

“TERRIBLY CHRISTIAN”

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- *Foreign policy on human rights under the Bolsonaro administration* •

ABSTRACT

This study analyses the foreign policy on human rights of the Bolsonaro government. Our hypotheses are: (1) backed by the religious positions of his electoral base, the illiberal Bolsonaro administration used Brazil's foreign policy as a space to express his ideological views, and (2) as this use of foreign policy was connected to the electoral arena, Bolsonaro radically altered the country's foreign policy on human rights to maintain the loyalty of his evangelical voters. Based on these two hypotheses, we argue that the changes are linked to the reconfiguration of Brazil's foreign policy to favour the access and leadership of evangelical conservative organizations in this area at the expense of progressive human rights organizations.

KEYWORDS

Brazil | Bolsonaro | Foreign policy | Human rights | Gender

1 • Introduction

“The state is laic, but this minister is terribly Christian”.¹ This statement was made by Damara Alves, the Minister of Women, Family and Human Rights, on the day she took office, on January 2, 2019, under the presidency of Jair Bolsonaro. This gave a clear indication of how the policies of the federal government, which were conservative, authoritarian and non-laic in nature, would violate the constitutional pillars of Brazilian democracy, including at the international level.²

Bolsonaro’s election in 2019 was a turning point in the history of Brazil. Under him, the Brazilian government was antagonistic toward judicial independence, freedom of the press and the development of a national educational system. It also threatened various forms of civil society activism.

Efforts to block setbacks in Brazilian foreign policy have not been very effective. From an international perspective, the Bolsonaro administration eroded the country’s political capital, linked to cooperative multilateral actions, and turned foreign policy into a catalyst for his anti-rights project. In June 2019, the Minister of Foreign Affairs instructed Brazilian diplomats to defend the outdated view that only biological sex exists, with the aim to hinder debates and block the use of the term “gender” in the international forums in which Brazil participates. In September 2019, Bolsonaro attacked Michelle Bachelet, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, by mentioning her father’s history.³ In October 2020, Brazil cosponsored the Geneva Consensus Declaration – basically an international anti-abortion declaration – accompanied by countries like the United States (under the Trump administration), Egypt, Indonesia, Hungary and Uganda. Also in February 2021, before the UN Human Rights Council session, the Brazilian Minister of Foreign Affairs denounced measures being adopted globally to fight COVID-19, drawing a simplistic dichotomy between health and freedom.⁴

These setbacks, both national and international, are very serious. However, when comparing the efforts to contain domestic and international setbacks in the human rights arena, Brazilian CSOs and institutions had different levels of success in 2019 and 2020. Governments have historically been averse to social participation in foreign policy, as well as input from political entities outside the executive branch. However, since the 2000s, it had been a channel for mobilizing progressive struggles and had developed through a plural decision-making process.⁵ The Bolsonaro administration changed this trend. Thus, this article’s main questions are: *why did the human rights dimension of Brazilian foreign policy suffer radical changes under the Bolsonaro government? And a secondary question is: to what extent has the Bolsonaro government’s democratic deficit and anti-rights agenda impacted the performance of CSOs?*

Over the last three decades, Brazilian foreign policymaking has been pluralized with an increasing number of actors influencing or attempting to influence this area. This

pluralization means that decision-making is more accessible to governmental (other ministries and agencies) and non-governmental actors (CSOs).⁶ In this article, we analyse the executive branch (the presidency and ministries involved with the human rights area of foreign policy) and CSOs (both progressive ones and those aligned with the Bolsonaro government's preferences).⁷ To be more specific, we focus on identifying the relevant actors in the formulation of these conservative positions by the Brazilian state in international human rights arenas and examining their interests, resources and how they are distributed. We aim to verify whether and how the changes in actors and agendas after the 2018 Brazilian election reconfigured the playing field and to point out new dynamics of interaction and the production of new political results in the domestic and international environment.

2 • Human rights and foreign policy: Bolsonaro's breaks with constitutional traditions

After the democratization process in the 1980s, the PSDB and PT governments (1990-2003 and 2003-2016) were inspired by and the propellers of a human rights-based foreign policy narrative. Despite the differences in their guidelines and strategic choices, both administrations were aligned with the principle of the prevalence of human rights enshrined in the Brazilian constitution. Neither administration saw the UN Human Rights Council as a political enemy like the Bolsonaro government did.

The different kinds of actions chosen by the two administrations were not disconnected from their domestic goals, nor from the Brazilian constitution and, in terms of human rights, from the legacy of Brazilian foreign policy, especially the one built after the redemocratization process. In the empirical analysis below, we will analyse how this disconnect emerged in Bolsonaro's foreign policy on human rights, especially in the illiberal positions it defended in the UN Human Rights Council. We will also examine how these positions were created, who were the formulators, who were the domestic beneficiaries of this strategy and what were the channels and actors that this illiberal turn of Brazilian human rights foreign policy privileged.

