not investigate, or there is not even a computer to record it correctly. There is great precariousness in this area, and at the same time that violence is migrating there,” says Ana Maria Nogales Vasconcelos, a demographer at the University of Brasília.’<sup>61</sup>

5.1.2 At time of writing, 12 states (Acre, Alagoas, Amazonas, Amapá, Bahia, Maranhão, Piauí, Rio Grande do Norte, Rondônia, Roraima, Sergipe and Tocantins) had joined the [Virtual Police Station](#), an initiative of Brazil’s Ministry of Justice and Public Security (SINESP), which has ‘the objective of facilitating the citizen’s access to the police occurrence registration service’ of those states. The service ‘is only available for the registration of facts that occurred in the states that have joined’ the initiative<sup>62</sup>.

5.1.3 The Frequently Asked Questions section of the Virtual Police Station’s website stated, originally in Portuguese, that: ‘Any individual of legal age and with an active registration on gov.br may register an occurrence report...

‘To register your communication you must select the State where the event occurred. Your communication will be forwarded to the Civil Police of this State, which will be responsible for the analysis and approval or not of the occurrence report.’<sup>63</sup>

5.1.4 The same webpage noted that not all types of crime can be reported online, but did not elaborate further<sup>64</sup>.

5.1.5 Other Brazilian states may also have online reporting capabilities, for example:

- the [Electronic Police Station](#) of Sao Paulo, which notes on its website that rape, homicide and robbery followed by death cannot be reported online<sup>65</sup>
- the [Civil Police of Rio de Janeiro](#), which notes on its website that reports of death, bank robbery, kidnapping, theft/vehicle theft and requests for protective measures cannot be made online<sup>66</sup>
- the [Virtual Police Station of Santa Catarina](#)

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<sup>59</sup> The Rio Times, [Beyond the Badge: The Growing Power of... Municipal Guards](#), 1 August 2024

<sup>60</sup> Wilson Center, [About the Wilson Center](#), no date

<sup>61</sup> Wilson Center, [Homicides Are Down In Brazil. But It’s Not Time For A Victory Lap](#), 14 March 2023

<sup>62</sup> SINESP, [Virtual Police Station](#), no date

<sup>63</sup> SINESP, [Virtual Police Station Faq](#), no date

<sup>64</sup> SINESP, [Virtual Police Station Faq](#), no date

<sup>65</sup> Civil Police of Sao Paulo, [Electronic Police Station](#), no date

<sup>66</sup> Civil Police of Rio de Janeiro, [Incident Reporting](#), no date

- 5.1.6 For further information on access to law enforcement in areas controlled by organised criminal groups, see [Country Policy and Information Note: Organised Criminal Groups, Brazil](#).

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## 5.2 Effectiveness

- 5.2.1 In 2023, Insight Crime, ‘a think tank and media organization that seeks to deepen and inform the debate about organized crime and citizen security in the Americas’<sup>67</sup>, reported that:

‘Police officers in Rio are regularly arrested for links to militia groups and are closely connected to these criminal organizations, according to crime analysts.

“The efficiency of state police is hampered by the participation of hundreds of their agents in organized crime,” said Carolina Grillo, a sociology professor at the Federal Fluminense University in Rio who closely studies militia groups...

“The federal police are doing a great job... It is good at arresting high-level criminals, at being able to put together the kind of evidence to prosecute these sorts of [organised] crimes,” said Lessing [Benjamin Lessing, an expert on criminal conflict and corruption in Brazil<sup>68</sup>].

‘Still, federal police have limitations in terms of manpower and mandate.’<sup>69</sup>

- 5.2.2 The 2023 Global Organized Crime Index noted that ‘The penal code and other laws classify a wide range of crimes, but the police mostly react when violence rises or tackle small-scale operators, rather than acting preventively.’<sup>70</sup>
- 5.2.3 The same source stated that ‘the federal police remains the best-equipped police force in the country’, but also noted that ‘the lack of coordination between the different security forces remains a challenge...’<sup>71</sup>
- 5.2.4 Bertelsmann Stiftung’s Transformation Index (BTI) assesses movements toward democracy and market economy around the world<sup>72</sup>. Its 2024 iteration (BTI 2024) covers the period from 1 February 2021 to 31 January 2023<sup>73</sup>. It stated that ‘In several large cities and in remote areas, the state is unable or unwilling to guarantee private and public security...’<sup>74</sup>
- 5.2.5 The OSAC 2025 report noted that ‘Local police are generally well equipped... However, disparities do exist across Brazil’s 27 states in terms of response capability and law enforcement resources for public security.
- ‘Civilian authorities have at times not maintained effective control over security forces.’<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Insight Crime, [About Us](#), no date

<sup>68</sup> Insight Crime, [Local Police Could Disrupt Attempts to Remove Militias from...](#), 9 November 2023

<sup>69</sup> Insight Crime, [Local Police Could Disrupt Attempts to Remove Militias from...](#), 9 November 2023

<sup>70</sup> Global Organized Crime Index, [Brazil Profile](#) (Leadership and governance), 2023

<sup>71</sup> Global Organized Crime Index, [Brazil Profile](#) (Leadership and governance), 2023

<sup>72</sup> BTI, [Who we are](#), no date

<sup>73</sup> BTI, [Brazil Country Report 2024](#) (page 2), 2024

<sup>74</sup> BTI, [Brazil Country Report 2024](#) (Stateness), 2024

<sup>75</sup> USSD OSAC, [Country Security Report Brazil](#) (Law Enforcement), 5 February 2025

- 5.2.6 The CNMP (Brazil's National Council of the Public Prosecutor's Office) told the UK HO FFM team that 'Brazil has 10 thousand miles of land borders as well as sea borders, presenting a logistical challenge.'<sup>76</sup>
- 5.2.7 Representatives from United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime (UNODC) told the UK HO FFM team that:
- '...the Amazon... is a huge region with a lack of communications and a lack of technology, as well as borders with the main cocaine producing areas of the world... Some remote areas have less government presence...
- 'In the Amazon, we have a lot of... crimes and very few public servants, helicopters, equipment. The territory is so vast and there are highly specialised criminal factions who know all the routes around it. The river is like an ocean and there is very little monitoring or systemic inspection of it. This poses a huge challenge...
- 'Another issue is the extent of Brazil's land borders – Brazil borders almost every other country in South America and alongside that, there is a huge coastline making it very difficult for law enforcement to monitor.'<sup>77</sup>
- 5.2.8 Members of the Brazilian Federal Police working in the Serious and Organised Crime division told the UK HO FFM team that: '[Brazil] is the size of a continent... There are 16,000km of land border with only 13,000 federal police officers. It is a huge task to keep the borders secure, it is basically impossible...'<sup>78</sup>
- 5.2.9 Regarding law enforcement resources, the UNODC told the UK HO FFM team that: 'One of the main difficulties is co-operation between entities at federal and state levels, as well as between municipalities...
- '...The Federal Police have a huge mandate but limited human resource. Cooperation between institutions is therefore tricky.'<sup>79</sup>
- 5.2.10 Members of the Brazilian Federal Police working in the Immigration division told the UK HO FFM team that '...The federal police have jurisdiction over the whole country, but we have a limited number of officers for 27 states. State police are therefore closer to what happens on the ground. We establish agreements with them so that we can exchange information and act in more than one state. Until recently we had challenges with sharing information.'<sup>80</sup>
- 5.2.11 Members of the Civil Police of Sao Paulo told the UK HO FFM team that 'We used to have double the amount of officers, but in the last 24 years our personnel has been depleted. The Government has stopped investing in investigation police and instead invests in preventive police (the military police).'<sup>81</sup>
- 5.2.12 Antonio Carlos Costa, founder of NGO Rio de Paz, told the UK HO FFM team that 'Civil and military police... will not help each other. So clarifying crimes is something that happens to a minimum degree...'<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> UK Home Office, [Report of a FFM: OCGs](#) (page 13), September 2024

<sup>77</sup> UK Home Office, [Report of a FFM: OCGs](#) (page 16), September 2024

<sup>78</sup> UK Home Office, [Report of a FFM: OCGs](#) (page 24), September 2024

<sup>79</sup> UK Home Office, [Report of a FFM: OCGs](#) (page 16), September 2024

<sup>80</sup> UK Home Office, [Report of a FFM: OCGs](#) (page 22), September 2024

<sup>81</sup> UK Home Office, [Report of a FFM: OCGs](#) (page 55), September 2024

<sup>82</sup> UK Home Office, [Report of a FFM: OCGs](#) (page 41), September 2024



- 5.2.13 In October 2024, the Institute for the Reform of State-Business Relations (IREE), ‘an independent organization... dedicated to promoting democratic and pluralistic debate to improve the interaction between the public and private sectors in Brazil’<sup>83</sup>, carried out a survey researching the ‘perception of the Brazilian population about Public Security in the country’<sup>84</sup>. Originally in Portuguese, this stated that 70% of respondents expressed trust in the federal police, whilst 55% and 51% expressed trust in the civil police and the military police respectively. 43% trusted the municipal guard<sup>85</sup>. The survey had 2,000 respondents and stated that it was representative of the ‘Brazilian population aged 16 and over, of all ages and regions of the country’<sup>86</sup>.
- 5.2.14 In December 2024, Brazilian newspaper Folha de Sao Paulo<sup>87</sup> reported that:
- ‘A survey conducted by Datafolha reveals that Brazilians fear the security forces more than they trust them.
- ‘According to the data, 51% of respondents said they are more afraid of the police, compared to 46% who expressed greater trust.
- ‘The results show stability in public perception since April 2019, when the same question was posed to respondents.
- ‘Black Brazilians (59%)—who, according to statistics, are more vulnerable to state violence—reported greater fear of police work than white Brazilians (45%)...
- “The way [the police forces] have historically operated has been troubling because it’s not an approach that ensures security for everyone,” says Renato Sérgio de Lima, executive director of the Brazilian Forum on Public Security.’<sup>88</sup>
- The article gave no further detail on the parameters of the survey or the demography of the respondents.
- 5.2.15 The Brazilian government’s National Secretariat of Public Security (Secretaria Nacional de Segurança Pública, SENASP) shared the below data (published in Portuguese) on its online public security platform. It shows the yearly number of homicide victims in Brazil from 2022 to 2024, and for January to April of 2025, covering the categories of femicide, intentional homicide and bodily injury followed by death<sup>89</sup>:

<sup>83</sup> IREE, [Who we are](#), no date

<sup>84</sup> IREE, [...Brazilians' perception of Public Security in Brazil](#), 24 October 2024

<sup>85</sup> IREE, [...Brazilians' perception of Public Security in Brazil](#) (page 24), 24 October 2024

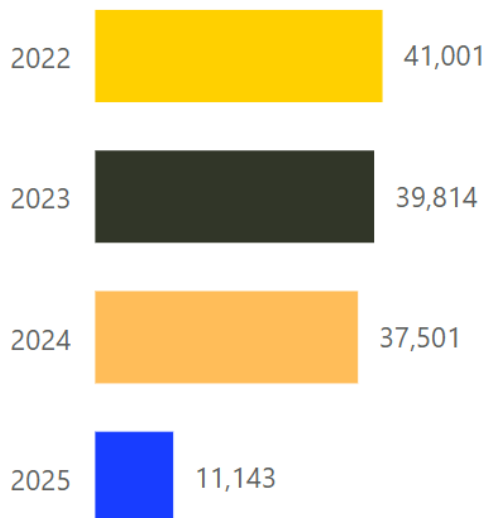
<sup>86</sup> IREE, [...Brazilians' perception of Public Security in Brazil](#) (page 5), 24 October 2024

<sup>87</sup> Folha de Sao Paulo, [Homepage](#), no date

<sup>88</sup> Folha de Sao Paulo, [Brazilians Fear the Police More Than They Trust It...](#), 23 December 2024

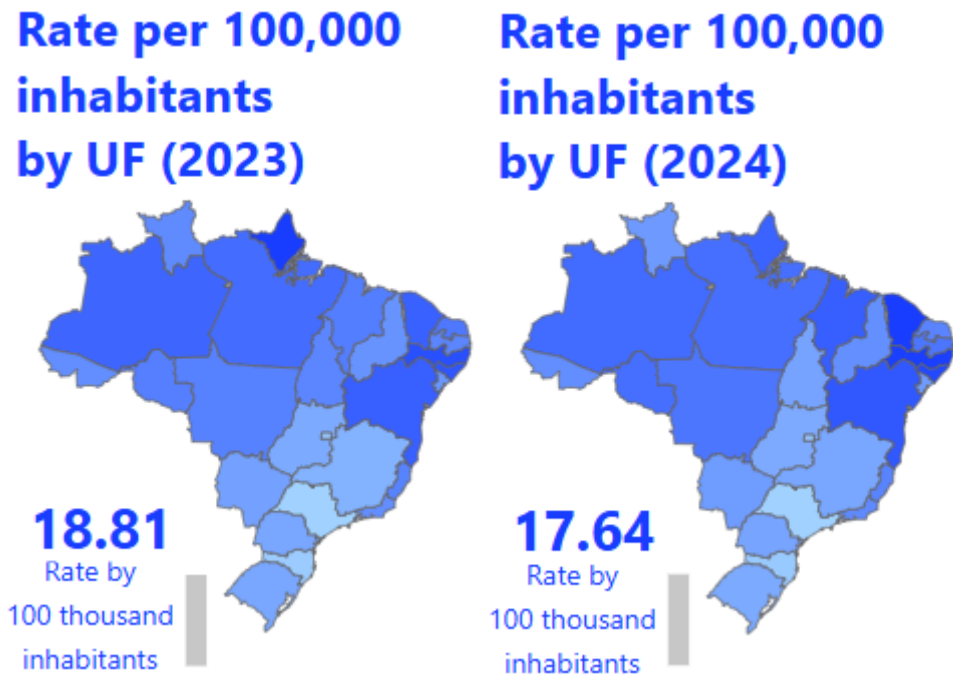
<sup>89</sup> SENASP, [Victims per Year](#), updated 26 May 2025

## Victims per Year



\*2025: Data from January to April

5.2.16 The same source also illustrated the geographical distribution of homicides (comprising the above-mentioned categories) across Brazil through heatmaps. The 2023 and 2024 iterations below show that, generally, the northern and north eastern states of Brazil experience more homicides than the southern states<sup>90</sup>:



5.2.17 The below table was reproduced by CPIT using 2024 data from Brazil’s online public security portal<sup>91</sup>. It shows in the left column the individual states of Brazil; in the middle column the 2024 homicide rate per 100,000 of that state’s population; and in the right column the absolute number of homicides in that state in 2024. It shows that, in 2024, the states with the highest

<sup>90</sup> SENASP, [Rate per 100,000 inhabitants by UF](#), updated 26 May 2025  
<sup>91</sup> SENASP, [Rate per 100,000 inhabitants by UF](#), updated 26 May 2025



number of homicides per 100,000 inhabitants were Ceara, Pernambuco and Alagoas (all in the Northeast region) and the states with the lowest number of homicides per 100,000 inhabitants were the Federal District, Santa Catarina and Sao Paulo. These figures do not include deaths resulting from police violence:

Brazil and Federal Units	Number of murders per 100,000 inhabitants	Absolute number of murders
Brazil	17.64	37,501
Ceara	34.99	3,231
Pernambuco	34.65	3,305
Alagoas	32.61	1,050
Bahia	29.66	4,405
Maranhao	28.40	1,991
Amapa	27.53	221
Amazonas	25.90	1,109
Para	25.03	2,169
Rondonia	25.03	437
Paraiba	23.79	986
Mato Grosso	23.67	908
Rio Grande do Norte	21.10	727
Espirito Santo	21.04	863
Rio de Janeiro	19.84	3,416
Acre	18.96	167
Piaui	18.78	634
Roraima	16.60	119
Mato Grosso do Sul	16.20	470
Sergipe	16.15	370
Tocantins	14.90	235
Parana	14.58	1,724
Minas Gerais	14.05	2,996
Rio Grande do Sul	13.43	1,508
Goiias	13.39	984
Distrito Federal	8.11	242
Santa Catarina	7.21	581
Sao Paulo	5.77	2,653

5.2.18 Originally published in Portuguese, the FBSP's 2024 Brazilian Public Security Yearbook, referring to 2023 homicide data, stated:

'...women represented, on average, 11% of... [victims of robberies leading to death], injuries followed by death and intentional homicides...

