

HUMAN RIGHTS IN ARGENTINA

First 6 Months of Javier Milei's Government

Executive Summary

I. Context: Argentina is undergoing a profound social and economic crisis

At the end of 2023, 41.7% of the population was living below the poverty line, and 5.7% were unemployed in the third quarter of that year, according to official statistics (INDEC). Inflation levels exceeded 211.4% year-over-year. The economic and social crisis that Argentina has been facing in recent years; the unjust distribution of wealth; corruption and lack of transparency and accountability; barriers to justice; and the weakening of institutions, all demanded a necessary and urgent change of direction.

However, these early months of the new government's administration have not contributed to changing this reality. On the contrary, what we observe is:

A) **A violent and intolerant confrontation** towards those with differing opinions, characteristic of authoritarian practices that use hate speech, aggression, and misinformation as a means to silence and censor those with different viewpoints (including journalists, opposition leaders, and social organizations).

B) **An austerity plan:** A devaluation that caused a surge in prices with a direct impact on the households of working or middle-class individuals, leading to a direct increase in the population living below the poverty line. Concurrently, a cutback affected not the so-called CASTA but millions of people who yearned for change, including retirees, under the argument that they are the least poor segment of the population.

C) **Criminalization** and mismanagement of social conflict, resulting in repression, the use of excessive force, and persecution.

D) A **deterioration in institutional** integrity that seeks to advance measures and policies without considering the institutional processes established in the National Constitution.

1. CONFRONTATIONAL RHETORIC: "US Vs. THEM"

Like a magic trick, distraction is a technique used to divert citizens' attention from important issues and focus on an alternative point of interest, such as confrontation, hatred, or conflict.

This phenomenon is neither new nor exclusive to Argentina. In various parts of the world, political leaders from countries ranging from the United States to India, Brazil to Hungary, and Turkey to the Philippines, have promoted narratives of demonization and division to gain popular support, basing

their strategies, among other things, on blaming entire groups for economic, social, or security problems: women, migrants, LGBTIQ+ individuals, etc.

Inequality is increasing in many parts of the world, and politicians exploit this situation by using simplified rhetoric that identifies scapegoats to blame, provoking a sense of popular discontent, often against specific groups or minorities.

What are they seeking? To create an enemy to confront, delegitimize, and destroy; to accuse them of being responsible for all ills and, with that, justify all kinds of measures and interventions. For example, refugees or migrant populations have been blamed as the direct cause of economic crises in Europe. Women's achievements in ending abuse and violence have been portrayed as a threat to men or as destroying the traditional values of a country (Russia).

The construction of the idea of "casta"¹ and "the same old faces" or "with our own" used by the President operates in the same way: it triggers a flood of expressions that include speeches and insults inciting violence, aggression, and hatred, fostering an inability to engage in dialogue. Either you are with them, or you are against them. It's all or nothing. There is no room for dissent.

a) **Confrontation**, therefore, serves as a vehicle to divert attention from real problems such as the increase in poverty and indigence, hunger, and lack of access to various medications, including oncology drugs that are essential for people's lives. The constant aggression and conflict with the opposition, with Congress - labeled as a "nest of rats" - obscures the major challenges facing Argentina today.

An example of this is the attack on opposition leaders who voted against the Bases Law², known as the "Omnibus Law." From the official account, a list of legislators was posted, which was then reproduced by the President with the caption: "Here is the list of the loyal and the traitors who used the rhetoric of change to grab a seat... come and see the enemies of a better Argentina." During an event in the province of Corrientes, Deputy **Ricardo López Murphy** was disparaged as "a real trash" who "disguises himself as a liberal."³ **Carla Carrizo, Mónica Fein, Esteban Paulón, Martín Lousteau**⁴, among others, were all deliberately attacked. Although, as public figures, the threshold for acceptable criticism is higher, the level of repeated and constant insults dilutes and impoverishes public debate.

