

Model OAS Position Paper

Committee: Hemispheric Security

Topic: Citizen security and public safety

Country: Brazil

The public safety of citizens of the Americas has continued to be a pressing matter of emphasis. In light of the political and economic instability that arose from democratization efforts in the 80s and 90s, many countries have been consumed with the violence that follows drug trafficking. Brazil has not been excluded from this trend. Drug trafficking routes initiated in neighboring countries Columbia, Peru, and Bolivia– the three largest cocaine producers in the world– have contributed greatly to the increasingly dangerous environment for citizens in Brazil. This progressively degraded state of public safety came to a climax in 2017, when homicide rates reached an all time high with approximately 30.9 people dying per 100,000 people. In addition to these rising homicide rates, overall violence and crime has increasingly targeted persons of color and women. With this in mind, the reduction of crime and violence along with the maintenance of high overall citizen security is a matter of utmost importance to Brazil.

Following 2017, Brazil's law enforcement and policy makers have been proactive in bettering public safety. Through diplomacy, cooperation, and the cross-institutional efforts of military and civil police, Brazil has addressed public safety at the state level, managing to lower homicide rates to the lowest they have been in the past decade. This progress, although at times hindered by the division between military and civil police, has been made possible through the creation and sharing of innovative programs like the "Fico Vivo!" (Stay Alive!) program in Belo Horizonte in the state of Minas Gerais. The program managed to significantly lower homicide rates in low-income neighborhoods through the multi-sectoral cooperation of the military police,

the civil police, and various educational organizations. That being said, the most significant effect of the “Fico Vivo!” program, was its subsequent emulation in places like Recife, where provincial policy makers went on to form their own “Pacto Pela Vida” (Pact for Life) program. Brazil considers this spread of multi-sectoral collaborative programs to be an essential aspect of their efforts in bettering public safety.

Brazil has also taken action in order to improve protection of racial minorities and women in the face of both crime and police violence. The UN’s Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination recently commended Brazil for its implementation of body cameras and the use of seminars and courses on racial equality in law enforcement. This led to a significant decrease in police brutality and police killings. Additionally, Brazil’s National Public Safety and Social Defense Plan, established a set of goals, strategic actions, and indicators in order to continue to develop and monitor the state of public safety. This plan was directly aimed at reducing violence against women and improving the security of black and other vulnerable groups. Since its enactment in 2021, programs such as the Red Signal against domestic violence have been established in order to strengthen the safety of women and locate missing persons.

Although certain small successes have been achieved in terms of public safety, violence and crime continue to be matters in dire need of improvement. Brazil believes it is essential for cooperation and collaboration between member states in order to ensure the protection of its citizens.