'...half of the dead were up to 29 years old (49.4%)...

'Black people, who, according to IBGE [Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics], combine the black and brown categories, remain as the main victims, representing 78% of all MVI [mortes violentas intencionales, intentional violent deaths] records...

'In relation to the instrument used, firearms remain the most common instrument used to kill, responsible for 73.6% of occurrences... Finally, in

relation to the place where the death occurred, public roads continue to be the most frequent in all categories...'<sup>92</sup>

5.2.19 Instituto Sou da Paz, 'a non-governmental organization that has worked for over 15 years to reduce levels of violence in Brazil'<sup>93</sup>, told the UK HO FFM team that 'People have also disappeared. There has been a big reduction in manslaughter in Brazil since 2018 – we had 60,000 victims in 2017 and now the number has decreased. But in critical areas this could be down to disappearances, and the mystery number of the missing.'<sup>94</sup>

5.2.20 In January 2025, The Rio Times reported that:

'Brazil's intentional homicide rate plummeted to 17.9 per 100,000 inhabitants in 2024, its lowest level in over a decade. The Ministry of Justice and Public Security reported 38,075 murders, a 6% decrease from 2023. This decline continues a trend that began in 2020, with a 16% cumulative reduction in homicides since then.

'Despite this progress, regional disparities paint a complex picture of crime in Brazil. Bahia state recorded 4,480 murders in 2024, the highest in the country. Five states, including Maranhão and Ceará, saw increases in their homicide rates. These variations highlight the uneven nature of crime reduction efforts across the nation.

'The government attributes the overall improvement to enhanced policing and socio-economic programs. However, challenges remain. Only 8% of homicides in Brazil lead to convictions, indicating a need for judicial system reforms. This low conviction rate could undermine long-term crime reduction efforts...

'...Public perception of safety remains a concern despite statistical improvements. Many Brazilians still feel unsafe in their communities, creating a disconnect between data and public sentiment.'<sup>95</sup>

5.2.21 Referring to 2024's murder rate, Agencia Brasil reported in February 2025 that:

'...in proportional terms, the murder rate fell in almost all Brazilian states, especially Tocantins, where it dropped by 10.1 points (from 25.4 victims per 100 thousand people in 2023 to 15.3 in 2024); Roraima (down seven points to 16.60); Rio Grande do Norte (down six points, reaching 21.65); Sergipe (down 4.70); and Rio de Janeiro, where this same index sank from 21.96 to 20.35 (down 1.61), which, in absolute terms, means that 177 lives were spared in the state, with the total number victims lowering by 3,781 to 3,504 victims.

'On the opposite direction, however, Ceará (up 3.15), Maranhão (up 3), and Minas Gerais (up 0.6) recorded small increases in the number of occurrences per 100 thousand people.

'In the view of National Secretary for Public Security Mario Sarrubbo, even though the rates are less than ideal, a consistent downward trend in crime

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<sup>92</sup> FBSP, [Anuário Brasileiro de Segurança Pública](#) (pages 31-35), 2024

<sup>93</sup> Instituto Sou da Paz, [What we do](#), no date

<sup>94</sup> UK Home Office, [Report of a FFM: OCGs](#) (page 45), September 2024

<sup>95</sup> The Rio Times, [Brazil Slashes Murder Rate to Decade Low...](#), 18 January 2025

can be seen.<sup>96</sup>

5.2.22 A 2025 article in The Guardian discussing Brazil Avenue, which it describes as a '36-mile highway – which bisects more than 25 neighbourhoods as it leads from Rio [de Janeiro]'s western outskirts towards its heart'<sup>97</sup>, noted that 'According to the Instituto Fogo Cruzado, a group that tracks gun violence, Brazil Avenue suffered 637 shootouts from 2017 to 2024 – one every five days. The bullets killed 160 people and wounded 383. Last month three police officers were killed on the motorway after losing control of their vehicle during a high-speed chase.'<sup>98</sup>

5.2.23 The OSAC 2025 report noted that:

'Violent crime remains a key concern for large parts of the country, with several large cities having high homicide rates. Almost every year since 2017 overall homicides have gone down, reaching the lowest levels in over a decade. However, some areas like the northern and northeastern regions of Brazil have seen higher rates than the rest of the country. The national homicide rate in 2023 was around 18.5 homicides per 100,000 residents. In 2023, there were 37,639 homicides, a 3.3% decrease from 2022. Around 90% of homicide victims are male. Conflicts between armed criminal factions competing for territorial control between each other and state security forces play a major role in driving homicide numbers.'<sup>99</sup>

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## 6. Arrest and detention

### 6.1 Arrest and detention rights

6.1.1 The Brazilian Constitution provides that:

- 'litigants in judicial or administrative proceedings and defendants in general are assured an adversary system and a full defense, with the measures and recourses inherent therein...'<sup>100</sup>
- 'no one shall be considered guilty until his criminal conviction has become final and non-appealable...'<sup>101</sup>
- 'no one shall be arrested unless in flagrante delicto [caught in the act of committing an offence<sup>102</sup>] or by written and substantiated order of a competent judicial authority, except for a military offense or a specific military crime, as defined by law...'<sup>103</sup>
- 'one under arrest shall be informed of his rights, including the right to remain silent, and shall be assured assistance of his family and a lawyer...'<sup>104</sup>
- 'the State shall provide full and gratuitous legal assistance to anyone who

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<sup>96</sup> Agencia Brasil, [Number of violent deaths in Brazil falls 5% in 2024](#), 10 February 2025

<sup>97</sup> The Guardian, ['Avenue of Death': the Rio motorway...](#), 29 May 2025

<sup>98</sup> The Guardian, ['Avenue of Death': the Rio motorway...](#), 29 May 2025

<sup>99</sup> USSD OSAC, [Country Security Report Brazil](#) (Crime), 5 February 2025

<sup>100</sup> Constitute Project, [Constitution of Brazil](#) (Article 5 XLIX LV), 5 October 1988

<sup>101</sup> Constitute Project, [Constitution of Brazil](#) (Article 5 XLIX LVII), 5 October 1988

<sup>102</sup> Collins Dictionary, [in flagrante delicto](#), no date

<sup>103</sup> Constitute Project, [Constitution of Brazil](#) (Article 5 XLIX LXI), 5 October 1988

<sup>104</sup> Constitute Project, [Constitution of Brazil](#) (Article 5 XLIX LXIII), 5 October 1988

proves that he has insufficient funds...'<sup>105</sup>

- 'everyone is assured that judicial and administrative proceedings will end within a reasonable time and the means to guarantee that they will be handled speedily...'<sup>106</sup>

#### 6.1.2 The USSD 2023 report stated that:

'Police were required to advise persons of their rights at the time of arrest or before taking them into custody for interrogation. The law prohibited use of force during an arrest unless the suspect attempted to escape or resisted arrest...

'...The law permitted provisional detention for up to five days under specified conditions during an investigation, but a judge could extend this period. Judges were also authorized to order temporary detention for an additional five days for processing. Preventive detention for an initial period of 15 days was permitted if police suspected a detainee might flee the area. Defendants arrested in the act of committing a crime were required to be charged within 30 days of arrest. The law required other defendants to be charged within 45 days, although this period could be extended. In cases involving heinous crimes, torture, drug trafficking, and terrorism, pretrial detention could last 30 days with the option to extend for an additional 30 days.

'...The law did not provide for a maximum period of pretrial detention, which was decided on a case-by-case basis. Bail was available for most crimes, and defendants facing charges for all but the most serious crimes had the right to a bail hearing... Detainees who were unable to pay for legal counsel had the right to a lawyer provided by the state... If detainees were convicted, time in detention before trial was subtracted from their sentences...'<sup>107</sup>

#### 6.1.3 The World Prison Brief (WPB), a 'database that provides free access to information about prison systems throughout the world'<sup>108</sup>, in cooperation with the Institute for Crime & Justice Policy Research<sup>109</sup> and Birkbeck University of London, reported in May 2025 that:

'Brazil's federal Penal Code 1940 provides for three alternative security regimes for people sentenced to deprivation of liberty—closed, semi-open and open—through which prisoners are required to progress in the course of their sentence. Which regime a prisoner is in has consequences for the type of work they will be eligible for.

'Closed regime prisoners are held in maximum or medium security facilities. Semi-open regime prisoners are required to work or attend supervised training or education during the day, either on or off prison premises, but return to the prison at night. In this regime, prisoners are also entitled to a "temporary leave" of up to seven days, with or without electronic monitoring (as determined by the penal execution judge), four times per year, intended for family visiting or to aid participation in education or other activities with a resocialising purpose. In the open regime, prisoners are expected to attend courses, work, or engage in other authorised activities unsupervised, and to

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<sup>105</sup> Constitute Project, [Constitution of Brazil](#) (Article 5 XLIX LXXIV), 5 October 1988

<sup>106</sup> Constitute Project, [Constitution of Brazil](#) (Article 5 XLIX LXXVIII), 5 October 1988

<sup>107</sup> USSD, [2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Brazil](#) (Section 1), 2024

<sup>108</sup> The World Prison Brief, [About](#), no date

<sup>109</sup> Institute for Crime & Justice Policy Research, [About](#), no date

stay in hostels (casas do albergado) outside working hours.

‘Initial regime placement is prescribed by the sentencing court and depends partly on sentence length: sentences of more than eight years must begin in the closed regime; those of between four and eight years generally begin in the semi-open regime; and those of less than four years, in the open regime. Progression from more secure to less secure regimes is authorised by the penal execution judge (who is a member of the judiciary, not part of prison staff), progression decisions being based on the individual’s conduct in custody and other criteria that vary depending on the offence, and whether there are any previous convictions. In practice, the federal provisions on regimes and progression are not fully operational due to a shortage of places across the prison system.’<sup>110</sup>

#### 6.1.4 WPB also noted:

‘Most of Brazil’s law on prison work derives from the federal Penal Execution Law (“LEP”) of 1984. The LEP requires every sentenced prisoner to work to the extent of their capacity and aptitude for “educative and productive purposes”, and prison work is promoted “as a condition of social dignity”. Allocation of work, and its remuneration, are listed as specific rights of all prisoners alongside essentials such as food and communication with the outside world. Prisoners, including those on remand, must be held in conditions that bring about their “harmonious social integration”.

‘The Penal Code (1940), for its part, requires the sentencing judge to ensure a sentence is passed that is proportionate to the seriousness of the offence, and meets the aims of deterrence and retribution. The federal Supreme Court has held that, in addition to these statutory objectives of punishment, “it’s resocializing character cannot be forgotten, and the state should therefore be concerned with rehabilitation of the convict”. The state also has a duty to support and guide prison-leavers to reintegrate into the workplace. The LEP requires that social services should support prison-leavers in obtaining work. This support is required to be offered for one year from the date of release or, if a person is granted conditional release, during the parole or probationary period.’<sup>111</sup>

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## 6.2 Arrests

### 6.2.1 SENASP shared the below data (published in Portuguese) on its online public security platform. It shows the yearly totals of warrant-based arrests made in Brazil between 2022 and 2024. It did not specify whether this includes arrests made under warrants for all crimes or specific categories of crime. It does not include arrests made without a warrant<sup>112</sup>:

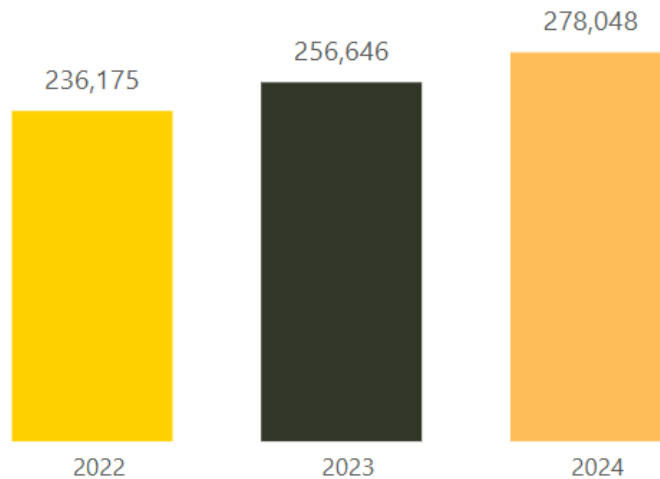
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<sup>110</sup> The World Prison Brief, [Working prisoners in Brazil: Laws, Policies...](#) (page 4), 22 May 2025

<sup>111</sup> The World Prison Brief, [Working prisoners in Brazil: Laws, Policies...](#) (page 8), 22 May 2025

<sup>112</sup> SENASP, [Warrant Enforcement Arrests per Year](#), updated 26 May 2025

## Warrant Enforcement Arrests per Year



- 6.2.2 The same source also breaks down the [number of warrant-based arrests per state of Brazil](#).
- 6.2.3 The USSD maintains a [list of the Secretarias de Segurança Pública](#) (Public Security Secretariats) of each state of Brazil, with a link to the webpage of each. These may contain further information and statistics on arrests at state level.
- 6.2.4 In the sources consulted (see [Bibliography](#)), CPIT could not find statistics on arrests made by the Federal Police. However, the Brazilian government regularly posts news stories on individual operations and arrests on its [webpage](#) for the Federal Police.
- 6.2.5 For information on police actions in relation to specific topics, see [Brazil: country police and information notes](#).