Character Assassination

"Character assassination" is one of the methods used to attack opposition leaders, opinion leaders, and credible figures who could undermine the popularity of a government or individual.

¹ In Javier Milei's political discourse, the term "casta" (Spanish for "caste") is used to describe what he views as the entrenched political class or elite in Argentina. Milei uses the concept of "casta" to criticize and challenge the existing political establishment, which he argues is corrupt, self-serving, and detached from the needs of ordinary citizens. For Milei, the "casta" represents a group of politicians and bureaucrats who benefit from maintaining the status quo and perpetuating a system that he believes hinders economic progress and personal freedom. By targeting the "casta," Milei aims to position himself as an outsider and reformer who seeks to dismantle the old political order and introduce a more transparent, efficient, and libertarian approach to governance.

² The "Ley Bases y Puntos de partida para la libertad de los argentinos" (often referred to as the "Ley Bases") is a legislative initiative introduced in Argentina under the government of Javier Milei. This law aims to establish foundational principles and policies intended to reshape the country's economic and regulatory framework, in many cases criticized for its regressive aspect related to human rights.

³ <https://www.ambito.com/politica/el-sorpresivo-ataque-javier-milei-ricardo-lopez-murphy-lo-tildo-basura-y-traidor-n5948948>

⁴ <https://www.c5n.com/politica/javier-milei-volvio-atacar-martin-lousteau-votar-contra-el-dnu-n150777>

This includes targeting journalists and opinion makers. How is it translated into practice? By completely undermining their reputation.

The goal is to bring down a charismatic, credible figure who inspires trust. Whatever the attributes of the personality, their sum should result in an image that people trust, and thus the tactic must be to undermine that trust. In the face of credibility, there is discredit. In the face of faith, there is suspicion.

Character assassination, therefore, involves destroying the person's reputation to neutralize the esteem that generates support from their real and potential followers. Defamation, slander, or the spread of false or malicious information are vehicles for this. The objective is to discredit the individual in question and undermine their credibility or trust among others.

b) Hate Speech, Intolerance, Stigmatization, and Discrimination as Tools for Eliminating the Opponent

Hate speech, intolerance, stigmatization, and discrimination serve as essential tools to achieve the goal of eliminating the "other."

Twitter has become the preferred tool of the government for making accusations and targeting individuals. Other powers, influencers, officials, journalists, artists, media outlets, and organizations become the targets. An open campaign is waged against anyone who criticizes or points out issues.

When the person leading these attacks is none other than the President of the Nation, it is clear that it will have a chilling effect on the speech of others, jeopardizing and violating the right to freedom of expression. There is a clear intention to silence voices through threats, harassment, and exposure.

In this line of attack, **journalism** has been a recurrent target.

During the [speech](#) before the Legislative Assembly on March 1, 2024, the President once again made generic references to journalists as "bribed," "bought" with official advertising, and "ruthless" defenders of "privileges" they are unwilling to lose. Following his speech, he directed criticisms of at least two well-known journalists: **Martín Rodríguez Yebra** and **Marcelo Bonelli**. These incidents were preceded by other attacks where Milei targeted other journalism professionals: **Silvia Mercado** (she was labeled a "serial liar" due to a report about her dogs on January 8, 2024); **Luisa Corradini**, La Nación's correspondent in Paris, ten days later, after she described the reception of the President's speech at the Davos summit as "astonishing and surprising"⁵; and **María O'Donnell** on January 19 (she was accused of being a liar and attempting

⁵ https://www.eldiarioar.com/politica/repetidos-maltratos-javier-milei-mujeres-periodistas_1_10849760.html; see also his publication in X: https://x.com/JMilei/status/1748048707625386401?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etweetembed%7Ctwtterm%5E1748048707625386401%7Ctwgr%5Ecdc0a2e4b8030d4f033f9b109067fe7a79df80d7%7Ctwcon%5Es1_&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.lanacion.com.ar%2Fpolitica%2Fjavier-milei-critico-a-una-periodista-de-la-nacion-por-una-nota-sobre-davos-y-la-califico-de-nid18012024%2F

to tarnish him because she initially reported, and later corrected, that the President would travel from the local airport to the Presidential house by helicopter when he actually traveled by car⁶).

