



Genocide Watch
The Alliance Against Genocide

Country Report: Brazil November 2021

Brazil is the largest country in Latin America. It is home to two hundred million people. Fifty-six percent of Brazil's citizens identify as Black or brown. Yet in 2019, nearly [80% of those killed by police](#) and [75% of murder victims](#) were Black. The Atlas of Human Development in Brazil, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), and the João Pinheiro Foundation have [concluded that racial disparities have been widening](#) in Brazil. Black people comprise the majority of people who are living in extreme poverty. They have the highest rates of homicide. They earn 42% less than white people. Brazil suffers from 'structural racism' in many of the same ways that are evident in the USA, another post-slavery society. [The UN has urged](#) the government to enact structural reforms.

Since the election in 2018 of the openly anti-human rights President Jair Bolsonaro, discrimination against Black and Indigenous people has worsened. Police brutality has markedly increased according to Human Rights Watch. [Bolsonaro's homophobic statements and restrictions](#) against the LGBTIQ+ community have exacerbated homophobic and transphobic violence, resulting in imprisonment, murder, and discrimination against LGBTIQ+ people.

Brazil's long history of violence against the Indigenous people of its Amazon regions is becoming increasingly life-threatening. Intentional burning and wildfires have destroyed large areas of the Amazon Forest, home to over [30 million people](#). According to [Amnesty International](#), the fires are mostly caused by illegal deforestation and land seizures. Burning has usually been linked to the interests of agribusiness to clear the forest for cattle farming. At least [182 indigenous people were murdered in 2020](#), a dramatic 61% increase from already elevated numbers in 2019.

In November 2019, President Bolsonaro announced that the Amazon is being [opened for agriculture and mining](#). Indigenous peoples in Karipuna, Eu-Wau-Wau, and Arara have reported illegal seizures and destruction of their ancestral lands. The [Brazilian government severely limited the powers](#) of the governmental agencies created to protect the people of the Amazon regions. Indigenous leaders who oppose such deforestation are often murdered. Government officials in protective agencies receive frequent [death threats](#). President Bolsonaro has tried to "mirror" his government's attacks on Indigenous people by claiming that the Brazilian government itself is being attacked by the [criminal actions of onguerios \(NGOs\)](#). President Bolsonaro calls NGOs such as Greenpeace "terrorists."

In 2021, President Bolsonaro's denialist propaganda that the COVID-19 pandemic is a hoax has led Brazil to become one of the world's worst-affected countries. He repeatedly dismissed the danger caused by the pandemic and rejected taking strict quarantine measures. His COVID denialism and racism are directly parallel with the right-wing politics of his model, Donald Trump. An October 2021 congressional report on Bolsonaro's failures to respond to the pandemic recommended he be [charged with crimes against humanity](#).

Genocide Watch considers Brazil to be at Stage 5: Organization due to police oppression against Black, Indigenous, and LGBTIQ+ people, and **Stage 6: Polarization** based on race, class, and Indigenous identity.

Genocide Watch recommends:

- The U.S., O.A.S., E.U., and U.N. should urge President Bolsonaro to end police brutality against Black, Indigenous, and LGBTIQ+ people.
- The same governments should support international and local NGOs that defend human and Indigenous rights.
- The entire international community should work to prevent the Amazon region from becoming another victim of agribusiness deforestation, a cause of global warming and climate change.
- The World Bank and IMF should devise financial incentives for Brazil to protect the Amazon.
- The U.S., U.N., and O.A.S should demand that President Bolsonaro stop denying the scientific facts about the COVID-19 pandemic and implement measures to provide Brazilians with vaccinations.