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### 6.3 Detention and prison conditions

- 6.3.1 Members of the Brazilian Federal Police working in the Serious and Organised Crime division told the UK HO FFM team that:

‘There are 5 federal prisons in Brazil. They have fewer inmates and there is no overcrowding unlike in state prisons. The most dangerous criminals are placed in federal prisons and spread out in prisons across the national territory. We have a different regime for these prisoners – they cannot have conjugal visits, there are cameras watching them 24/7, their visitations are different.

‘They work well. The problem is that 600,000 other inmates are in state facilities which are not so rigorous.’<sup>113</sup>
- 6.3.2 In a May 2025 report, the World Prison Brief noted that: ‘Brazil’s prison population has surged in recent decades, and is currently the highest it has ever been: 909,067 as at December 2024... The pre-trial prison population at 214,447 accounts for 24% of this total... A failure to match investment in prison places with prisoner numbers has left prisons in some areas of the

<sup>113</sup> UK Home Office, [Report of a FFM: OCGs](#) (page 26), September 2024



country in an overcrowded, dilapidated state.’<sup>114</sup>

6.3.3 The same report noted:

‘Due to this chronic shortage of prison places, increasing use has been made in recent years of “residential custody”, whereby people subject to a custodial sentence are permitted to serve or complete their sentence at home, with or without electronic monitoring... Less commonly, people awaiting trial or final sentence can also be subject to residential custody.

‘The number of people held in physical custody... now stands at 674,016. The rest of the prison population (235,051 people) are subject to residential custody, just over half of them electronically monitored.’<sup>115</sup>

6.3.4 WPB also noted that:

‘Brazil’s prison population is relatively young and contains a far larger proportion of working age people than that of the US or the UK: almost 60% of those in custody are in the 18-34 age bracket, and fewer than 3% are aged over 60. The most common offences of which people in physical custody have been convicted are property-related (37% of offences of people in custody), followed by drug offences (29%). The largest proportion of people in custody are serving sentences of between four and 15 years...’<sup>116</sup>

6.3.5 The USSD 2023 report stated that:

‘Prison conditions were poor and sometimes life threatening, mainly due to overcrowding and violence, according to the NGO National Security Forum. Abuse by prison guards continued, and poor working conditions and low pay for prison guards encouraged corruption, according to the NGO...

‘Conditions in most prisons were inadequate, according to the National Security Forum. Prisoners often lacked access to potable water, adequate nutrition, clothing, and hygiene items. Rats and cockroaches infested many cells. In the Federal District’s prison system, observers said problems included poor quality of food and hygiene conditions, overcrowding, lack of access to health care, and inadequate infrastructure.

‘Reports of abuse by prison guards continued... Authorities attempted to hold pretrial detainees separately from convicted prisoners, but lack of space often required placing convicted criminals in pretrial detention facilities... Multiple sources reported adolescents were held with adults in poor and crowded conditions...

‘According to the National Security Forum, prisons suffered from insufficient staffing and lack of control over inmates. Violence was rampant in prison facilities. Poor administration of the prison system contributed to the violence, as did overcrowding, the presence of gangs, and corruption, according to the National Security Forum...

‘Prison riots were common occurrences, according to media reports...

‘...Authorities monitored prison and detention center conditions and conducted investigations of credible allegations of mistreatment...

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<sup>114</sup> The World Prison Brief (WPB), [Working prisoners in Brazil: Laws, Policies...](#) (page 3), May 2025

<sup>115</sup> The World Prison Brief (WPB), [Working prisoners in Brazil: Laws, Policies...](#) (page 3), May 2025

<sup>116</sup> The World Prison Brief (WPB), [Working prisoners in Brazil: Laws, Policies...](#) (page 6), May 2025

‘The constitution prohibited arbitrary arrest and detention and provided for the right of any person to challenge the lawfulness of their arrest or detention in court. The government generally observed these requirements...

‘... According to human rights observers, some detainees complained of physical abuse while being taken into police custody.

‘Authorities generally respected the constitutional right to a prompt judicial determination of the legality of detention, according to observers...

‘Often the period for charging defendants was extended because of court backlogs. The law did not provide for a maximum period of pretrial detention, which was decided on a case-by-case basis... Prison authorities generally allowed detainees prompt access to a lawyer... Detainees had prompt access to family members. If detainees were convicted, time in detention before trial was subtracted from their sentences...

‘...Lengthy pretrial detention was a problem. The length of pretrial detention frequently equaled or exceeded the maximum sentence for the alleged crime, according to the National Security Forum...’<sup>117</sup>

6.3.6 Conectas, a non-governmental organisation that ‘participate[s] in various decision-making debates that advance the path of human rights from the Global South perspective’<sup>118</sup>, noted in a 2024 report that:

‘Torture and cruel treatment are commonplace in Brazilian prisons. There are frequent reports of physical and psychological violence and medical neglect. Overcrowding and the absence of adequate infrastructure exacerbate these inhumane conditions. In Minas Gerais, around 775 complaints of torture and ill-treatment were registered in 2023 in the state’s 43 prisons, an increase of 21% compared to 2022, according to the annual activity report of the State Council for the Defense of Human Rights of Minas Gerais (Conedh, in the Brazilian Portuguese acronym).

‘Black people represent the majority of the prison population. In addition to facing disproportionate incarceration, the discrepancy in treatment and conviction rates between black and white people reflects the structural inequalities present in the Brazilian justice system. A survey by Insper’s Center for Racial Studies showed that, in São Paulo alone, 31,000 brown and black people were classified as drug traffickers in situations similar to those in which white people were treated as drug users.

‘There is no adequate separation between pre-trial detainees and convicts, juveniles and adults, men and women. This mixture worsens violence and hinders resocialization efforts.

‘Overcrowding is a constant element, with cells designed for a few people housing multiple individuals who, in many cases, sleep on the floor due to lack of space. Today, we face overcrowding in prisons, which hinders the resocialization process and increases corruption and the expansion of gangs. Data from the National Penal Policy Department (Federal Government) indicate that there are currently 649,600 incarcerated individuals and only 482,900 vacancies available in the system.

‘Hygiene conditions are deplorable, with a lack of basic sanitation,

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<sup>117</sup> USSD, [2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Brazil](#) (Section 1), 2024

<sup>118</sup> Conectas, [About](#), no date



inadequate ventilation, and insufficient food. Access to medical services is extremely limited and often neglected. Incarcerated individuals with serious illnesses often do not receive necessary treatment, resulting in preventable deaths. Infectious diseases are common due to unsanitary conditions...

‘Searches are often humiliating and invasive, especially for women and children. The hostile environment discourages visits and exacerbates the incarcerated individuals’ disconnection from their families. According to the report “Degrading searches: a constant practice”, the majority of people who visit a relative in prison say they have already undergone an strip search, totaling 77.7% of interviewees. Of this percentage, 97.7% are women. In relation to race, it is clear that this rights violation is much more frequently perpetrated against black and brown people, 69.9% – 15.4% black and 54.5% brown – than against white people, 26.3%.

‘The presence of children is part of the reality of prison visits. A large proportion of family members (54.1%) stated that their children had already been subjected to degrading searches. From this total, 70.2% report that children had their bodies searched. Another 48.3% stated that the child had to be stripped naked and approximately 10% were forced to cough and/or squat. One of the most severe accusations is that 23.1% of people reported that, when their children underwent these searches, the parents were not given the right to be present.’<sup>119</sup>

#### 6.3.7 The UNHRC 2024 report stated that:

‘The prison population in Brazil has quadrupled in the last 20 years, from 232,755 incarcerated people in 2000 to 852,010 persons in 2023. Now, Brazil occupies the third place in the world with the highest number of imprisoned persons, with a rate of 419 per 100,000 inhabitants... In total, Brazil has 1,534 detention facilities, including 1,382 state prisons and 5 federal prisons...

‘...The Mechanism visited places of detention in Salvador and Rio de Janeiro and listened to testimonies in these and other cities, which highlighted inadequate food, poor sanitation, lack of access to drinking water and to healthcare, and violent treatment and punishment by prison officials which may amount to torture or ill-treatment, in some cases leading to deaths in custody...

‘Besides the overall degrading conditions, the Mechanism received reports of the excessive and indiscriminate use of force by prison officials, with violent handling and punishment which would amount to torture or ill-treatment, including the excessive use of less-lethal weapons against inmates...’<sup>120</sup>

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## 7. Investigations

### 7.1.1 The Brazil Office Alliance ‘is a specialized network dedicated to reflecting on Brazil and supporting actions that strengthen the role of civil society and institutions committed to promoting and defending... human rights...’<sup>121</sup> A December 2023 article on the website of the Washington Brazil Office stated

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<sup>119</sup> Conectas, [Mandela Rules: The Problems of the Brazilian Prison System](#), 18 July 2024

<sup>120</sup> UNHRC, [...Visit to Brazil...](#) (pages 12, 13), 27 September 2024

<sup>121</sup> Washington Brazil Office, [About](#), no date

that: 'Brazil still experiences alarming levels of homicides... There is a serious problem when it comes to solving homicides. An analysis by Sou da Paz showed that only 37 percent of these crimes are solved. In Rio de Janeiro, only 15 percent of homicides are solved.'<sup>122</sup>

- 7.1.2 The Global Organized Crime Index 2023 stated that 'While institutions such as the attorney general's office and the federal police are effective in investigating crime, impunity remains a common issue...'<sup>123</sup>
- 7.1.3 Members of the Sao Paulo Civil Police told the UK HO FFM team that 'Today, we have 120 ongoing investigations into money laundering – this is a technical job involving other organisations and public departments.'<sup>124</sup>
- 7.1.4 Fiquem Saber is a non-profit organisation that uses 'administrative mechanisms, such as the Access to Information Law and Electronic Information Services (SEI) to search for data and documents.'<sup>125</sup> In October 2024, it published an article on investigations by Brazil's Federal Police, sharing data it obtained via Brazil's Access to Information Law. This article, originally in Portuguese, stated that:

'...the Federal Police (PF) has opened, on average, an investigation every eight minutes in the last 24 years. Since 2000... there have been 1.5 million inquiries opened, more than half of them – 56.4% – aimed at combating tax crimes, such as tax evasion, money laundering and appropriation of public resources...

'...the PF went from about 40,000 inquiries opened annually in the early 2000s to 94,000 investigations in 2008. Between 2003 and 2019, the annual volume of open cases was always above 50 thousand inquiries, but has been falling since then.

'The data... indicate that the increase in the volume of open investigations was not accompanied by the conclusion of the investigations, generating an accumulation of police demands. Many cases have been held back, to the point that, in the last four years, the volume of reported inquiries – concluded by the delegate in charge – has exceeded the volume of new inquiries opened...

'The fight against international drug trafficking... registered a drop in the number of investigations opened. The third most investigated crime, trafficking accounts for 7.3% of the total investigations – there were more than 111 thousand in 24 years – but the 3.8 thousand cases opened last year and the 2.4 thousand in the first months of 2024 are far below the 7.5 thousand registered in 2013 and the average for the period itself [2000 to 2024], about 4.4 thousand new inquiries per year.

'In addition to border states, two in the Southeast are among those with the most investigation records. São Paulo... leads the list, with 33,104 inquiries, followed by Mato Grosso do Sul (11,937), Paraná (10,439) and Rio de Janeiro (7,050).

'Analyzed in isolation, the data do not allow us to infer the cause of the drops – a drop in crime or a reduction in police investigative capacity...

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<sup>122</sup> Washington Brazil Office, [Challenges for public security in Brazil](#), 1 December 2023

<sup>123</sup> Global Organized Crime Index, [Brazil Profile](#) (Leadership..., Criminal justice...), 2023

<sup>124</sup> UK Home Office, [Report of a FFM: OCGs](#) (page 55), September 2024

<sup>125</sup> Fiquem Saber, [About Us](#), no date

‘In the last four years, the PF has concluded 183,146 investigations, pointing to the authorship in 54,475 of these investigations. That is, in 29.7% of the cases there was an indictment of suspects.

‘The percentage is not homogeneous among the federative units. States in the North lead the ranking of investigations concluded with the identification of suspects, while the states in the Southeast and Northeast are among those with percentages below the national average. Among the worst performers are Rio de Janeiro and Ceará, where only one in six cases results in the indictment of suspects...

‘...the PF reinforced that “the accuracy and reliability of the information are significantly greater as of 2021, when the system began to be used in a standardized way at the national level.”...’<sup>126</sup>

- 7.1.5 The below graph was created by CPIT using data from the 2024 Fiquem Saber article. It shows the total number of investigations opened and concluded by the Federal Police each year between 2021 and 2024. The 2024 data applies to the period from January to August<sup>127</sup>:



- 7.1.6 In the sources consulted (see [Bibliography](#)), CPIT could not find further information on the numbers of investigations carried out by state police forces in Brazil.
- 7.1.7 For information on police action in relation to specific topics, see [Brazil: country police and information notes](#).

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## 8. Human rights violations

- 8.1.1 The USSD 2023 report stated:

‘There were numerous reports that state-level civil and military police committed arbitrary or unlawful killings, including extrajudicial killings, during the year.