The targeting of female journalists is not new. Although they face the same risks as their male counterparts when investigating and reporting, they encounter specific risks due to their gender.

Violence Against Women Journalists

Various international human rights protection organizations have condemned specific attacks against female journalists in the course of their work, including discrimination and violence based on sex and gender, online and offline intimidation, and harassment. These organizations have urged states to address the threats faced by female journalists due to their gender⁷.

The violence and abuse that many female journalists experience on social media lead them to self-censor their posts, limit their interactions, and, in some cases, completely abandon these platforms despite their crucial role in disseminating their work. This ultimately impacts the diversity of voices in public debate and constitutes a violation of both individual and collective freedom of expression.

A survey conducted by Amnesty International Argentina shows that 70% of women who experienced online abuse or harassment made changes in how they use platforms, and 36% stopped posting or sharing content that expressed their positions on certain issues. Additionally, this phenomenon deters those who witness or observe the consequences of public criticism, further inhibiting its reproduction. This impacts not only the chilling effect on public debate but also the mental health of the affected individuals.

Furthermore, a United Nations report highlights the impact of gender-based violence on women with a public voice. The report reveals that 80% of these women limited their participation on social media; 40% self-censored on topics of relevance to them; one in three changed jobs; and one in four was either dismissed or did not have their contract renewed⁸.

In October 2023, the "Olimpia Law" was enacted, which incorporates digital violence as a form of gender-based violence, establishes the need for public policies to address this issue, and includes minimum rights and guarantees for judicial and administrative procedures in cases of gender-based violence in the digital environment⁹.

Some of these incidents have been condemned by organizations such as ADEPA (which represents 180 journalism companies across the country) after recognizing that "when the highest authorities

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https://x.com/JMilei/status/1748360012441743409?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etweetembed%7Ctwtterm%5E1748360012441743409%7Ctwgr%5E8259e9a0babf5f04bb1fcb7816fd003fa3d36ef4%7Ctwcon%5Es1_&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.eldiarioar.com%2Fpolitica%2Freperti-dos-maltratos-javier-milei-mujeres-periodistas_1_10849760.html

⁷ The Human Rights Council unanimously approved resolution 33/2 in 2016 on the safety of journalists. (See A/HRC/44/52, May 6, 2020, p. 70-). This is complemented by the joint statement from the Special Rapporteurs on freedom of expression and violence against women dated March 8, 2017.

⁸ Regional Alliance for Free Expression and Information and UN Women, "Online Gender-Based Violence Against Women with Public Voices: Impact on Freedom of Expression," 2022

⁹ Official Bulletin, Olimpia Law (Law 27.736), October 23, 2023, available at <https://www.boletinoficial.gob.ar/detalleAviso/primera/296572/20231023>

of a country are involved, the asymmetry is greater, and the risks of disrupting the environment that protects freedom of expression are heightened.¹⁰

c) On the other hand, among the shared tactics of demonization and public manipulation, "fake news" (false news) plays an omnipresent role.

False information is published as news to deceive people and is amplified with the support of media, social networks, and other platforms. These falsehoods are presented as truths, facts, or data that are completely untrue, and they have more influence than objective facts. This type of news is accompanied by stigmatizing narratives, filled with implicit judgments and emotions. Constantly in dispute, they have overtaken public debate and directly influence how issues are manipulated and perceived.

Furthermore, the technological capacity to blur the line between reality and fiction continues to grow, violating people's access to public information. Thus, instead of addressing real issues faced by people, political actors are driven by the adrenaline of headline battles, memes, and sensationalism, which is far from thinking and working for the benefit of the entire population.

d) Finally, the use of such rhetoric is aimed at instilling fear.