In the current human rights backlash,⁸ exemplified by the changes in Bolsonaro's international agenda, conservative CSOs are trying to gain access to these human rights forums. This also implies a change in the actors who have access to foreign policy-making.

The role of CSOs in international politics has become increasingly important since the end of the Cold War. They have been elevated to the status of legitimate representatives of the public interest.⁹ Accordingly, they became active players that states and international bureaucracies are now forced to deal with. In the human rights field, CSOs are forceful agents and an indispensable part of the international regime. They are responsible for pushing states and international organizations to adopt, update and enforce human rights standards.

In general, analytical models normally consider CSOs as pro-human rights actors. However, the current situation of the world, particularly the recent state of Brazilian foreign policy, raises some political and analytical challenges to this assumption.

Also, despite the recent pluralization of actors with influence in foreign policymaking, foreign policy is still relatively distant from citizens and public opinion. Considering the substantial changes made by President Bolsonaro on international human rights issues, Soares de Lima and Albuquerque argue that "because it is a theme highly centred on the executive power, in which there is less need to form alliances in Congress, we argue that Bolsonaro uses Brazilian foreign policy as a space for making declarations aimed at deepening the loyalty of a more radical portion of the electorate".¹⁰

Brazilian foreign policy in the Bolsonaro government has been characterized as disruptive.¹¹ We highlight its nationalist discourse grounded on religious values and a strong defence of the moral agenda. From this new perspective, under Bolsonaro, Brazilian international relations became guided by a critique of multilateralism, especially institutions and organizations whose agenda conflicts with the traditional, conservative and religious values of the president's most loyal constituency.

This anti-globalist shift is rhetorically justified by the need to align the international actions with the religious and traditional values of a significant number of Brazilian citizens. In such thinking, there is the fallacious idea that the internationalization of the moral agenda through foreign policy is necessary in order to democratize the latter.¹² However, adopting the values of one single group does not democratize foreign policymaking; instead, it increases the gap between citizens and foreign policy.

Chart 1 summarizes the actors (of Bolsonaro administration) in the governmental and non-governmental spheres¹³ and their main arenas and strategies. Those elements will guide our analysis in the next section.

Chart 1. Actors, arenas and strategies

| Actors | Arenas | Main arena | Strategies |
|--|--|--|--|
| President | Executive Congressional International Electoral | Electoral | Nominate ministers and advisors on foreign and human rights policies. Direct dialogue with the electorate through social media and online statements |
| Ministers (Foreign Affairs, and Women, Family and Human Rights) | Executive Congressional International | Executive, aiming to improve the loyalty of Bolsonaro's constituency | Controlling the agenda |
| Coletivo RPU* | International Civil society | International | Voicing preferences; pressure and advocacy; shaming |
| ANAJURE | International Civil society Executive Congressional | Executive Congressional | Vocalization of preferences; pressure advocacy |

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

* UPR: Universal Periodic Review (RPU in Portuguese).

We now analyse the main actors, their preferences and the resources they mobilized to shape Brazil’s foreign policy on human rights between January 2019 and March 2021. As mentioned before, we will focus on government actors of the executive branch (the Presidency, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Women, Family and Human Rights). We also highlight how two CSOs whose ideological orientations differ from one another — the Coletivo RPU¹⁴ and ANAJURE — started to react to Bolsonaro’s religious and ideological politics.

3 • Bolsonaro’s theo-conservative shift in foreign policy on human rights

Jair Bolsonaro won the presidential election in 2018 after a long trajectory of authoritarian and anti-human-rights discourses. Bolsonaro presented himself as a leader capable of tearing down public policies, including the country’s foreign policy.¹⁵ His government style has some particularities such as “zero concern with governability [...] the relationship of opposition and co-optation of the political system, [...] and a broad social base that ratifies his positions on social media, which allows him to relativize the media opposition he faces”.¹⁶ This strategy, called (un)government by Avritzer, is best represented by key ministers in public policy areas such as human rights. Minister Damares Alves was nominated as the Minister of Women, Family and Human Rights for her ability to tighten up the human rights policy, undo previous trends and advancements and create conflict between the bureaucracy and the public policy community,¹⁷ including CSOs.

As mentioned before, conservative Christian values are at the core of Bolsonaro’s political platform, and his government was constituted by a growing religious right. Hence, the Ministry of Women, Family and Human Rights (MMFDH) became an institutional space for the actions and consolidation of this group in neoconservative terms and through a populist logic.¹⁸

Since 2018, the evangelicals in Brazil are the group that backed Bolsonaro’s actions the most. This constant and popular support is what guaranteed his election and continuity in office, although not exclusively so,¹⁹ and was reflected in his government policies and changes in the executive branch. Evangelicals have a long political trajectory of being close to other governments, but under the Bolsonaro administration, this relationship between political power and religious groups became organic and more institutionalized.²⁰ This resulted in a cross-cutting integration of neoconservative and religious values in the government structure, with gender issues, in particular, being deconstructed in different policy areas.²¹

In addition, Bolsonaro, as an “elected autocrat”,²² treated the political opposition as enemies and built up a populist wall that separated “us” – the people with religious values – from “them”, using the valorisation of the family as a tool. Thus, international organizations, such as the UN Human Rights Council, and progressive CSOs were considered and treated as enemies.