‘...According to the Rio de Janeiro Public Attorney’s Office, as of May [2023] police conducted 612 raids in the state... There was a persistent pattern of

<sup>126</sup> Fiquem Saber, [Finance crimes are the most investigated by the Federal Police](#), 21 October 2024

<sup>127</sup> Fiquem Saber, [Finance crimes are the most investigated by the Federal Police](#), 21 October 2024

impunity for police operations, which often resulted in significant fatalities, accusations of excessive force, extrajudicial killings, and denial of medical care for injured criminal suspects, with accusations involving several different law enforcement entities.

‘In March [2023] the newspaper O Globo reported that a police raid conducted in the favela of Salgueiro, Niteroi, in Rio de Janeiro State, resulted in the death of 13 suspects. The raid was carried out by police officers, including from the Military Police Battalion of Special Operations and the Civil Police Coordination of Special Resources. There was no information regarding an investigation of the incident.

‘According to O Globo, on June 17 [2023], Federal Highway Police officers killed a woman while she and her husband were driving through a police checkpoint on a highway in Rio de Janeiro State. The officer who fired the fatal shot was briefly arrested but later released...

‘According to the São Paulo Public Security Secretariat, the number of deaths resulting from military and civil police operations in the state of São Paulo in the first semester of the year increased by 9 percent, compared with the same period in 2022. From 2020 to 2021, the total number of cases decreased by 30 percent, a result attributed by security experts in part to the use of body cameras by military police officers along with the implementation of new strategies and the use of nonlethal weapons, such as tasers.

‘In operations to combat criminal groups in the coastal area of Guarujá, São Paulo State, from the end of July to September 5, São Paulo military police killed 28 persons. Human rights organizations reportedly accused police of using excessive force, violating human rights, and committing extrajudicial killings. The Public Prosecutor’s Office was investigating the deaths. On September 5 [2023], the São Paulo State Secretariat of Public Security, responsible for the operation, stated all deaths resulted from direct confrontations with criminals and added that two internal inquiries were underway...

‘In July [2023] the nongovernmental organization (NGO) Brazilian Public Security Forum reported that police (including federal, state, and municipal) killed 6,429 persons nationwide in 2022, an increase of 284 persons compared with 2021. Afro-Brazilians represented 83 percent of victims. According to some civil society organizations, victims of police violence throughout the country were overwhelmingly young Afro-Brazilian men.’<sup>128</sup>

- 8.1.2 The Global Organized Crime Index 2023 stated that ‘Law enforcement in Brazil has a militarized approach to public security, and has resulted in police violence and low levels of public trust. The expansion and militarization of police strategies have led to increased violence and incarceration... State police forces have been accused of extrajudicial executions against young and black men in marginalized areas...’<sup>129</sup>

- 8.1.3 In November 2023, HRW reported that:

‘While some killings by police are in self-defense, many result from excessive use of force...

‘Studies in Rio de Janeiro suggest police are significantly more likely to kill

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<sup>128</sup> USSD, [2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Brazil](#) (Section 1), 2024

<sup>129</sup> Global Organized Crime Index, [Brazil Profile](#) (Criminal justice and security), 2023

after an officer has been killed. One such study found, for example, that when a police officer is killed on duty, the chances of a person being killed by the police increases more than 1000 percent that day, 350 percent the following day, and 125 percent over the course of the week...<sup>130</sup>

8.1.4 In December 2023, HRW stated that ‘In 2022, Black people comprised 83 percent of the victims [of deaths resulting from police intervention], even though they account for just 56 percent of the population.’<sup>131</sup> HRW did not provide any further context around the incidents leading to these deaths.

8.1.5 The BTI 2024 stated that ‘Civilian authorities generally maintain effective control of the federal security forces; however, state-level security forces have committed numerous human rights abuses...’<sup>132</sup>

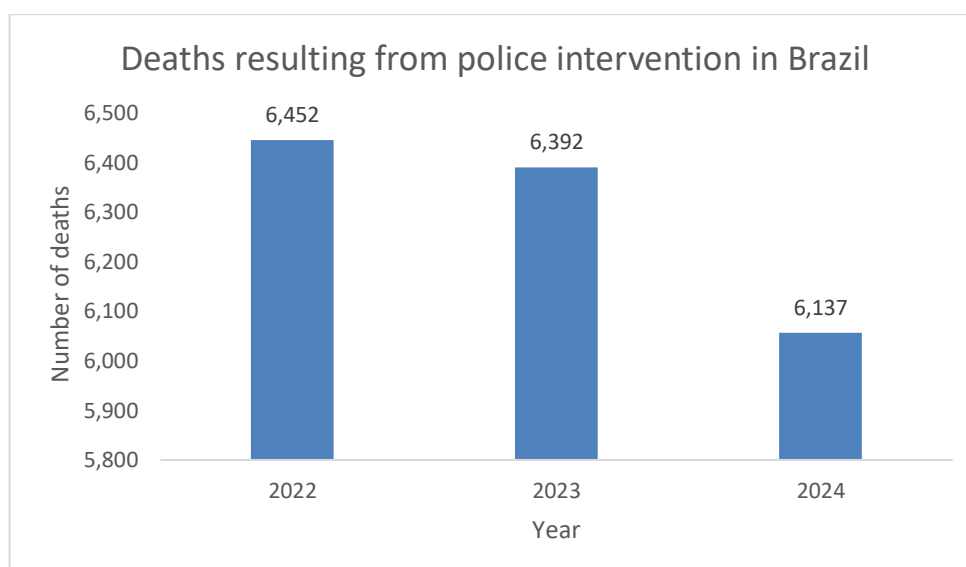
8.1.6 Amnesty International’s 2024 report, ‘The State of the World’s Human Rights’, covering events of 2023, stated that:

‘Between July and September [2023], at least 394 people were killed in police operations in the states of Bahia, Rio de Janeiro, and São Paulo. Despite the extent of the crisis, the executive secretary of the Ministry of Justice, and Public Security... reportedly commented: “You don’t fight organized crime with a rifle with roses.”...

‘Heavily armed police operations oriented towards the “war on drugs” in favelas and marginalized neighbourhoods resulted in intense shootouts, unlawful killings and extrajudicial executions... torture and other ill-treatment...

‘Police intervention continued to cause the deaths of children and adolescents.’<sup>133</sup>

8.1.7 The below table was created by CPIT based on data published by Brazil’s Ministry of Justice and Public Security (SENASP). It shows yearly total numbers of deaths resulting from police interventions in Brazil, between 2022 and 2024<sup>134</sup>:



<sup>130</sup> HRW, [“They Promised to Kill 30”: Police Killings in Baixada Santista...](#), 7 November 2023

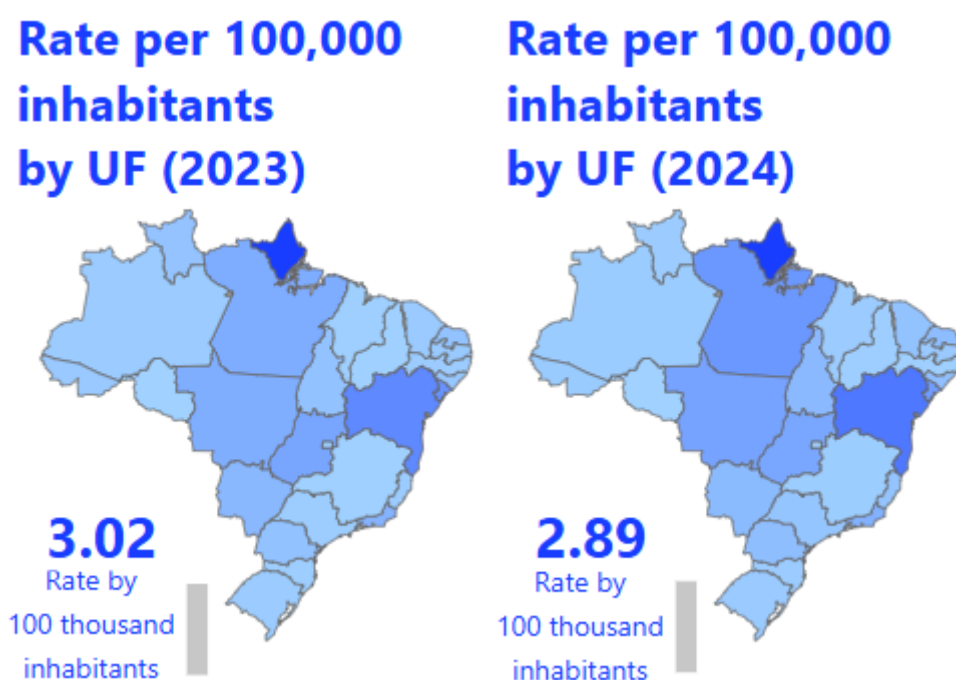
<sup>131</sup> HRW, [UN Experts Call on Brazil to End ‘Brutal’ Police Violence](#), 15 December 2023

<sup>132</sup> BTI, [Brazil Country Report 2024](#) (Stateness), 2024

<sup>133</sup> Amnesty International, [The State of the World’s Human Rights](#) (Brazil), 2024

<sup>134</sup> SENASP, [Deaths due to police intervention](#), updated 26 May 2025

8.1.8 The same source also illustrated the geographical distribution of deaths resulting from police intervention across Brazil through heatmaps. The 2023 and 2024 iterations are shown below<sup>135</sup>:



8.1.9 The below table was produced by CPIT using 2024 data from SENASP's online public security portal<sup>136</sup>. It shows in the left column the individual states of Brazil; in the middle column the rate of deaths as a result of police intervention per 100,000 of that state's population in 2024; and in the right column the absolute number of deaths as a result of police intervention in that state in 2024. It shows that, in 2024, the states with the highest number of deaths as a result of police intervention per 100,000 inhabitants were Amapa, Bahia and Para (all in the Northeast region) and the states with the lowest number of deaths per 100,000 inhabitants were the Federal District, Rondonia and Pernambuco:

Brazil and Federal Units	Number of deaths per 100,000 inhabitants	Absolute number of deaths
Brazil	2.89	6,137
Amapa	17.06	137
Bahia	10.48	1,556
Para	6.89	597
Sergipe	6.33	145
Mato Grosso	5.58	214
Goiás	5.18	381
Rio de Janeiro	4.08	703
Tocantins	3.11	49
Mato Grosso do Sul	2.96	86
Rio Grande do Norte	2.64	91
Parana	2.57	304
Alagoas	2.36	76

<sup>135</sup> SENASP, [Rate per 100,000 inhabitants by UF](#), updated 26 May 2025

<sup>136</sup> SENASP, [Rate per 100,000 inhabitants by UF](#), updated 26 May 2025



Ceara	2.05	189
Espirito Santo	1.90	78
Sao Paulo	1.77	813
Paraiba	1.35	56
Rio Grande do Sul	1.21	136
Acre	1.14	10
Maranhao	1.08	76
Amazonas	1.00	43
Roraima	0.98	7
Santa Catarina	0.97	78
Minas Gerais	0.93	199
Piaui	0.74	25
Pernambuco	0.70	67
Rondonia	0.46	8
Distrito Federal	0.44	13

8.1.10 Rio de Janeiro state's Institute of Public Security (ISP) created a [map](#) which provides regularly updated crime statistics for that state. This can be filtered by date and crime type. It showed that, in 2024, there were 699 deaths as a result of police intervention in Rio de Janeiro state, compared with 871 in 2023 (a decrease of approximately 20%). The total for 2022 was 1,330, which means that in 2023, deaths as a result of police intervention had also reduced, by approximately 34.5%<sup>137</sup>.

8.1.11 The UNHRC 2024 report stated that:

‘During the visit, the Mechanism perceived a police culture and a public security policy based on repression, violence and hyper-toxic masculinity. In the context of police operations... people of African descent are often unjustly seen as criminals or as collateral damage. The Mechanism observed a deep and generalized erosion and profound lack of trust of people of African descent in law enforcement, especially among marginalized communities... compounded by longstanding impunity for these acts...

‘...Before and during the visit, the Mechanism received considerable information indicating that racial profiling is used as a basis for discriminatory identity checks, stops-and-searches, and arrests; and often lead to related abuses and violence, including serious injury and deaths by law enforcement.’<sup>138</sup>

8.1.12 The UNHRC 2024 report also stated that:

‘...Killings by police have increased significantly from 2,212 in 2013, to 6,393 in 2023... Of the 6,393 persons killed by police in 2023, 99,3% were men; 6,7% children between the ages of 12-17; and 65% were young adults: 41% were between the ages of 18-24 and 23,5% between the ages of 25-29.

‘Available data shows that people of African descent are three times more likely to be killed by police than white people, with 82,7% of the killings by police in 2023 were people of African descent compared to 17% of “white” persons... those most affected by police lethality are young men of African

<sup>137</sup> Rio de Janeiro ISP, [Historical Series](#), last updated January 2025

<sup>138</sup> UNHRC, [...Visit to Brazil...](#) (pages 6, 8), 27 September 2024

descent living in poverty in impoverished areas.

‘...testimonies pointed to a pattern of law enforcement authorities planting evidence, including firearms or drugs at the scenes of execution to “frame” the victim...

‘Given available data and the testimonies received, the Mechanism considers that most of the cases of alleged excessive use of force, killings, enforced disappearances and extrajudicial executions by law enforcement in Brazil are not isolated acts of violence; rather, they show an alarming pattern that points to a deeply rooted systemic problem...

‘The narrative of the “war on drugs” has been employed in Brazil to rationalize militarized interventions in favelas and other marginalized and racialized neighbourhoods... This approach has resulted in the unwarranted and excessive use of force, leading to numerous extrajudicial executions...’<sup>139</sup>

- 8.1.13 In a 2024 article, originally in Portuguese, commenting on data from 2023, the Violence Monitor (a partnership between Brazilian news portal G1<sup>140</sup>, the Center for the Study of Violence, a research centre of the University of Sao Paulo<sup>141</sup>, and the FBSP<sup>142</sup>) stated:

‘Bruno Paes Manso, a researcher at NEV-USP, points out that the presence of more police on the street does not necessarily help to reduce violence...