This is not new globally. Fear is used as a tool for subjugation and domination. Behind the form and the insults is an exemplary punishment of what could happen if one opposes the status quo. This not only positions those with differing opinions as "traitors" but also intimidates those who would like to express themselves freely. The result is silence, censorship, and the loss of an essential right such as freedom of expression.

With this infallible recipe—confrontation, hatred, fear, and false news—Milei has managed to break all limits. By doing so, he ensures an absolute platform where there are no rules nor limits.

2. POVERTY, AUSTERITY, AND SOCIAL PROTEST

The same silence that is being imposed in public debate within the media and social networks is also being translated to the streets. The shrinking of the space for participation renders the official discourse and strategies for non-management of conflict functional.

As previously highlighted, the situation in Argentina is critical: according to the latest data from INDEC, poverty reached 47.1% in December 2023. The Social Observatory of UCA reported that 27 million people are living in poverty in Argentina¹¹.

The state's response to social mobilizations demanding better living conditions and opposing regressive reforms is repression and violence. However, hunger cannot be addressed with either

¹⁰ See, <https://www.perfil.com/noticias/actualidad/organizaciones-de-periodistas-en-alerta-por-las-descalificaciones-de-javier-milei-a-trabajadoras-de-medios.phtml#:~:text=%E2%80%9Ccuando%20lo%20hacen%20las%20m%C3%A1ximas,period%C3%ADsticas%20de%20todo%20el%20pa%C3%AADs.>

¹¹ Observatorio de la Deuda Social Argentina, de la Universidad Católica Argentina. Condiciones materiales de vida de los hogares y la población (2004-2023): evidencias de una pobreza monetaria estructural. 2024. https://wadmin.uca.edu.ar/public/ckeditor/Observatorio%20Deuda%20Social/Presentaciones/2023/Observatorio_Pobreza_ingreso_5_12.pdf

conflict or harsh policies. Managing this conflict is key to ensuring that older adults can live with dignity and that children can escape poverty.

Restrictions on the Right to Protest

On December 14, the Ministry of Security of the Nation issued the "Protocol for Maintaining Public Order During Road Blockades," Resolution 943/2023, and on December 21, the supplementary Resolution 949/2023. According to international standards, the protocol poses several problems for the protection of individual rights, promoting an escalation of violence and social conflict, and endangering the lives and physical integrity of individuals.

In a [letter](#) sent by the UN Special Rapporteurs to the government, they requested that all necessary measures be taken to review the resolution and ensure it is compatible with international human rights norms and does not impose undue restrictions on the right to peaceful assembly¹².

Problems with the National Ministry of Security's Protocol

- **Protest as a Crime:** The protocol treats peaceful protest exclusively as a crime, rather than as a form of participation, dissent, and petition. It deems the exercise of the right to protest as criminal and mandates the intervention of federal police and security forces in cases of total or partial disruption of transit routes during demonstrations, without the possibility of evidence to the contrary.
- **False Dichotomy Between Right to Freedom of Movement and Right to Protest:** The protocol sets the right to protest in opposition to the right to free movement. The prohibition of protest due to potential disruption of free movement does not align with constitutional rights and human rights standards.
- **Use of Force:** The protocol establishes guidelines for police and state actions that explicitly violate the rights to free assembly and association, as well as freedom of expression. It assumes that all social protests threaten public safety and order. According to the protocol, the use of force is the primary and only state response to social demands expressed in the streets, whereas it should be an exception and last resort.
- **Use of Less Lethal Weapons:** Although the protocol states that forces will act "always with less lethal weapons," it does not define clear criteria that comply with human rights standards on the use of force, aiming to avoid severe impacts on physical integrity and life. A clear example is the police actions during protests at Congress Square on January 31 and February 1 and 2, 2024, where numerous people were injured, some with serious and permanent injuries (such as Matías Aufieri, who has lost sight in one eye due to a rubber bullet).
- **Criminalization, Persecution, and Stigmatization of Protesters:** The protocol mandates that security and police forces collect information and images of protesters and the organizations they belong to. This aspect has been challenged in court, and the Ministry has been ordered to align "the actions of federal police and security forces with the limits imposed by the constitutional system."