This analysis shows that foreign policy is tied to the electoral arena and how Bolsonaro's international actions were undertaken to increase the loyalty of his constituency by pleasing those with conservative and religious values. Bolsonaro promised to withdraw Brazil from the UN Human Rights Council²³ and while he did not keep this promise, he made significant changes to Brazilian guidelines and decisions in this organization.²⁴

3.1 - The thinkers and the doers of the shift: government actors

These significant turns in Brazil's human rights foreign policy have at least two important political actors at their core: former Minister of Foreign Affairs Ernesto Araújo and Minister of Women, Family and Human Rights Damares Alves.²⁵

Ernesto Araújo was the Minister of Foreign Affairs from January 2019 to March 2021. He was the formal executor of the changes in trends, discourses and actions in Brazil's international relations. Araújo, who is a career diplomat, was appointed to the position of minister for his ideological predilections. In Araújo's words, Bolsonaro "[...] was the only political leader capable of bringing the people to power, the only one who believed in freedom, nationalism, God and the interaction between them."²⁶

Araújo strengthened the nationalist discourse based on religious precepts and the defence of the moral agenda, which attacks so-called globalist policies.²⁷ As an example, he stated that the word "multilateralism" should be avoided when referring to international institutions in order to defend sovereignty and the national sentiment.²⁸

Attacks on globalism were not just a criticism of multilateralism or the functioning of international institutions. In Araújo's view, globalism means the combination of the globalized economy with "cultural Marxism". Thus, Brazilian foreign policy was thought to be part of a universal insurgency, led by the Trump administration, against "globalism", "climatism," "racialism," "gender ideology" and "abortionism".

This shows that the foreign policy under Araújo's guidance became part of a moral crusade, at the expense of real and pragmatic strategies. The government's hostility toward China, Brazil's most important commercial partner, in defence of and in alignment with Trump's United States exemplifies this blindness and lack of rational strategies.²⁹

Araújo tried to change Brazil's foreign policy into a tool of a liberal-conservative alliance (liberal in the economy, conservative in values) to promote a "healthy, trustful and successful society" based on the following values: nation, family and traditional ties. He agreed that these guidelines were making Brazil an international pariah and praised the ostracism he helped to cause.³⁰ As a result of this rhetoric, we highlight the special ties that Brazil built with conservative governments such as Israel, Hungary, Saudi Arabia, Poland and India. Except for India, these countries had not been a priority for Brazilian international relations during previous governments.

These new special relationships were justified by the religious and ideological features of Bolsonaro's politics rather than pragmatic reasons. Araújo left the government in March 2021 following criticism from the legislative branch and pressure from the media and civil society.

Damara Alves was the Minister of Women, Family and Human Rights. She was one of the most vocal ministers and one of the main supporters of the Bolsonaro administration and its conservative principles. According to a December 2019 poll, Alves was the second most popular minister of Brazil and the only one who had more support among the poor than the rich.³¹ She is an important political figure whose role needs to be carefully examined to understand the conservative turn in foreign policy.

Alves is an evangelical pastor and a lawyer, and began her career in politics at the end of the 1980s. But it was only at the end of the 1990s that she became the congressional aide for a conservative congressman in Brazil and an evangelical leader.

Alves was also the Director for Legislative Affairs and one of the founders of ANAJURE, the National Association of Evangelical Lawyers, an organization that played an important role in the conservative and anti-gender turn of Bolsonaro's foreign policy. This association became known in Brazil for defending the rights of teachers and schools to not address human rights and political issues, especially debates on gender.

As a Minister, Alves controlled an important part of the Brazilian human rights agenda. First, we should pay attention to the name of the institution she headed: Women, Family and Human Rights. This mix of elements already shows the meaning, framework and level of priority of her ideological views. Up until 2019, Brazil had never had a ministry devoted to family. And "family" is not a neutral and inclusive term here. It refers to a very strict, conservative, heteronormative understanding of family as one that is formed by a heterosexual couple and their children, thus perfectly satisfying Bolsonaro's conservative evangelical constituency. Damara said in her speech for her inauguration as Minister: "All public policies in this country will have to be built on the basis of the family. The family will be considered in all public policies".³² In 2020, the MMFDH launched the "Programa Município Amigo da Família" (Municipality, A Friend of the Family Programme) with the goal of strengthening marital relationships and inter-generational ties, without a single mention of alternative family arrangements, birth control methods or domestic violence.