“Often, it can be the opposite: more police, more violence. Amapá, for example, the state that proportionally registers the largest police force in Brazil (4.2 military police officers per thousand inhabitants), leads the ranking of Brazilian homicides (45.2 deaths per 100 thousand). Santa Catarina is at the opposite extreme: it has the lowest police force in Brazil (1.3 police officers per thousand inhabitants) and the second lowest national homicide rate (7.9 per 100,000),” says the researcher.’<sup>143</sup>

- 8.1.14 HRW, in its ‘World Report 2024’ (HRW 2024 report), covering events in 2023, stated that: ‘After falling 59 percent in two years, killings by on-duty police in São Paulo state went up 45 percent from January through September 2023, compared to the same period the year before...’<sup>144</sup>

- 8.1.15 The HRW 2025 report stated that: ‘Police abuse continued to plague Brazil...

‘In São Paulo, police killings increased 55 percent from January through September [2024], compared to the same period in 2023.’<sup>145</sup>

- 8.1.16 In 2025, HRW also reported that: ‘Every year, Brazilian police officers kill more than 6,000 people, with people of African descent being three times more likely to become a victim than white individuals...’<sup>146</sup>

- 8.1.17 Originally in Portuguese, data from Sao Paulo state’s secretariat for public security indicated that deaths as a result of police intervention totalled 749 in 2024 (of which 36 were attributed to civil police and 713 to military police,

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<sup>139</sup> UNHRC, [...Visit to Brazil...](#) (pages 8, 9, 14), 27 September 2024

<sup>140</sup> G1, [Homepage](#), no date

<sup>141</sup> Centre for the Study of Violence, [About](#), no date

<sup>142</sup> University of Sao Paulo, [Violence Monitor](#), no date

<sup>143</sup> G1, [Violence Monitor: murders fall 4% in Brazil in 2023...](#), 12 March 2024

<sup>144</sup> Human Rights Watch, [World Report 2024: Brazil](#) (Public Security and Police Conduct), 2024

<sup>145</sup> Human Rights Watch, [World Report 2025: Brazil](#) (Public Security and Police Conduct), 2025

<sup>146</sup> Human Rights Watch, [A Glimmer of Hope in Police Killings Cases in Brazil](#), 8 May 2025



and of which 474 victims were black or brown), 504 in 2023 (of which 47 were attributed to civil police and 457 to military police, and of which 322 victims were black or brown) and 421 in 2022 (of which 37 were attributed to civil police and 384 to military police, and of which 263 victims were black or brown)<sup>147</sup>.

- 8.1.18 In a January 2025 article, originally in Portuguese, Agencia Brasil reported that:

‘Data from the monitoring of the Special Action Group on Public Security and External Control of Police Activity (Gaesp) of the Public Prosecutor’s Office of the State of São Paulo (MP-SP) show that the number of deaths resulting from police intervention last year was the highest in the decade. The numbers indicate a 65% increase in deaths, from 542 to 835, between 2023 and 2024. The lowest number recorded in the time series, fed since 2017, was in 2022, with 477 deaths.

‘The Military Police, the force with the largest number of personnel in the state, is also responsible for most of the deaths, which in a way is expected because it is an institution that has among its objectives the direct approach in situations of urban violence. When isolated, data related to the São Paulo Military Police (PM) show a similar increase. In 2023 there were 460 deaths, rising to 760 in 2024, an increase of 60.5%...

‘The prevalence of deaths caused by the intervention of police officers on duty is directly related to the beginning of the term of Governor Tarcísio de Freitas, who took office in 2023, after a campaign in which he valued the role of military police intervention in conflict situations as a central element in public security policies.

‘Since the current government, the Public Security Secretariat, the government body responsible for the corporation, has been commanded by Captain PM Guilherme Derrite, a defender of ostensible policing and the use of lethal weapons and heavy weapons in the daily life of the force...

“‘When the governor of the state of São Paulo, still as a candidate, called into question the effectiveness of body cameras, he appoints, as soon as he takes office, a Secretary of Public Security who has a history of violence and who has said, throughout his career, that the good police officer is those who have at least three deaths in their curriculum, This is a guideline for acting out what is expected of a military police officer,” she says [Carolina Diniz, coordinator of combating institutional violence at NGO Conectas<sup>148</sup>]. This attitude, according to Diniz... indicates that the police officer will have more chances of receiving, for example, a decoration than an investigation after a situation that leads to the death of someone, proven criminal or not...

“‘What we have seen is a discourse, I think as a whole in Brazilian society, that the police have to kill...,” says the spokesperson for the Sou da Paz Institute.<sup>149</sup>

- 8.1.19 The USSD maintains a [list of the Secretarias de Segurança Pública](#) (Public Security Secretariats) of each state of Brazil, with a link to the webpage of each. These may contain further information and statistics on deaths as a

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<sup>147</sup> Sao Paulo Secretariat for Public Security, [Morte Decorrente de Intervenção Policial](#), 2025

<sup>148</sup> Agencia Brasil, [Lethality of the São Paulo military police increased in 2024](#), 15 January 2025

<sup>149</sup> Agencia Brasil, [Lethality of the São Paulo military police increased in 2024](#), 15 January 2025

result of police intervention.

- 8.1.20 For examples of police operations against organised criminal groups in favelas, which have resulted in violations against residents of these communities, see [Country Policy and Information Note: Organised Criminal Groups, Brazil](#).

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## 9. Judiciary

### 9.1 Structure

- 9.1.1 A Wilson Center article noted: 'Brazil's judiciary is a multifaceted system that operates on the state and federal levels, much like the U.S. judicial system. Primarily based on the civil law tradition, it divides cases into several different jurisdictions, including labor, electoral, military, constitutional and non-constitutional. It also includes three instances of appeal, with cases able to advance from first-level courts all the way to either the Supreme Federal Court or the Superior Court of Justice.'<sup>150</sup>

- 9.1.2 Encyclopaedia Britannica stated:

'The Brazilian judicial system is divided into two branches: the ordinary branch, made up of state and federal courts, and the special branch, made up of labour, electoral, and military courts.

'The Supreme Federal Court (Supremo Tribunal Federal) is Brazil's highest court. It is composed of 11 members nominated by the president with the approval of the Federal Senate. The court provides final rulings on constitutional issues...

'The Higher Court of Justice (Superior Tribunal de Justiça) consists of 33 judges appointed by the president with the approval of the Senate. It is the highest court in the land regarding nonconstitutional matters... The ordinary branch also includes federal courts of appeal known as Regional Federal Courts. Each state has state and federal courts that exercise first-instance jurisdiction.

'Of the special branch courts, electoral courts are responsible for the registration of political parties and the control of their finances. They also select the date of elections and hear cases involving electoral crimes. Labour courts mediate in conflicts between management and workers, and military courts have jurisdiction in cases involving members of the armed forces.'<sup>151</sup>

- 9.1.3 Judiciaries Worldwide is 'a hands-on toolkit' developed by the education and research agency for the United States federal judiciary 'to enhance understanding about how countries structure their court systems'<sup>152</sup>. Regarding state courts, it noted:

'Each state in Brazil has at least one first instance court, a court of appeals, and a supreme court. The state courts have residual jurisdiction, hearing criminal and civil cases not within the jurisdiction of the federal judiciary. The first instance courts are divided into districts called comarcas. Cases are heard by a single judge or, in very limited criminal cases, a jury. In criminal

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<sup>150</sup> Wilson Center, [The Brazilian Judicial System](#), 6 July 2017

<sup>151</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica, [Brazil](#) (Administration and social conditions), updated 19 May 2025

<sup>152</sup> Judiciaries Worldwide, [About](#), no date

cases, the judge overseeing the investigation will preside over all case-related proceedings through trial.

‘Appeals are heard by a panel of three judges. The state supreme court (tribunal de justiça) exercises supervisory authority over the lower courts and can appoint special state judges to hear cases involving agriculture. First instance judges are selected by competitive examination, court of appeals judges are appointed by the governor, and supreme court justices are appointed by the governor, with the approval of the State Assembly.’<sup>153</sup>

9.1.4 The BTI 2024 stated that ‘The judiciary checks both the legislature and the executive through the power of judicial review. The Supreme Court may revoke laws and decisions of the executive branch if it concludes that they violate the constitution...’<sup>154</sup>

9.1.5 For further detail on the structure and composition of the judiciary, see

- Chapter III of Title IV of the [Constitution of Brazil](#)
- DLA Piper’s [Country insight](#) on Brazil
- Judiciaries Worldwide [Country profile](#) on Brazil

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## 9.2 Effectiveness

9.2.1 Human Rights Watch, in its ‘World Report 2023’, covering events in 2022, stated that ‘Fewer than 40 percent of homicides result in criminal charges.’<sup>155</sup>

9.2.2 The Global Organized Crime Index 2023 stated that:

‘The justice system is notorious for wrongfully arresting the poor and marginalized population while dangerous criminals often go free, which fuels organized crime that originates in prisons...’

‘The Brazilian criminal justice system is widely criticized for being inefficient, corrupt and biased against black people and the poor, owing to class and racial prejudices among legal practitioners. The executive has been attempting to interfere with the autonomy of the judiciary, leading to political polarization and challenges to executive decisions by the Supreme Court.’<sup>156</sup>

9.2.3 The USSD 2023 report stated that ‘... While the law provided for the right to counsel, the Ministry of Public Security stated many prisoners could not afford an attorney. The court was required to furnish a public defender or private attorney at public expense in such cases, but staffing deficits persisted in all states, according to the National Security Forum.’<sup>157</sup>

9.2.4 The same report stated that:

‘The constitution provided for an independent judiciary, and the government generally respected judicial independence and impartiality...’

‘The constitution provided for the right to a fair and public trial, and the judiciary generally enforced this right, although NGOs reported that in some rural regions – especially in cases involving land rights activists – police,

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<sup>153</sup> Judiciaries Worldwide, [Brazil](#), no date

<sup>154</sup> BTI, [Brazil Country Report 2024](#) (Rule of Law), 2024

<sup>155</sup> Human Rights Watch, [World Report 2023: Brazil](#) (Public Security and Police Conduct), 2023

<sup>156</sup> Global Organized Crime Index, [Brazil Profile](#) (Leadership..., Criminal justice...), 2023

<sup>157</sup> USSD, [2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Brazil](#) (Section 1), 2024

prosecutors, and the judiciary were perceived to be susceptible to external influences, including fear of reprisals. Investigations, prosecutions, and trials in these cases often were delayed.

‘Although the law required trials be held within a set time, there were millions of backlogged cases at state, federal, and appellate courts, and cases often took many years to be concluded.’<sup>158</sup>

- 9.2.5 The same report also stated that ‘Delays in the special military police courts allowed many cases to expire due to statutes of limitations.’<sup>159</sup>
- 9.2.6 Freedom House, in its 2024 ‘Freedom in the World’ report (Freedom House 2024 report), covering events throughout 2023, stated that ‘The judiciary, though largely independent... is overburdened, inefficient...’<sup>160</sup>
- 9.2.7 The BTI 2024 stated that the ‘efficiency [of the Brazilian judiciary] is somewhat restricted by limited capacity... The system is heavily overburdened. Brazilian law is heavily procedural. Despite repeated attempts at reform, the legal system still operates with these weaknesses.’<sup>161</sup>
- 9.2.8 However, the same source stated that ‘The judiciary is... largely independent of government intervention and professionally organized... Courts usually manage to control whether the government and administration conform to the law.’<sup>162</sup>
- 9.2.9 Instituto Sou da Paz told the UK HO FFM team that: ‘Our legal system is very slow – there’s a lifetime between pressing charges and a person being sentenced...’<sup>163</sup>
- 9.2.10 The UNHRC 2024 report stated that: ‘The Mechanism received alarming information about the problem of the backlog of judicial cases, which would mainly affect prisoners who are in provisional detention. With 208,882 persons in pretrial detention and only 13,711 magistrates available to resolve their cases, it would take at least two years to review them, which would far exceed the reasonable timeframe for resolving their legal situation.’<sup>164</sup>
- 9.2.11 The USSD’s 2024 Trafficking in Persons Report on Brazil noted: ‘The government has never reported a final conviction under its 2016 anti-trafficking statute; on average, courts took more than 10 years to adjudicate trafficking cases and the number of prosecutions initiated and traffickers convicted was low relative to the known scale of the problem.’<sup>165</sup>
- 9.2.12 The World Justice Project (WJP)’s Rule of Law Index ‘evaluates and ranks countries across key rule of law indicators, including checks on government powers, corruption and transparency, fundamental and equal rights, open government, civic engagement, security, business regulation, and the functioning of regulatory, criminal, and civil justice systems.’<sup>166</sup> Its 2024 iteration ranked Brazil 80<sup>th</sup> out of 142 countries (where 1<sup>st</sup> indicates the strongest adherence to the rule of law and 142<sup>nd</sup> indicates the weakest), and

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<sup>158</sup> USSD, [2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Brazil](#) (Section 1), 2024

<sup>159</sup> USSD, [2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Brazil](#) (Section 1), 2024

<sup>160</sup> Freedom House, [Brazil: Freedom in the World 2024](#) (F1), 2024

<sup>161</sup> BTI, [Brazil Country Report 2024](#) (Rule of Law), 2024

<sup>162</sup> BTI, [Brazil Country Report 2024](#) (Rule of Law), 2024

<sup>163</sup> UK Home Office, [Report of a FFM: OCGs](#) (page 44, 45, 46, 47), September 2024

<sup>164</sup> UNHRC, [...Visit to Brazil...](#) (page 13), 27 September 2024

<sup>165</sup> USSD, [2024 Trafficking in Persons Report: Brazil](#), 24 June 2024

<sup>166</sup> World Justice Project, [WJP Rule of Law Index. About](#), no date

scored it at 0.50, where 1 signifies the strongest adherence to the rule of law and 0 signifies the weakest. Regionally (Latin America and Caribbean), Brazil ranked 17<sup>th</sup> out of 30 countries, and the regional average score was 0.52<sup>167</sup>.

9.2.13 Regarding criminal justice, the WJP's 2024 Rule of Law Index scored Brazil 0.33, which is below both the regional average of 0.40 and the global average of 0.47. The score was broken down based on the following indicators:

- The criminal investigation system is effective: Brazil scored 0.31 (regional average 0.33, global average 0.43)
- The criminal adjudication system is timely and effective: Brazil scored 0.25 (regional average 0.36, global average 0.46)
- The correctional system is effective in reducing criminal behaviour: Brazil scored 0.19 (regional average 0.27, global average 0.46)
- The criminal system is impartial: Brazil scored 0.10 (regional average 0.40, global average 0.47)
- The criminal system is free of corruption: Brazil scored 0.55 (regional average 0.52, global average 0.55)
- The criminal system is free of improper government influence: Brazil scored 0.54 (regional average 0.47, global average 0.46)
- Due process of the law and rights of the accused: Brazil scored 0.35 (regional average 0.45, global average 0.51)<sup>168</sup>

9.2.14 The WJP noted, in a report discussing Brazil's place on its 2024 Rule of Law Index, that:

'The country moved up three places in this year's Index, and now ranks 80 out of 142 countries and jurisdictions.