¹² UN, <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=28732>

- **Responsibility for Operational Costs:** Participating social organizations may be subject to lawsuits for operational costs incurred to end road or street blockades and may be held liable for damage to public property and individuals.

In the context of a growing social and economic crisis, dialogue should be promoted to find negotiated solutions rather than implementing criminalization and punitive measures. The peaceful exercise of the right to social protest is essential for the diversity of voices and the very existence of democracy.

The anti-protest protocol has already begun to be implemented at various social demonstrations that took place in Buenos Aires near the National Congress.

Matías Aufieri, a 42-year-old lawyer, participated in the protest on February 1 against the approval of the Omnibus Law. Due to excessive police repression, he lost sight in his left eye from the impact of a rubber bullet. Matías reports that the protesters were exercising their right peacefully, with most on the sidewalk of the *Plaza de los Dos Congresos*, and the police began shooting and launching tear gas to force them to leave. Numerous people were injured.

Ivanna Bunge, 52 year-old, participated in the protests on January 31. She was detained by the police without being informed of the reason, along with three other women, while they were peacefully protesting by singing the national anthem. They were only released the next day, and to this day, they remain charged with resisting authority.

Numerous journalists were injured during the repression on January 31, February 1, and 2. The vast majority of the journalists and cameramen injured by rubber bullets and tear gas had their work credentials visible; they were wearing ID and/or had cameras hanging around their necks. Press worker unions have filed criminal complaints for the attacks suffered by journalists and cameramen. That same day, at least 285 people sustained various injuries according to reports from the health post set up in the Plaza del Congreso (composed of doctors and nurses)¹³.

Additionally, unions along with other organizations have reported the Argentine State's failure to comply with freedom of expression standards to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) and the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression.

Finally, on June 12, during the sessions for the Bases Law, 33 people were detained in a massive operation. (more information below)

Operation of June 12, 2024 – Brutal Repression and Criminalization

On June 12, while the Argentine Senate was debating the second version of the “Bases and Starting Points for the Freedom of Argentines” Law (Bases Law), social, political, and trade union organizations, along with spontaneous public participation, gathered around the National Congress to express their rejection of the project, exercising their right to protest.

¹³ Provincial Commission for Memory. Report available at: <https://www.comisionporlamemoria.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/16/2024/02/Nota-4248 -Informe-a-la-Camara-de-Diputados-sobre-la-represion-en-el-Congreso.pdf>

The state's response to this broad demonstration was also conducted under the Protocol's framework, with a deployment of police and federal security forces (Federal Police, Naval Prefecture, and National Gendarmerie) in the *Plaza del Congreso* and the surrounding streets and avenues.

The operation was marked by the illegal use of less-lethal weapons, including manual chemical irritants/tear gas, batons, rubber bullets, and water cannons, which caused injuries to the protesters. Additionally, there was a presence of motorized and infantry units, and barriers around the Congress premises. It is worth noting that on June 12, there were reports of plainclothes police officers and Naval Prefecture officers carrying firearms.

Images from June 12 show that in many cases, the use of tear gas was not in response to disturbances or situations requiring police intervention, but rather to force the protesters to leave the area. Numerous people were injured that day, including elderly individuals and press workers, with some suffering injuries from rubber bullets to the face.