However, controlling the agenda involves not only the ability to set the tone of the debate and public policies but also to control who participates (or not) in decision-making bodies and processes. In 2019, Bolsonaro and Alves terminated the committee responsible for monitoring the third National Programme for Human Rights (PNDH-3), one of Brazil's most comprehensive and progressive human rights programmes, elaborated in a very collaborative and participatory way in 2009.

Damara Alves' participation in the UN Human Rights Council mirrored her role in the national sphere. In the international sphere, due to the nature of Brazil's foreign policy, she had fewer obstacles to overcome, being freely successful and satisfying Bolsonaro's conservative circle.

One important example of Alves's international actions is the Geneva Consensus. The Geneva Consensus was an initiative launched in 2020 by the conservative governments of the United States, Brazil, Egypt, Hungary, Indonesia and Uganda. These countries cosponsored a declaration named the *Geneva Consensus Declaration on Promoting Women's Health and Strengthening the Family*.³³ The Consensus was supposed to strengthen women's health but did not even mention the word "rights" and, of course, its content reflected a conservative, religious and heteronormative understanding of family. Actually, the Declaration is a kind of anti-abortion and pro-life diplomatic manifesto. Like Alves, it aims to reaffirm the family as the main unit of society, avoid any international initiative that could guarantee abortion as part of a women's sexual and reproductive health programme and protect national jurisdictions from such initiatives.³⁴ After Biden's victory, the United States left the initiative, and Brazil became the leader responsible for trying to gather more support for the declaration.³⁵

This kind of position and coalition has moved Brazil away from its historical position and alliances on women's health. In March 2021, Brazil did not sign a declaration supported by more than sixty countries to celebrate Women's International Day and establish a list of commitments regarding women's health.³⁶ Brazil, which was accompanied by ultraconservative countries such as Poland, Hungary, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Russia and China, explained that the country did not join the declaration because it made references to sexual health rights and supported feminist movements – two points that were in complete disagreement with the Ministry of Women, Family and Human Rights³⁷ and, we add, the Brazilian evangelical conservative audience.³⁸

3.2 - Spacious supporters of and squashed opponents to the shift: non-governmental actors

In terms of human rights foreign policy, in 2006, the Brazilian Committee of Human Rights and Foreign Policy³⁹ was created to increase transparency and participation in the elaboration and execution of Brazil's foreign policy on human rights.⁴⁰ The goals of the Committee were to promote the creation and strengthening of formal mechanisms of citizen participation in the elaboration, execution and monitoring of Brazilian foreign policy on human rights.⁴¹

One of the most interesting characteristics of the Committee was the periodic meetings it promoted before and after the UN Human Rights Council sessions with Brazilian diplomats. These meetings served as spaces to align positions between CSOs and the government, when possible, and to justify positions on resolutions and votes before society,

increasing transparency. Thus, it was a channel through which human rights organizations could monitor Brazilian foreign policy on human rights closely.

The Committee started to weaken in 2016 and 2017, when President Dilma Rousseff was impeached and replaced by Michel Temer. Then, in 2017, periodic meetings between members of the Committee and the Brazilian government began to cease. When Bolsonaro was elected with an anti-human-rights, anti-CSO and anti-UN speech, governmental channels of participation, especially in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, became completely closed to human rights organizations. Constructive dialogue on the foreign policy on human rights between the government and its international representatives (such as Araujo, Martins and Alves) and human rights CSOs was not possible, as they were viewed by the Bolsonaro administration as political enemies.

Faced with these constraints, human rights CSOs continued their work in relation to an anti-human rights government by directing the entirety of their resources to monitoring its activity. The UPR became the focus. Human rights CSOs no longer had constructive and periodic meetings with Brazilian diplomacy. Instead, they acted collectively through a monitoring platform called *Coletivo RPU*.⁴² The organizations that congregated in the Coletivo were often attacked by the Bolsonaro government.

The Coletivo was one of the most vociferous organizations about denouncing Brazilian foreign policy's lack of commitment to human rights. When commenting on the report that the Brazilian government submitted to the UN Universal Periodic Review, the organization made the following statement: “The Brazilian government repeats in its report what has been the main tone of its actions in this area: denialism, delays and lack of protection for the population, attacks on and dismantling of human rights policies”.⁴³

The Bolsonaro administration explicitly blocked the access of human rights organizations to the process of formulating and implementing foreign policy. The *Coletivo RPU* denounced the government's attitude and highlighted how the civil society consultations held in the lead-up to the UPR were merely a formality. “This reveals the inefficiency and extremely low representativity of the public consultation held. Civil society attributes this to the way it was organized and the total lack of mobilization to allow for participation [...]”, the Coletivo affirmed.⁴⁴

However, if our hypotheses are correct and this government uses this policy mainly to satisfy its conservative and evangelical constituency, it makes sense that it would also grant access to foreign policymaking processes to conservative and evangelical organizations, such as ANAJURE, which Alves co-founded.