'Brazil is among the most improved countries this year, though this rebound still places the country's rule of law score below where it was in 2016.

'Brazil made gains in six of eight factors measured by the Index this year. The areas of greatest improvement are in effective regulatory enforcement, the fight against corruption, and access to civil justice.

"In the face of a continuing global rule of law recession, Brazil now offers a leading example that negative trends can be reversed and that positive change is possible," said Elizabeth Andersen, executive director of the World Justice Project "Strengthening the rule of law requires government commitment, as well as the participation of a robust civil society and an engaged citizenry."<sup>169</sup>

9.2.15 In the sources consulted (see [Bibliography](#)), CPIT could not find statistics on numbers of cases and outcomes before the Brazilian judiciary.

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## 9.3 Accessibility

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<sup>167</sup> World Justice Project, [Rule of Law Index, Brazil](#), 2024

<sup>168</sup> World Justice Project, [Criminal Justice for Brazil, 2024](#), 2024

<sup>169</sup> World Justice Project, [Rule of Law Improves in Brazil for First Time in 8 Years](#), 23 October 2024



- 9.3.1 A 2022 article in Hivos, ‘an international development organization guided by humanist values’<sup>170</sup> quoted Kari Guajajara, an assistant prosecutor, as stating that Brazil’s judicial system “... is ill equipped to handle criminal cases dealing with the collective rights of Indigenous Peoples. There is little training, the judiciary lacks expertise in the area of indigenous law, and in Maranhão it’s hard to find qualified legal advice,”<sup>171</sup>
- 9.3.2 The official blog of the University College London (UCL)’s Student Pro Bono Committee<sup>172</sup> noted in a 2023 blog post about access to justice in Brazil that: ‘...The Public Defender’s Office’s core aim is to provide legal aid to those who need it.
- ‘Moreover, the Brazilian Constitution contains a fundamental right clause that expressly determines that all service of justice must be granted for free to those who, under any circumstances, cannot afford it.
- ‘A relevant percentage of legal claims runs under public funding: 29,7% in 2021, according to the most pertinent report in the area.
- ‘In addition, the main challenges to accessing justice nowadays are the high number of people who need legal advice, whom Public Offices may need more investments to assist appropriately, and Brazil’s extensive territory, which the digitalisation of judicial services has partially overcome. Still, vulnerable individuals face technical issues and a lack of digital literacy barriers.’<sup>173</sup>
- 9.3.3 A 2024 research paper by 3 academics based in Portugal and Brazil, published by the New York-based Association for Computing Machinery, discussed Brazil’s virtual judicial desk services. The authors stated that:
- ‘Brazil created the judicial Virtual Desk Services (VDS) in 2021, the digital version of traditional face-to-face JDS [Judicial Desk Services] ...
- ‘The Brazilian justice system faces essential challenges mainly because of the lengthy duration of lawsuits and its huge backlog (81 million pending cases in 2023)... To help speed up justice procedures and diminish backlogs, Brazil enacted the "Law of Electronic Judicial Process" in 2006, shifting the paradigm from the paper to the digital format. Thus, even before the COVID-19 pandemic, Brazilian courts were already receiving the majority of cases in digital format. Over 98.9% of new cases are filed electronically...
- ‘During the COVID-19 pandemic, the National Council of Justice (NCJ) established that all Brazilian courts must regulate the virtual service for all judicial users... The courts should adopt the platform already used to hold hearings and sessions by videoconference. After the end of the pandemic, the Labor Court of Acre and Rondônia States continued to use videoconferencing as the preferred way to attend to users and deployed a permanent virtual service. The successful experience provided the practical basis for expanding the initiative to the country... By the end of 2023, 16.445 units of VDS had already been deployed in 23 of the 27 Brazilian states...
- ‘...the most meaningful effect of VDS is broadening access to justice. Once contact with justice has been simplified, access has significantly increased.

<sup>170</sup> Hivos, [Vision and values](#), no date

<sup>171</sup> Hivos, [Access to information brings access to justice in the Brazilian Amazon](#), 5 January 2022

<sup>172</sup> The official blog of the UCL Student Pro Bono Committee, [Home Page](#), no date

<sup>173</sup> The official blog of the UCL Student Pro Bono Committee, [Brazilian Legal...](#), 8 December 2023

Many citizens who usually would not seek information in the service due to economic and distance obstacles are now “a click” from the person who will solve their doubts and give them orientation...

‘A report from one of the Brazilian states indicates that overall satisfaction with the VDS is 4.7 out of 5.0. Complaints registered by ombudsman services primarily related to long waiting times in virtual lines and mistreatment by judicial workers, which also occur in presential services...’<sup>174</sup>

9.3.4 A 2023 article by the Thompson Reuters Foundation, ‘a global professional services organisation working in international development and registered as an independent charity in the UK and USA’<sup>175</sup>, noted that virtual methods present a challenge for those ‘who do not have access to digital devices such as smartphones and computers (according to data from the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics, 46 million Brazilians experience digital exclusion), or those who have such technology but struggle to read, communicate, and send documents.’<sup>176</sup>

9.3.5 A 2024 research paper by academics from the National School for the Training and Improvement of Magistrates in Brasília and the University of Coimbra in Portugal, published in the journal Social Sciences, stated that:

‘Official data on the IBGE website regarding the specific use of technology by the riverside populations of the Amazon is currently unavailable. However, information on the Brazilian population at large... indicates that 90% of households in the country had internet access in 202 ...

‘Ten individuals, who were randomly selected... were interviewed, ensuring diversity in gender, profession, age, education, and social influence in the local communities. The people interviewed were teachers and community agents, as well as men and women of different ages, rural workers, or those who did not perform any type of work...

‘...access to information and geographic barriers were the most indicated by the interviewees as influential in access to justice...

‘...the natural geographical barriers in the Amazon region significantly impact access to justice for riverside communities. Indeed, residents in these communities reported having to endure riverboat journeys lasting between eight to twelve hours to reach the only courthouse in the judicial district located in Porto de Moz, Pará. All the respondents conveyed the challenges of securing resources and arrangements for this travel, involving substantial time and financial commitments...

‘...the interviewees strongly emphasized that information and communication technologies have the potential to facilitate access to justice and rights in the Amazon region. However, in some instances, a lack of familiarity with technology remains a feasible challenge...’<sup>177</sup>

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## 9.4 Witness protection

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<sup>174</sup> Cinara Maria Rocha and others, [...Broadening Access to Justice](#), 16 December 2024

<sup>175</sup> Thomson Reuters Foundation, [About us](#), no date

<sup>176</sup> Thomson Reuters Foundation, [Access to Justice in Brazil...](#), 6 February 2023

<sup>177</sup> B Fruet de Moraes and others, [...Judicial Services in the Brazilian Amazon...](#), 10 February 2024



9.4.1 For information on the witness protection programme and its effectiveness, see:

- [Country Policy and Information Note: Organised Criminal Groups, Brazil](#)
- [Report of a fact-finding mission: Organised criminal groups \(OCGs\), Brazil](#)

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## 10. Corruption

10.1.1 Regarding the legal framework on corruption, Article 317 of the Brazilian Penal Code criminalised ‘passive corruption’ by public officials. This is defined as ‘To request or receive, for oneself or for others, directly or indirectly, even outside the function or before assuming it, but by reason of it, undue advantage, or accepting a promise of such advantage’<sup>178</sup>, and is punishable by 2 to 12 years in prison<sup>179</sup>. Article 333 of the Penal Code criminalised active corruption, defined as ‘Offering or promising an undue advantage to a public official, to determine him to practice, omit or delay an official act’<sup>180</sup>. This is also punishable with 2 to 12 years in prison<sup>181</sup>.

10.1.2 Transparency International is a non-governmental organisation which ‘advocate[s] for anti-corruption policy on a global level’<sup>182</sup>. Its Corruption Perception Index (CPI) ‘ranks 180 countries and territories around the globe by their perceived levels of public sector corruption, scoring on a scale of 0 (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean)’<sup>183</sup>, and ‘is calculated using 13 different data sources from 12 different institutions that have captured perceptions of corruption within the past two years.’<sup>184</sup> Its 2023 iteration scored Brazil 36 out of 100<sup>185</sup>, a drop of 2 points from its 2022 edition<sup>186</sup>.

10.1.3 The Global Organized Crime Index 2023 stated that:

‘Brazil has been struggling with corruption... in recent years. Despite the existence of independent investigation and prosecution bodies, the government is heavily influenced by private and criminal interests...

‘Brazil has a robust legal framework to fight crime, but the government lacks the efficiency and capacity to enforce the law due to corruption and patronage...

‘...police corruption is rampant.’<sup>187</sup>

10.1.4 U4, an anti-corruption resource center<sup>188</sup>, noted in a 2024 blog about police corruption in the Amazon that:

‘More subtle, everyday forms of corruption – committed by police officers who are off-duty or moonlighting in informal security work – help to

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<sup>178</sup> Government of Brazil, [Brazilian Penal Code](#) (Article 317), 7 December 1940

<sup>179</sup> Government of Brazil, [Brazilian Penal Code](#) (Article 317), 7 December 1940

<sup>180</sup> Government of Brazil, [Brazilian Penal Code](#) (Article 317), 7 December 1940

<sup>181</sup> Government of Brazil, [Brazilian Penal Code](#) (Article 333), 7 December 1940

<sup>182</sup> Transparency International, [About](#), no date

<sup>183</sup> Transparency International, [Corruption Perceptions Index 2023](#), 2024

<sup>184</sup> Transparency International, [Corruption Perceptions Index 2023](#) (page 20), 2024

<sup>185</sup> Transparency International, [Corruption Perceptions Index 2023](#) (page 3), 2024

<sup>186</sup> Transparency International, [Corruption Perceptions Index 2022](#) (page 3), 2023

<sup>187</sup> Global Organized Crime Index, [Brazil Profile](#) (Leadership..., Criminal justice...), 2023

<sup>188</sup> U4, [About](#), no date

accelerate the destruction of the Amazon. They collaborate with illegal loggers or miners to collect and pay bribes, extort local businesses, quash resistance from environmental defenders, and coerce or co-opt citizens into informal work.

‘Their activities may also extend to higher levels, with state intelligence systems allegedly being used for political leverage, negotiating immunity, and making decisions about how best to launder and direct illicit commodities and capital (such activities have also been documented in police forces in other parts of Brazil).’<sup>189</sup>

10.1.5 The BTI 2024 stated that:

‘Brazil possesses a robust legal anti-corruption framework, although certain anti-corruption mechanisms were intentionally weakened under the Bolsonaro administration. Numerous laws and governing bodies aimed at combating office abuse and corruption are in place. The Brazilian penal code includes legislation addressing both active and passive corruption, the breach of public servants’ functional duties, and the practice of influence peddling. Additionally, a multitude of legal provisions pertain to bribery...’<sup>190</sup>

10.1.6 However, the same source stated that the ‘efficiency [of the Brazilian judiciary] is somewhat restricted by... corruption.’<sup>191</sup>

10.1.7 The USSD 2023 Report stated that ‘Local NGOs... argued that corruption within the judiciary, especially at the local and state levels, prevented fair trials.’<sup>192</sup>

10.1.8 The same report stated that:

‘The law provided criminal penalties for convictions of corruption by officials... There were numerous reports of corruption during the year at various levels of government, and delays in judicial proceedings against persons accused of corruption were common, often due to constitutional protections from prosecution for elected officials. This often resulted in de facto impunity for the accused...

‘According to the publication *NSC Total*, in April Santa Catarina state police continued serving arrest and search-and-seizure warrants to mayors and other high-level public servants involved in a widespread corruption network. Police arrested 15 mayors in five months on suspicion of fraud in bidding and contracting services, which included bribes to criminal organizations and money laundering in trash collection contracts in Santa Catarina cities. The Public Ministry of Santa Catarina planned to serve municipal secretaries, businessmen, and civil servants with warrants as part of the corruption scandal.’<sup>193</sup>

10.1.9 When asked whether the state is effective at combatting corruption, Carolina Grillo, professor and researcher with the Grupo de Estudos dos Novos Illegalismos, a research group based in the Fluminense Federal University<sup>194</sup>, told the UK HO FFM team that:

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<sup>189</sup> U4, [Tackling police corruption in the Brazilian...](#), 18 January 2024

<sup>190</sup> BTI, [Brazil Country Report 2024](#) (Resource Efficiency), 2024

<sup>191</sup> BTI, [Brazil Country Report 2024](#) (Rule of Law), 2024

<sup>192</sup> USSD, [2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Brazil](#) (Section 1), 2024

<sup>193</sup> USSD, [2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Brazil](#) (Section 4), 2024

<sup>194</sup> Grupo de Estudos dos Novos Illegalismos, [About](#), no date

‘In Rio de Janeiro, no.

‘In the federal government, yes, but they don’t have the means. You need the police to investigate the police and with no grassroots contact it is harder to conduct investigations.

‘In the civil police, everyone knows who is corrupt and who isn’t. They won’t mess with someone else’s business as it’s too dangerous. If you tried to investigate, you and your family would be in trouble and should flee...’<sup>195</sup>

10.1.10 Members of the Federal Police of Brazil in Sao Paulo told the UK HO FFM team that ‘Here in Sao Paulo, we don’t usually work with the civil state police. I cannot generalise but they have significant problems with corruption. It’s a grey area, we never know if we can trust the person we’re talking to, so we prefer to work by ourselves...’<sup>196</sup>

10.1.11 The Freedom House 2024 report stated that ‘Widespread corruption undermines the government’s ability to make and implement policy without undue influence from private or criminal interests...

‘The judiciary, though largely independent... is... often subject to intimidation and other external influences...