In this context, there were arbitrary detentions and attacks on press workers aimed at disrupting the social protest. This included the arbitrary detention of Camila Belén Juárez Oliva, Juan Ignacio Spinetto, Santiago Adano, and 30 others, who were charged with serious offenses (such as public intimidation (Art. 211 CP), incitement to collective violence (Art. 212 CP), crimes against public authorities and constitutional order (Art. 226 CP), assault and resistance to authority (Art. 237 and 239 CP), and disruption of legislative sessions (Art. 241 CP)) after the Minister of Security and the President publicly claimed that the protest was a form of coup d'état and that the detainees were terrorists, with the intervening prosecutor requesting charges with terrorism aggravation.

Many of these criminal charges ("incitement to rebellion," "sabotage," "apology of crime," "attack or resistance to public authority," "obstruction of traffic") have been criticized by international human rights organizations as vague or ambiguous, or used abusively to target protesters, activists, social leaders, and people in general for actively participating in social protests¹⁴.

On June 14, the intervening court ordered the release of 17 people, and on June 19, the release and dismissal of charges for 28 people were granted.

Of particular concern are the official statements from the Presidential Office that labeled the protesters as "terrorists" and described the peaceful public mobilization as an attempt at a "coup d'état." In its [press release](#) dated July 4, 2024, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights expressed "special concern over the stigmatizing and criminalizing statements made by the Government against protesters through a press release from the President's Office, where people were broadly labeled as 'terrorists'. Furthermore, the Government described the events as a 'modern coup d'état' and thus justified the response of the security forces 'in defense of democracy.'"

¹⁴ Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. Report "Social Protest and Human Rights," 2019, para. 210. Available at: <https://www.oas.org/es/cidh/expresion/publicaciones/ProtestayDerechosHumanos.pdf>

3. ELDERLY: A DELAYED PRIORITY

As of March 2024, there are 5.924.327 people in Argentina receiving retirement benefits. Regarding retirement amounts, in March, the minimum benefit was set at ARS 134,445.30 (USD 134) and in April at ARS 171,217 (USD 171), amounts that are significantly below the income required to avoid poverty according to INDEC (National Institute of Statistics and Census), which is ARS 250,286 (USD 250) and ARS 268,012 (USD 268) respectively¹⁵.

Since January 2024, an unprecedented situation has occurred: for the first time since INDEC implemented a new measurement methodology in 2016, the purchasing power of the minimum retirement benefit failed to cover the Total Basic Basket (TBA) per equivalent adult. In other words, according to official statistics, **minimum pensions constitute poverty-level income**.

Nevertheless, the reduction in pensions has been one of the main drivers of the fiscal adjustment carried out by the Milei government since its assumption. According to the Argentine Institute of Fiscal Analysis (IARAF), the total reduction in primary spending by the national public administration during the first two months of 2024 (ARS 3.869 trillion, in February pesos) was explained by a 43% reduction (ARS 1.682 trillion) in spending on pensions and retirements¹⁶, which was down 33% compared to the first two months of 2023¹⁷. This demonstrates that, far from targeting the "caste," a significant part of the ongoing adjustment relies on the erosion of elderly people's income.

It is concerning that government measures do not provide an urgent solution to ensure dignified living conditions for retirees. Instead of working to alleviate this situation and planning a policy to ensure older adults have a dignified life, we have seen arguments based on "there is no money" or the claim that retirees are "...the age group with the least poverty in Argentina." In reality, retirees are neither a "sector" nor an "age group"; they are individuals who have consistently lost not only purchasing power but also tranquility and dignity over the past decades. Adjusting the already adjusted reflects no fiscal plan that prioritizes the human rights imperative to work on a proposal that allows them to recover lost purchasing power and address future economic variables.

Finally, on June 4, 2024, the Chamber of Deputies approved a bill to reform pensions that guarantees a monthly update of benefits based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI). Additionally, the proposed legislation includes: i) an extra compensation of 8.1%, since the 12.5% granted in March by the Government does not cover the 20.6% inflation rate of January, and ii) a guarantee that the minimum pension will not be less than the basic basket. The bill has been approved by Senate but Milei's administration has stated that it would veto it.