ANAJURE is a conservative, right-wing Brazilian association founded in 2012 and composed of evangelical lawyers, prosecutors, judges and law professors and students. Its activities focus especially on religious freedom and freedom of expression. The association

has more than six hundred members and is present in twenty-three of the twenty-seven Brazilian states. ANAJURE is affiliated to different international institutions of the same type, such as the International Panel of Parliamentarians for Freedom of Religion or Belief (IPPFoRB) and the Religious Liberty Partnership (RLP).⁴⁵

ANAJURE has made efforts to implement its goal of becoming a national forum for influencing Brazilian laws, lobbying authorities, acting internationally to create ties with similar associations and building alliances to influence discussions within international organizations such as the UN. Thus, ANAJURE seeks to act internationally. Its institutional objective requires it to obtain accreditation as an authorized CSO with international organizations to be able to widely participate in the debates, forums and activities. ANAJURE has already achieved this status inside the Organization of the American States (OAS) and is pursuing the same at the UN.⁴⁶ ANAJURE is fully aligned with the ideas and actions of the foreign policy on human rights of the Bolsonaro administration, especially regarding issues such as gender, “family” and LGBT rights. ANAJURE, for instance, was an enthusiastic supporter of Brazil’s participation in the Geneva Consensus⁴⁷ – a position that is diametrically opposed to that of Coletivo RPU.⁴⁸

Therefore, despite ANAJURE’s argument that its goal is to defend religious freedom internationally, it is engaged in a struggle to establish the cultural hegemony of Christian values throughout the country and internationally.

3.3 - Findings: actors, preferences and resources

Brazil’s foreign policy was more ideological and less pragmatic due to governance standards (low social participation, low monitoring and predominance of the executive branch when compared with other policies) in addition to the (un)government generated by Bolsonaro’s political strategy.

Chart 2. Actors, preferences and resources

| Actors | Interests/preferences | Resources |
|---|--|--|
| <p>President (Jair Bolsonaro)</p> | <p>Electoral success</p> | <p>Agenda powers</p> <p>Appointment of ministers, advisers and members of the Supreme Court</p> <p>Direct dialogue with its constituency</p> |
| | <p>Changes in Brazil's foreign policy</p> | |
| | <p>Treating the opposition as an enemy</p> | |
| <p>Minister of Foreign Affairs (Ernesto Araújo)</p> | <p>Changes in Brazil's foreign policy</p> | <p>Definition and implementation of foreign policy</p> |
| | <p>Criticizing the multilateral international order, especially on human rights issues (anti-globalist agenda)</p> | |
| <p>Minister of Women, Family and Human Rights (Damares Alves)</p> | <p>Foreign policy on human rights based on a non-secular view and submitted to the will of a religious, and electorally victorious, majority</p> | <p>Definition and implementation of human rights policy</p> |
| <p>Coletivo RPU</p> | <p>Monitoring human rights in Brazil from the perspective of the UPR</p> <p>Recommendations</p> | <p>Voicing preferences; pressure and advocacy shaming</p> <p>Focusing on the international level in view of the limitations of domestic channels</p> |
| | <p>Struggle against setbacks in human rights policy</p> | |

| | | |
|---------|--|---|
| ANAJURE | Promoting a view of human rights based on Christian values | Voicing preferences; pressure advocacy |
| | Valuing religious freedom and freedom of speech | |

Source: elaborated by the authors.

4 • Final remarks

This article shows the role of different actors in the redefinition of Brazil’s foreign policy on human rights. We believe that it contributes to a more analytical, and not only prescriptive, view of Bolsonaro’s human rights and foreign policies.

The main findings of this study point to a new dimension of the politicization of Brazilian foreign policy: its use as a permanent electoral tool.⁴⁹ This politicization did not mean foreign policy becomes more plural. Instead, it led to more homogenous positions on human rights issues across policies, as the government strengthened its contact and dialogue with CSOs whose Christian and conservative values were aligned with those of the government, namely ANAJURE. Progressive CSOs such as Coletivo RPU had to adjust their strategies to influence international institutions, since the institutional channels within the government had been closed or hollowed out. Accordingly, the decision-making process regarding foreign policy on human rights became less plural and less conflictive, since there was just one view on the table — one based on Christian values.

Our analysis helps understand how complex the meaning and scope of the current human rights backlash is. It is a kind of transnational phenomena, shared by different countries, and is also directly linked with the electoral arena and national groups and their values. In this sense, our case study showed how the human rights backlash also involves strong, active anti-secular groups who vote, support their political leaders and expect to be pleased by them.

Bolsonaro and his ministers justified an anti-secular, conservative foreign policy on human rights by saying that they are satisfying the will of a Christian/evangelical majority in Brazil. However, this justification completely subverts the meaning of democracy, whose full

realization depends on the protection of the human rights of minorities and the guarantee that their voices be effectively represented and heard.