‘The police force remains mired in corruption...’<sup>197</sup>

10.1.12 For further information on corruption of state officials in the context of organised crime, see:

- [Country Policy and Information Note: Organised Criminal Groups, Brazil](#)
- [Report of a fact-finding mission: Organised criminal groups \(OCGs\), Brazil](#)

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## 11. Oversight and accountability

### 11.1 Accountability

11.1.1 In its ‘2022 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Brazil’ (USSD 2022 report), published in 2023 and covering events throughout 2022, the USSD stated that:

‘Impunity and a lack of accountability for security forces, particularly at the local level, was a problem, and an inefficient judicial process at times delayed justice for perpetrators as well as for victims. Most examples of impunity were found in the military police and civil police, with some also reported in the armed forces and Federal Police. Low pay and endemic corruption established an environment where individuals were not consistently held accountable. Furthermore, the overburdened judicial system limited the application of justice and encouraged corruption.’<sup>198</sup>

11.1.2 The Inter-American Commission of Human Rights observed in a 2022 report ‘the high level of impunity in cases of institutional violence; for the most part, the justice system has not moved forward with investigations, convictions, or reparations for victims...’<sup>199</sup> However, the same report also provided

<sup>195</sup> UK Home Office, [Report of a FFM: OCGs](#) (page 40), September 2024

<sup>196</sup> UK Home Office, [Report of a FFM: OCGs](#) (page 61), September 2024

<sup>197</sup> Freedom House, [Brazil: Freedom in the World 2024](#) (C1, F1, F3), 2024

<sup>198</sup> USSD, [2022 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Brazil](#) (Section 1), 2022

<sup>199</sup> IACHR, [Annual Report 2022](#) (page 786), 1 April 2023

examples of convictions and investigations of police officers for torture<sup>200</sup>.

11.1.3 The USSD 2023 report stated:

‘Authorities stated the case regarding an operation in May 2022 to arrest Commando Vermelho gang members in the city of Rio de Janeiro remained open and no one had been charged or arrested. The joint operation, involving military police agents from Rio de Janeiro State’s Special Operations Battalion and agents from the Special Operations Command of the Federal Highway Police, resulted in 23 deaths.

‘Investigations remained open, but no indictments or convictions were reported regarding the 2021 police operation in Rio de Janeiro City’s Jacarezinho neighborhood. As of October [2023], 10 of the 13 investigations into police abuses in the operation had been closed according to press reports, despite autopsy reports indicating at least four victims were shot in the back at less than three feet...

‘On August 14 [2023], Minister of Justice and Public Security Flávio Dino announced that he had accepted the resignation of the three Federal Highway Police officers accused of asphyxiating and killing Genivaldo de Jesus Santos in Sergipe State in May 2022. The officers were to be tried for murder and torture ...

‘On April 5 [2023], the NGO Forum for Justice reported that fewer than one-half of the investigations of police homicides resulted in an indictment. The study analyzed more than 4,500 cases from 2011 to 2021, noting that 39 percent resulted in indictments, while the rest were archived due to self-defense claims or lack of evidence. The study also highlighted the length of the process, with an average of four years for charges to be filed and eight years for cases to be closed.’<sup>201</sup>

11.1.4 The same report stated: ‘Police personnel often were responsible for investigating charges of torture and excessive force carried out by fellow officers...

‘In operations to combat criminal groups in the coastal area of Guarujá, São Paulo State, from the end of July to September 5 [2023], São Paulo military police killed 28 persons... The Public Prosecutor’s Office was investigating the deaths...’<sup>202</sup>

11.1.5 In September 2023, HRW stated that:

‘While some police killings are in self defense, many result from illegal use of force that goes largely unpunished. Currently, civil police carry out investigations into police abuses. This raises serious questions of impartiality as civil police investigate their own personnel, as well as military police personnel with whom they may have worked in other cases...

‘Human Rights Watch has documented scores of cases in which police officers intimidated witnesses, or manipulated and destroyed evidence, including by taking bodies to hospitals falsely claiming the victims were still alive and removing the victim’s clothes; as well as cases in which civil police failed to conduct adequate investigations into police killings, for instance by

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<sup>200</sup> IACHR, [Annual Report 2022](#) (page 842), 1 April 2023

<sup>201</sup> USSD, [2023 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Brazil](#) (section 1), 23 April 2024

<sup>202</sup> USSD, [2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Brazil](#) (Section 1), 2024

not visiting the crime scene.’<sup>203</sup>

11.1.6 In March 2024, HRW reported that:

‘Brazilian police killed 6,381 people in 2023, the vast majority of them Black ... The poor quality of investigations is a longstanding problem.

‘In 2017, the Inter-American Court found that Brazil had failed to ensure independent and impartial investigations into the killing of twenty-six people in the Nova Brasília neighborhood in Rio de Janeiro during two civil police operations, in 1994 and 1995. The court found that the investigation by civil police was beset by “omissions and negligence,” that investigators failed to take “minimum measures required,” and that they lacked “diligence and independence.”

‘The court in 2017 ordered the Brazilian government, among other measures, to publish an official annual report with data on killings by police and the investigations conducted into each incident. It also ordered Brazil’s government to ensure that police killings, torture, and other police abuses are investigated by “an independent body, distinct from the public force involved in the incident,” with the support of forensic experts “unrelated” to the law enforcement agency that allegedly committed the abuse.

‘In a 2021 decision assessing Brazil’s compliance with the judgment, the Inter-American Court said that both the Brazilian government and victims’ representatives agreed that the prosecutor’s office was the independent body that should investigate police killings and other abuses in Brazil.

‘...to this day, Brazil has not fully complied with [these rulings]. The administration of President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva published nationwide data about killings by police in 2023, but it doesn’t include information about investigations. Civil police continue to investigate killings by police, and forensic experts are either part of the states’ public security secretariat or part of the civil police itself, which does not guarantee independence.

‘A resolution that would ensure that prosecutors lead investigations into all killings by security forces, instead of letting police investigate themselves, is under discussion at the National Council of Attorney General’s Offices...’<sup>204</sup>

11.1.7 The Freedom House 2024 report stated that ‘In the vast majority of homicides committed by police, there is no due process’<sup>205</sup> and that ‘those charged are almost never convicted.’<sup>206</sup>

11.1.8 When asked whether corrupt police officers commonly get brought to justice, members of the Federal Police in Sao Paulo told the UK HO FFM team that: ‘Yes, it’s common. But... we are restricted when it comes to combating corruption. It’s as hard and slow as investigating any crime, however the judges are stricter when it comes to a police officer being involved in corruption. The processes are all very long.’<sup>207</sup>

11.1.9 An April 2024 article in the Associated Press (AP) noted:

‘The Brazilian Supreme Court ruled Thursday [11 April 2024] that the state

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<sup>203</sup> HRW, [Brazil: Prosecutors Should Lead Police Killings Inquiries](#), 12 September 2023

<sup>204</sup> Human Rights Watch, [Brazil: Comply with Rulings on Police Violence](#), 15 March 2024

<sup>205</sup> Freedom House, [Brazil: Freedom in the World 2024](#) (F2), 2024

<sup>206</sup> Freedom House, [Brazil: Freedom in the World 2024](#) (F3), 2024

<sup>207</sup> UK Home Office, [Report of a FFM: OCGs](#) (page 60), September 2024

must compensate victims of stray bullets during military and law enforcement operations.

‘The ruling means that the state is now civilly liable for deaths or injuries resulting from either police or armed forces operations, even in cases where the forensics reports are inconclusive.

‘The country’s top court was ruling in a case stemming from the killing of a man by a stray bullet in 2015 during an army action in Rio de Janeiro’s impoverished Mare neighborhood. The court ordered the federal government to pay 300,000 reais (\$60,000) [approximately £39,981<sup>208</sup>] to his family, who will also receive a lifetime pension and have the victim’s funeral expenses covered.

“The risk of stray bullets and violent firearm deaths is recurring in the country. Efforts are being made to reverse this pattern of violence, which spares no one, including children,” said Cristina Neme, a sociologist and coordinator of Instituto Sou da Paz, a nonprofit that monitors public security...

“Stray bullets occur because the state has failed to protect citizens’ lives and to control the circulation of firearms,” [Fogo Cruzado, a nonprofit organization that provides real-time reporting of gun violence in Brazil<sup>209</sup>] said.<sup>210</sup>

#### 11.1.10 The UNHRC 2024 report noted:

‘Internal accountability measures, in which the civil police investigates the military police, fosters a conflict of interest that compromises the credibility and impartiality of the investigations. This internal investigation framework fails to meet the standards required for a fair and unbiased scrutiny of police conduct. Any system that uses police officers as investigators on cases against other police officers, is inclined to be partial. An existing internal police culture of taking care of each other in all types of situations does not help in this regard. Other systemic failures in gathering evidence and conducting autopsies were also mentioned, such as unjustified delays, insufficient forensic examinations, and lack of transparency, especially to families. Also, the testimony of police officers tends to carry more weight than other evidence, leading to an overall bias in their favour and recurrent acquittals...’<sup>211</sup>

#### 11.1.11 The same report stated: ‘The Mechanism received testimony about active retaliation and intimidation tactics by law enforcement against witnesses, victims and family members, lawyers and human rights defenders of victims of police violence...’<sup>212</sup>

#### 11.1.12 The same report also stated:

‘During the visit, the Mechanism heard repeatedly, directly from victims, about the lack of accountability in cases related to police abuse. It heard of cases not investigated, perpetrators not prosecuted, and cases closed. The Mechanism heard about the general distrust in the criminal justice system

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<sup>208</sup> Xe.com, [300,000 BRL to GBP](#), 24 June 2025

<sup>209</sup> AP, [Brazil court says government must compensate victims of stray bullets...](#), 12 April 2024

<sup>210</sup> AP, [Brazil court says government must compensate victims of stray bullets...](#), 12 April 2024

<sup>211</sup> UNHRC, [...Visit to Brazil...](#) (pages 9, 10), 27 September 2024

<sup>212</sup> UNHRC, [...Visit to Brazil...](#) (pages 9, 10), 27 September 2024



based on these experiences; the fear to present complaints due to retaliation...

'The Mechanism welcomes information received that some state prosecution services are forming specialised units for the prosecution of crimes committed by law enforcement officials. Even so, the Mechanism observed that these units lack sufficient resources to carry out their work successfully and independently.'<sup>213</sup>

11.1.13 A 2024 article by the Urban Violence Research Network, a 'global research network of scholars and public sector researchers working on urban violence'<sup>214</sup>, stated:

'To address this challenge [of accountability for officers involved in extrajudicial killings], law enforcement has turned to body-worn cameras (BWCs) to foster citizens' trust in the police and improve accountability ... Presently, out of the 26 Brazilian states (plus its Federal District), 11 have implemented BWCs and 14 others are testing the equipment. The Ministry of Justice and Public Security has also created a working group to devise national directives for their implementation.

'Despite receiving strong public support (90% in a recent survey), the adoption of BWCs has faced resistance, mainly from police officers and conservative politicians. Concerns range from budget limitations and competing police priorities to potential "de-policing" effects – the hypothesis that officers, fearing unfair accusations, might refrain from enforcing the law, potentially leading to an increase in crime.'<sup>215</sup>

11.1.14 In a January 2025 article, originally in Portuguese, Agencia Brasil quoted Sao Paulo's Secretariat of Public Security: '... "all cases of deaths resulting from police intervention (MDIP)... are rigorously investigated by the Civil and Military Police, with monitoring by internal affairs, the Public Prosecutor's Office and the Judiciary... Since the beginning of 2023, more than 300 police officers have been fired and expelled, and more than 450 officers have been arrested."<sup>216</sup>

11.1.15 The HRW 2025 report stated that:

'In May [2024], prosecutors charged a member of Congress and his brother, a state official, with ordering the 2018 killing of councilwoman and human rights defender Marielle Franco... Prosecutors also charged the then-civil police chief of Rio de Janeiro with aiding them... In October [2024], two former police officers who confessed to carrying out the murder were sentenced to decades in prison...

'Since a Supreme Court ruling in 2020 ordered Rio de Janeiro state to take measures to curb police abuse, killings have dropped dramatically...

'In two rulings published in March [2024], the Inter-American Court of Human Rights found police in São Paulo and Paraná states had committed serious human rights violations. The court ordered Brazil to stop trying crimes against civilians committed by military police in military courts, and instead

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<sup>213</sup> UNHRC, [...Visit to Brazil...](#) (pages 9, 10), 27 September 2024

<sup>214</sup> Urban Violence Research Network, [About](#), no date

<sup>215</sup> Urban Violence Research Network, [Brazil's Ongoing Struggle with Police ...](#), 27 March 2024

<sup>216</sup> Agencia Brasil, [Lethality of the São Paulo military police increased in 2024](#), 15 January 2025



use civilian courts.’<sup>217</sup>

- 11.1.16 The same report stated that: ‘Police killed at least 84 people in two operations in the Baixada Santista region, in 2023 and 2024. Prosecutors had filed charges in just five killings, as of November [2024].’<sup>218</sup>

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## 11.2 National Council of Justice (CNJ)

- 11.2.1 On an undated webpage, Judiciaries Worldwide stated:

‘The National Council of Justice is an administrative entity that manages Brazil’s judicial system. It is tasked with managing court operations, developing national judicial policy, disseminating best practices, and overseeing judicial conduct and discipline. The Council keeps data of all court filings and pending cases on its website. The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court presides over the Council and the President of the Superior Tribunal of Justice serves as national inspector magistrate and executive director of the Council. This role includes reviewing complaints about judicial conduct and services.’<sup>219</sup>

- 11.2.2 Encyclopaedia Britannica stated that the National Council of Justice is ‘an external institution to oversee compliance with judicial rules and to consider complaints against judges.’<sup>220</sup>

- 11.2.3 The website of Brazil’s Superior Court of Justice (STJ) stated:

‘The National Council of Justice (CNJ) is a public institution with the mission to improve the Brazilian judicial system, regarding administrative and procedural control and transparency.

‘As a multifunctional organ, it acts on several fronts:

‘Judicial policy: it ensures the autonomy of the Judiciary and its compliance with the Statute of the Judiciary, by issuing normative acts and recommendations;

‘Operation: it defines the strategic planning, the goals and the institutional evaluation programs for the Judiciary;

‘Provision of services to citizens: it receives complaints, digital petitions, and representations against members or organs of the judiciary, including their auxiliary services, notary public office and registry service providers, delegated by public or official authorities;

‘Inspection and Monitoring: it judges disciplinary proceedings, being assured the right to full defense. Depending on the case, it can determine the removal, availability or retirement of the offender among other administrative sanctions;

‘Efficiency of control: it prepares and publishes every six months a statistical report about the progress on procedures and other indicators pertinent to the jurisdictional activity throughout the country.

‘The CNJ is presided over by the president of the Supreme Federal Court. It

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<sup>217</sup> Human Rights Watch, [World Report 2025: Brazil](#), 2025

<sup>218</sup> Human Rights Watch, [World Report 2025: Brazil](#), 2025

<sup>219</sup> Judiciaries Worldwide, [Brazil](#), no date

<sup>220</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica, [Brazil](#) (Administration and social conditions), updated 19 May 2025

is located in Brasilia and operates throughout the national territory.’<sup>221</sup>

- 11.2.4 The CNJ’s website described how citizens can submit a complaint, stating ‘The Ombudsman’s Office of the National Council of Justice is a direct communication channel between you and the Council...

‘The reports received at the CNJ Ombudsman’s Office will be analyzed individually and responded to as appropriate. If the issue presented is within the scope of action of the Ombudsman’s Office/CNJ, the demand will be dealt with and forwarded in order to allow its solution.’<sup>222</sup> The website links to an online form that can be filled out to contact the Ombudsman’s Office<sup>223</sup>.

- 11.2.5 A contact email address and telephone number for the CNJ is also published on its [webpage](#).

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### 11.3 The Public Prosecutor’s Office (MP) and National Council of the Public Prosecutor’s Office (CNMP)

- 11.3.1 Judiciaries Worldwide stated that:

‘The Office of the Public Prosecutor (Ministério Público) is a constitutionally independent body at both the federal and state levels. Usually denoted to as ‘MP,’ it has been referred to as a “Fourth Branch” of government. The MP is led by the Prosecutor General and has three independent bodies: the Public Procurator’s Office, Public Defender’s Office, and the Public Prosecutor’s Office. For both the federal and state systems, there are three levels of public prosecutors, one for each level of court. Although the MP supervises police investigations, prosecutors only investigate major criminal cases including those involving misconduct by the police or public officials.’<sup>224</sup>

- 11.3.2 In September 2023, HRW stated that:

‘On March 10 [2023], the National Council of Prosecutors, which oversees the work of federal and state prosecutors, established a working group to draft a resolution to guide prosecutors’ investigations into cases of death, torture, and sexual violence “in the context of police operations.”..

‘... Prosecutors have often failed to meet their obligation to ensure civil and military police abide by the law and that investigations into abuses are prompt, thorough, and independent...

‘Once the working group drafts the resolution, it will open a period of comment on the text by prosecutors’ offices around the country. The National Council of Prosecutors will need to approve or reject the final resolution ...’<sup>225</sup>

- 11.3.3 The UNHRC 2024 report stated: ‘The Mechanism heard about ... the lack of independence and resources of internal and external oversight bodies, including the Public Prosecution offices ...’<sup>226</sup>

- 11.3.4 The CNMP told the UK HO FFM team that:

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<sup>221</sup> Superior Tribunal de Justica, [National Council of Justice](#), no date

<sup>222</sup> National Council of Justice, [Ombudsman CNJ](#), no date

<sup>223</sup> National Council of Justice, [Ombudsman CNJ](#), no date

<sup>224</sup> Judiciaries Worldwide, [Brazil](#), no date

<sup>225</sup> HRW, [Brazil: Prosecutors Should Lead Police Killings Inquiries](#), 12 September 2023

<sup>226</sup> UNHRC, [...Visit to Brazil...](#) (pages 9, 10), 27 September 2024

‘CNMP’s role is the external administrative, budgetary and disciplinary control of public prosecutor’s offices...

‘The CNMP also has commissions on thematic areas (10 in total). For example, the commission on external control of police activity, the prison system and public security. They also have commissions handling human rights, the environment, and health, as well as internal affairs, an ombudsman’s office and a national training unit.

‘An important aspect of their role is to guide prosecutor’s offices in performing their role. For example, the commission on external control of police activity, the prison system and public security disseminates best practices, contributing to the enhancement of the prison system and to the conformation of the conduct of police to the standards of the law...

‘CNMP issue Resolutions which are hard law, impose conditions of conduct on prosecutor’s offices, give recommendations and handle non-compliance...

‘Relevant norms include Resolution No. 181/2017: this covers proceedings for police investigation...

‘...Those who execute policies are prosecutor’s offices themselves, each state has one and there are additionally 4 more (30 in total). 29/30 handle criminal issues...

‘Through Resolution 243 we have a national institutional policy for prosecutor’s offices to support and protect victims... Victims are given social and psychological assistance, made to feel welcomed and heard, and receive the correct advice – this is all done on a local level...

‘Some prosecutor’s offices have interesting projects, for example in Minas Gerais they opened Casa Lilian (Lilian House) which is a physical structure with a multi-disciplinary team acting to care for victims. This can be accessed through Minas Gerais prosecutor’s office...’<sup>227</sup>

- 11.3.5 When asked by the UK HO FFM team whether the CNMP can handle complaints against public prosecutor’s offices on behalf of citizens, representatives from the CNMP responded:

‘Yes, and it’s routine. We have an Ombudsman’s office.

‘In all public prosecutor’s offices, there is an Ombudsman’s office. They all receive complaints. Any citizen can seek this office when they have complaints regarding public prosecutor’s offices. This commission has responded several times to such complaints.

‘As well as the Ombudsman’s office, the internal affairs office receives these. All offices have an internal affairs office, and are financially independent. Citizens can seek their local internal affairs office or the federal internal affairs office. There is therefore a double layer of tools to investigate actions of public prosecutor’s offices.’<sup>228</sup>

- 11.3.6 This [CNMP website](#) contains instructions and contact details for its ombudsperson.

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<sup>227</sup> UK Home Office, [Report of a FFM: OCGs](#) (pages 11, 12, 14), September 2024

<sup>228</sup> UK Home Office, [Report of a FFM: OCGs](#) (page 14), September 2024

## 11.4 Ombudsperson's Offices (Ouvidorias)

### 11.4.1 Judiciaries Worldwide stated:

'In 2010, Brazil's National Council of Justice issued a mandate that all courts establish an Ombudsman Office (Ouvidorias). All of the lower courts in Brazil have complied with this mandate and in 2023, the Supreme Federal Court, which is not subject to the Council's authority, created its own Ombudsman Office. The ombudsman is assigned numerous responsibilities including providing litigants with information about court rules, soliciting feedback from the public concerning their satisfaction with court operations, investigating complaints about court services and misconduct by court staff, and providing court leadership with data about court-user satisfaction as well as suggestions for improvement. Many courts also instituted a Women's Ombudsman section to gather and report on issues related to gender equity in the judiciary and violence against women.'<sup>229</sup>

### 11.4.2 The UNHRC 2024 report stated: 'Ombudsperson offices, which exist in some states such as São Paulo, and which play a role in investigating and prosecuting cases of reported police misconduct, also have a lack of resources.'<sup>230</sup>

### 11.4.3 Originally in Portuguese, on a webpage dealing with frequently asked questions about ombudspersons offices, the Government of Brazil stated that 'any person, individual or legal entity' may contact the ombudsperson's office regarding 'dissatisfaction related to public service' or 'the practice of an unlawful act whose solution depends on the action of an internal or external control body.'<sup>231</sup> Contact can be made 'in person, over the Internet, by letter, or by telephone, depending on the availability of the ombudsman and the needs of the user'<sup>232</sup>

### 11.4.4 The same webpage stated that 'at the Federal level, the manifestation must be registered in the e-Ouv system on the Fala.BR platform... Fala.BR is an integrated channel for forwarding... complaints... to public... bodies and entities.'<sup>233</sup>

### 11.4.5 The fala.br platform can be accessed [here](#).

### 11.4.6 In the sources consulted (see [Bibliography](#)), CPIT was unable to find information relating to the effectiveness of the Ombudsperson's offices.

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## 12. NGO support

### 12.1.1 Brazilian NGOs that can assist with seeking justice include:

- [Instituto Pro Bono](#): 'a non-profit organization founded in 2001 to promote the expansion of access to justice through pro bono advocacy. We act as a bridge between vulnerable populations or civil society organizations and a team of lawyers willing to offer volunteer services with the highest quality, providing free legal services'<sup>234</sup>

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<sup>229</sup> Judiciaries Worldwide, [Brazil](#), no date

<sup>230</sup> UNHRC, [...Visit to Brazil...](#) (pages 9, 10), 27 September 2024

<sup>231</sup> Government of Brazil, [Questions & Answers](#), updated 23 July 2024

<sup>232</sup> Government of Brazil, [Questions & Answers](#), updated 23 July 2024

<sup>233</sup> Government of Brazil, [Questions & Answers](#), updated 23 July 2024

<sup>234</sup> Instituto Pro Bono, [About us](#), no date

- [Centro por la justicia y el derecho internacional \(CEJIL\)](#): ‘a regional organization’ using ‘international human rights law and the bodies of the Inter-American Human Rights System (IAHRS) to promote justice, liberty and a dignified existence for the citizens of the hemisphere... CEJIL represents the victims of human rights abuses free of charge... CEJIL litigates cases emblematic of serious human rights violations in the Americas... However, due to limited resources and the nature of its mission, CEJIL cannot take on all of the cases submitted for consideration.’<sup>235</sup>
- [Justica Global](#): ‘A Brazilian non-governmental organization that works to protect and promote human rights and to strengthen civil society and democracy’<sup>236</sup>. Its website provides a list of [civil society networks](#)
- [Conectas](#): ‘part of a lively and global movement that continues in the fight for equal rights. Connected via a broad network of partners, spread across Brazil and around the world, we are always available, and we participate in various decision-making debates that advance the path of human rights from the Global South perspective. We work to secure and extend the rights of all, especially the most vulnerable. We propose solutions, avert setbacks, and denounce violations to create transformations.’<sup>237</sup>

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<sup>235</sup> CEJIL, [FAQs](#), no date

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# Research methodology

The country of origin information (COI) in this note has been carefully selected in accordance with the general principles of COI research as set out in the [Common EU \[European Union\] Guidelines for Processing Country of Origin Information \(COI\)](#), April 2008, and the Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation's (ACCORD), [Researching Country Origin Information – Training Manual](#), 2024. Namely, taking into account the COI's relevance, reliability, accuracy, balance, currency, transparency and traceability.

Sources and the information they provide are carefully considered before inclusion. Factors relevant to the assessment of the reliability of sources and information include:

- the motivation, purpose, knowledge and experience of the source
- how the information was obtained, including specific methodologies used
- the currency and detail of information
- whether the COI is consistent with and/or corroborated by other sources

Commentary may be provided on source(s) and information to help readers understand the meaning and limits of the COI.

Wherever possible, multiple sourcing is used and the COI compared to ensure that it is accurate and balanced, and provides a comprehensive and up-to-date picture of the issues relevant to this note at the time of publication.

The inclusion of a source is not, however, an endorsement of it or any view(s) expressed.

Each piece of information is referenced in a footnote.

Full details of all sources cited and consulted in compiling the note are listed alphabetically in the [bibliography](#).

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# Terms of Reference

The 'Terms of Reference' (ToR) provides a broad outline of the issues relevant to the scope of this note and forms the basis for the [country information](#).

The following topics were identified prior to drafting as relevant and on which research was undertaken:

- Legal framework - relevant laws and policies that:
  - protect individuals and groups from treatment that may amount to persecution in the constitution, and penal and criminal procedural codes;
  - regulate the operation and function of security/protection forces and judiciary, including arrest and detention rights
  - any discriminatory laws, policies or programmes applicable to protection
- Organisations responsible for law enforcement - usually police but may include other agencies such as armed forces, intelligence services or civilian militias:
  - structure and size (and number of security officers as a ratio of the wider population)
  - resourcing, pay, equipment and training
  - numbers of investigations, arrests (and types of crimes) and prosecutions
  - occurrence of corruption, misconduct and human rights violations
  - accessibility – existence (or lack of) barriers to obtaining protection for particular groups, by location or other factors.
  - application – discrimination in enforcement of law against particular groups, by location or other factors
  - reform – ongoing or planned reform
- Oversight bodies of security forces
  - size, structure, remit and powers of units within enforcement agencies, the courts and independent organisations including national human rights institutions
  - process for raising complaints
  - numbers of investigations and outcomes, including any evidence of investigations and punishment for corruption, misconduct and human rights violations
  - application – discrimination against particular groups, by location or other factors
- Judiciary
  - structure, size and composition, including juvenile, family and military courts
  - selection process for magistrates/judges
  - resourcing, pay, equipment and training
  - independence from executive or other state bodies – government influence on court composition and judgements



- fair trial – availability to legal aid and representation; witness protection programmes and their effectiveness; open and public trial; rights of appeal to higher courts
- accessibility - existence (or lack) of barriers to accessing the judicial process for particular groups, by location (different provinces or rural/urban) or other factors
- occurrence of corruption, misconduct and human rights violations
- numbers of cases, outcomes including convictions and acquittals
- informal justice systems, types of case and effectiveness.

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# Version control and feedback

## Clearance

Below is information on when this note was cleared:

- version **2.0**
- valid from **27 June 2025**

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### Official – sensitive: Not for disclosure – Start of section

The information on this page has been removed as it is restricted for internal Home Office use.

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### Official – sensitive: Not for disclosure – End of section

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## Changes from last version of this note

Country of Origin Information updated

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## Feedback to the Home Office

Our goal is to provide accurate, reliable and up-to-date COI and clear guidance. We welcome feedback on how to improve our products. If you would like to comment on this note, please email the [Country Policy and Information Team](#).

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## Independent Advisory Group on Country Information

The [Independent Advisory Group on Country Information](#) (IAGCI) was set up in March 2009 by the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration to support them in reviewing the efficiency, effectiveness and consistency of approach of COI produced by the Home Office.

The IAGCI welcomes feedback on the Home Office's COI material. It is not the function of the IAGCI to endorse any Home Office material, procedures or policy. The IAGCI may be contacted at:

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Information about the IAGCI's work and a list of the documents which have been reviewed by the IAGCI can be found on the Independent Chief Inspector's pages of the [gov.uk website](#).

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