After the first two years of government, the political situation changed significantly. Bolsonaro lost part of his supporters that voted for him in 2018. Even with occasional changes in campaign strategies, Bolsonaro followed the same logic used throughout the government: speaking to his more faithful electorate and looking for ways to retain their support. He continued to use the foreign policy to try to please and retain this electorate, leading Brazil away from the defence of human rights in the international arena.

Our analytical efforts aside, in view of the recent victory of the Lula-Alckmin ticket over Bolsonaro and the editorial vocation of Sur, we would like to offer a few words of recommendation: how can progressive civil society organizations work effectively to defend democracy and human rights in a context of intense international organizing by the far right?

It seems to us that the first task is to *rebuild a complex relationship with the state*. To do so, it will be necessary to restructure the course of action so that it is no longer based on a logic of confrontation between state and civil society, which was the only option available during the Bolsonaro administration due to the closure of channels of participation and its identification of human rights NGOs as enemies. Obviously, the exercise of denouncing and possibly constraining the elected government should always be present, especially when demanding that the government fulfil its promises on human rights, foreign policy and the connection between the two. However, it will be necessary to revive a logic of constructive collaboration between state and civil society in the elaboration of public policies and the defence of institutions. We must demand that channels for permanent dialogue be created, ones that have an adequate institutional structure to guarantee greater stability to foreign policy on human rights and prevent new setbacks.

This first point can be broken into two more: the *reoccupation of forums for social participation and the promotion/facilitation of international coordination among progressive parliamentary caucuses*. Along with entering or returning to important international forums linked to this theme, it is fundamental for human rights organizations to occupy spaces of participation related to the major social and economic rights agendas. We thus believe that human rights should be treated as a cross-cutting issue across different ministries and government agencies.

In relation to *international coordination among progressive parliamentary groups*, it is very important to encourage them to hold these exchanges. Progressive coalitions, which are generally the minority in the Global South, need to mutually reinforce one another and share good practices and strategies to fight setbacks in the legislature.

But as the actions of ANAJURE described in our article show, the far right is fighting to occupy civil society spaces as well. Thus, human rights organizations will need to take action to ensure that progressive groups prevail in these spaces. This includes efforts to

coordinate with organizations and diplomatic representatives from other countries to stop these conservative and retrograde organizations from obtaining consultative status at the UN, for example.

To deal specifically with the “cursed legacy” of the Bolsonaro government, human rights organizations will also have the role of *coordinating initiatives to catalogue, systematize and publicize the setbacks, dismantling and deconstructions of policies, institutions and rights*. Given the magnitude of the destruction, this task cannot be limited solely to the presidential transition team or the academic world. As the ‘memory and truth’ frame stir tension in Brazil, an alternative to a truth commission would be to launch a series of lawsuits targeting the second and third levels of the Bolsonaro administration first to build a network ecosystem on accountability that is not personified in the figure of the president.

The mission to protect human rights and defend democracy in an environment of intense international organizing by the extreme right is a tough one, but the Vienna legacy offers us a beacon of light and a spark of hope: our actions must be grounded on the so-called 3D – that is, the inevitable articulation among human rights, democracy and development.

NOTES

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11 • Matias Spektor, *Diplomacia da ruptura: Democracia em risco? 22 ensaios sobre o Brasil hoje*, 1 ed. (São Paulo: Cia das Letras, 2019): p. 324-338.

12 • Dawisson Belém Lopes, "Deus e o diabo na terra da política externa." *O Globo*, January 6, 2019, accessed September 20, 2020, <https://oglobo.globo.com/mundo/artigo-deus-o-diabo-naterra-da-politica-externa-23348545>.

13 • Milani, "Atores e agendas no campo da política externa de direitos humanos" (2012).

14 • "Coletivo RPU Brasil is formed by 30 entities from Brazilian civil society and monitors human rights in the country through the UN Universal Periodic Review mechanism". "O Coletivo RPU," *Plataforma RPU BR*, [n.d.], accessed January 26, 2023, <https://plataformarpu.org.br/o-coletivo-rpu>.

15 • Spektor, *Diplomacia da ruptura...*, (2019).

16 • Leonardo Avritzer, "Política e antipolítica nos dois anos de governo Bolsonaro," in *Governo Bolsonaro: Retrocesso democrático e degradação política*, org. Leonardo Avritzer, Fábio Kerche, and Marjorie Marona (Belo Horizonte: Autêntica, 2021): 52.

17 • *Ibid.*

18 • Ronaldo Almeida, "A religião de Bolsonaro: populismo e neoconservadorismo," in *Governo Bolsonaro: Retrocesso democrático e degradação política*, org. Leonardo Avritzer, Fábio Kerche, and Marjorie Marona (Belo Horizonte: Autêntica, 2021).

19 • Marcelo Ayres Camurça, "Um poder evangélico

no Estado brasileiro? Mobilização eleitoral, atuação parlamentar e presença no governo Bolsonaro," *Revista NUPEM* 12, no. 25 (2020): 82-104.

20 • Ronaldo Almeida, "A religião de Bolsonaro: populismo e neoconservadorismo" (2021).

21 • *Ibid.*, 6526.

22 • Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt, *Como as democracias morrem* (São Paulo: Editora Zahar, 2018).

23 • Talita Fernandes, "Bolsonaro diz que cometeu ato falho e que jamais pensou em sair da ONU." *Folha de S.Paulo*, August 20, 2018, accessed January 26, 2023, <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/poder/2018/08/bolsonaro-diz-que-cometeu-ato-falho-e-que-jamais-pensou-em-sair-da-onu.shtml>.

24 • In addition to the shifts regarding Brazil's vote on gender, Brazil changed its historical position on the Israeli- Palestinian conflict inside the UN Human Rights Council, for example. According to Belém Lopes (2021), the Brazilian voting behaviour changed in several items in this area, always in favour of Israel, an unusual shift that shows a new alliance with Israel. This alignment among Brazil, Israel and the United States was also intended to meet the religious constituency's values and requests. See: Dawisson Belém Lopes, "Dois anos de uma política externa rudimentar," in *Governo Bolsonaro: Retrocesso democrático e degradação política*, org. Leonardo Avritzer, Fábio Kerche, and Marjorie Marona (Belo Horizonte: Autêntica, 2021).

25 • The foreign policy on human rights of the Bolsonaro administration was elaborated by both official policymakers, such as Ernesto Araújo and Damares Alves, and unofficial ones. Here, we highlight the importance of Filipe Martins, the former Special Foreign Affairs Advisor to the Presidency of the Republic. His nomination was backed by Eduardo Bolsonaro, the former president's son, who chaired the Commission on Foreign Affairs and National Defence of the House of Representatives. Similar to Ernesto Araújo, Martins was instrumental to Brazil's alignment with the US during the Trump administration, and he remained in the position even after Araújo left office.

- 26 • Speech by the former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Ernesto Araújo, Washington: Ernesto Araújo, "O Brasil voltou!". FUNAG, September 11, 2019, accessed September 20, 2020, <https://funag.gov.br/index.php/pt-br/2015-02-12-19-38-42/3011>.
- 27 • Dawisson Belém Lopes, "Deus e o diabo na terra da política externa." *O Globo*, 6 de janeiro de 2019, accessed January 26, 2023, <https://oglobo.globo.com/mundo/artigo-deus-o-diabo-na-terra-da-politica-externa-23348545>.
- 28 • Diana Lott, "Em fala sobre 2a Guerra ao Conselho de Segurança da ONU, Ernesto ataca multilateralismo." *Folha de S.Paulo*, May 8, 2021, accessed March 11, 2021, <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/mundo/2020/05/em-fala-sobre-2a-guerra-ao-conselho-de-seguranca-da-onu-ernesto-ataca-multilateralismo.shtml>.
- 29 • Dawisson Belém Lopes, "Dois anos de uma política externa rudimentar" (2021).
- 30 • Ricardo Della Coletta, "Se a atuação do Brasil nos faz um pária internacional, que sejamos esse pária, diz Ernesto." *Folha de S.Paulo*, October 20, 2020, accessed April 13, 2021, <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/mundo/2020/10/se-atuacao-do-brasil-nos-faz-um-paria-internacional-que-sejamos-esse-paria-diz-chanceler.shtml>.
- 31 • Berardo Caram, "Moro e Guedes têm alta aprovação entre ricos e baixa entre pobres, diz Datafolha." *Folha de S.Paulo*, December 9, 2019, accessed April 15, 2021, <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/poder/2019/12/moro-e-guedes-tem-alta-aprovacao-entre-ricos-e-baixa-entre-pobres-diz-datafolha.shtml>.
- 32 • Vivas, "Estado é laico, mas esta ministra é terrivelmente cristã..." (2019).
- 33 • "Brasil assina declaração sobre defesa do acesso das mulheres à promoção da saúde," *Brasil*, October 23, 2020, accessed April 13, 2021, <https://www.gov.br/pt-br/noticias/assistencia-social/2020/10/brasil-assina-declaracao-sobre-defesa-do-acesso-das-mulheres-a-promocao-da-saude>.
- 34 • Jamil Chade, "Biden sai de aliança antiaborto com Brasil; Itamaraty não muda de posição." UOL, January 28, 2021, accessed April 13, 2021, <https://noticias.uol.com.br/colunas/jamil-chade/2021/01/28/biden-sai-de-alianca-antiaborto-com-brasil-itamaraty-nao-muda-de-posicao.htm>.
- 35 • At the time of revision, Brazil is now under the presidency of Lula and has withdrawn from the Geneva Consensus. See Jamil Chade, "Itamaraty assumirá papel de Trump em agenda ultraconservadora, revela email." UOL, January 29, 2021, accessed April 13, 2021, <https://noticias.uol.com.br/colunas/jamil-chade/2021/01/29/itamaraty-assumira-papel-de-trump-em-agenda-ultraconservadora-reveia-email.htm>. Aware of the possibility of this happening, Cristiane Britto, who succeeded Damares Alves, and the Secretary of the Family of the Bolsonaro government, Angela Gandra Martins, handed over the coalition's leadership to Hungary at the end of 2022, as a government action for the international day of the family. More information is available from: "Consenso de Genebra: Brasil transmite à Hungria a liderança do grupo de países que defendem a vida desde a concepção," Ministério dos Direitos Humanos e da Cidadania, December 8, 2022, accessed January 26, 2023, <https://www.gov.br/mdh/pt-br/assuntos/noticias/2022/dezembro/consenso-de-genebra-brasil-transmite-a-hungria-a-lideranca-do-grupo-de-paises-que-defendem-a-vida-desde-a-concepcao>.
- 36 • Jamil Chade, "Comislâmicos, Brasil tenta esvaziar resolução sobre direito das mulheres." UOL, July 7, 2020, accessed April 20, 2021, <https://noticias.uol.com.br/colunas/jamil-chade/2020/07/03/com-islamicos-brasil-tenta-esvaziar-resolucao-sobre-direito-das-mulheres.htm>.
- 37 • Jamil Chade, "Brasil não adere a ato de 60 democracias na ONU pela defesa das mulheres." UOL, March 8, 2021, accessed April 16, 2021, <https://noticias.uol.com.br/colunas/jamil-chade/2021/03/08/brasil-nao-adere-a-ato-de-60-democracias-na-onu-pela-defesa-das-mulheres.htm>.
- 38 • Jamil Chade, "Na ONU, Damares denuncia "afrota à fé cristã" no Carnaval." UOL, February 25, 2021,

"TERRIBLY CHRISTIAN"

accessed April 16, 2021, <https://noticias.uol.com.br/colunas/jamil-chade/2020/02/25/na-onu-damares-denuncia-afronta-a-fe-crista-no-carnaval.htm>.

39 • "Histórico," Brazilian Committee of Human Rights and Foreign Policy., 2006, accessed January 26, 2023, http://dhpoliticaexterna.org.br/?page_id=4.

40 • *Ibid.*

41 • This Committee was originally composed of some of the most important human rights CSOs in Brazil and of key government bodies: the Human Rights and Minorities Commission of the House of Representatives, the Ministry of Health and the Federal Attorney General for the Prosecution of the Rights of Citizens. Besides, the Committee regularly met with members of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and of the Human Rights Secretariat. Rodrigo de Souza Araújo, "A crise do Sistema Interamericano de Direitos Humanos: dinâmicas na posição brasileira sobre o caso," Master's Thesis, Instituto de Relações Internacionais da Universidade São Paulo, São Paulo, 2017.

42 • "O Coletivo RPU," Plataforma RPU Brasil, [n.d.], accessed April 12, 2021, <https://plataformarpu.org.br/o-coletivo-rpu>.

43 • "Carta Aberta do Coletivo RPU Brasil sobre Relatório do Estado Brasileiro para o IV Ciclo da Revisão Periódica Universal," Plataforma RPU Brasil, 2022, accessed January 26, 2023, https://plataformarpu.org.br/storage/publications_documents/fMoui8aconv1PkQ2XC9CnmX7dwzju7y3VCyAyoX.pdf.

44 • *Ibid.*, 2.

45 • "Quem somos," ANAJURE, January 20, 2020, accessed March 27, 2021, <https://anajure.org.br/quem-somos/>.

46 • In the case of the UN, accreditation has not been approved yet because Cuba and China raised some questions regarding the work ANAJURE does in countries like Portugal, the United States, and Jordan. "ANAJURE concludes participation in Annual Session of the UN Committee on NGOs," ANAJURE, January 29, 2020, accessed March 17, 2021, https://anajure.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/ANAJURE.Nota_ONU_English-2.pdf; and Felipe Frazão, "Após China, Cuba retarda adesão de associação de juristas evangélicos na ONU." O Estado de São Paulo, January 23, 2020, accessed April 13, 2021, <https://internacional.estadao.com.br/noticias/geral,apos-china-cubaretarda-adesaodeassociacao-de-juristas-evangelicos-na-onu,70003169724>.

47 • This is precisely why ANAJURE severely criticized Brazil's recent withdrawal from the Geneva Consensus promoted by the current Lula administration. See: "O Coletivo RPU," Plataforma RPU Brasil [n.d.].

48 • "[...] the country, especially the executive branch, has defended retrograde and conservative positions on human rights and aligned itself on the international level with authoritarian countries with little or no tradition" (Coletivo RPU, 2022, p. 7).

49 • Lopes, "Dois anos de uma política externa rudimentar" (2021).

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