However, President Javier Milei has anticipated that if the bill is approved, he will veto the new pension update formula that would replace the mechanism imposed by the government by decree in March of this year.

¹⁵ <https://www.ambito.com/informacion-general/censo-2022-cuantos-argentinos-son-jubilados-alquilan-o-usan-la-salud-publica-n5881168>

¹⁶ See, IARAF, Economic Report, available at <https://iaraf.org/index.php/informes-economicos/area-fiscal/558-informe-economico-2024-03-05>.

¹⁷ Analysis of the Budget Execution of the National Administration February 2024 - Congressional Budget Office (opc.gov.ar), available at: <https://www.opc.gov.ar/ejecucion-presupuestaria/analisis-de-la-ejecucion-presupuestaria-de-la-administracion-nacional-febrero-2024/>

It is urgent to discuss and approve a pension system that provides social security to retirees. This system should, at a minimum:

- Ensure that any measures taken significantly improve the living conditions of older adults by guaranteeing quality resources and services.
- Progressively increase pension amounts to the maximum of available resources, particularly addressing the situation of those receiving the minimum pension. The focus should shift from preventing retirees from "losing" against inflation—since they have already lost too much in previous years, resulting in minimum pensions falling below the basic basket—to effectively improving their purchasing power, which would require a substantial increase in their income levels according to their needs. Current proposed formulas do not specify how retirees will gradually increase their purchasing power beyond just "breaking even" with pensions.
- Adopt urgent measures to restore the economic capacity of pension income for older adults, ensuring sufficient and dignified resources.

Once again, retirees are the ones who suffer the most. The adjustment always targets them. No administration has prioritized the protection of retirees.

In January, Amnesty International launched a **global petition** urging legislators to ensure that any proposed reform substantially improves the living conditions of retirees by guaranteeing quality resources and services, so that the adjustment does not fall on them.

Additionally, Amnesty International issued a global [Urgent Action](#) to prevent the Senate from approving the elimination of moratoriums. This reform was ultimately removed from the enacted "Ley Bases" (Foundations Law).

4. VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Abortion

In December 2020, Argentina's Congress passed Law 27.610, which legalized voluntary and legal abortion. This legislation followed one of the country's most robust and democratic debates, involving over 700 experts who voiced both support and opposition. It was a historic milestone in the fight for the human rights of women and people who can become pregnant, following a rigorous democratic process.

Three years after the enactment of the abortion law, there is ample evidence of its positive impact on the health of women, girls, and adolescents. From 2021 to October 2023, 245,015 people accessed a safe abortion within the public health system¹⁸. Recent records show a 56% decrease

¹⁸ National Directorate of Sexual and Reproductive Health, Ministry of Health of the Nation, Implementation of IVE-ILE, Law 27.610, years 2021, 2022, and updated report for 2023.

in abortion-related deaths between 2020 and 2021¹⁹. Early access to information, supplies, and quality sexual and reproductive health services has contributed to 90% of abortions occurring during the first trimester of pregnancy²⁰.

Despite these advances, the current administration has introduced initiatives and made statements promoting a regressive scenario. President Javier Milei has referred to "the murderous abortion agenda" at the Davos Economic Forum and described abortion as a crime and "aggravated murder by relationship" in a speech to high school students²¹. These statements generate misinformation and fear, suggesting that exercising one's right to abortion is criminalized by the President.

In legislative terms, the ruling party, La Libertad Avanza, has proposed repealing Law 27.610 and implementing a total abortion ban, effectively reversing progress to before 1921. Furthermore, the 2024 presidential decree declared "The Year of Life, Freedom, and Property."

Amnesty International notes with high concern that, in the absence of state support for sexual and reproductive health policies, barriers to accessing abortion services has increased, including a lack of information on how and where to obtain an abortion and shortages of necessary supplies, technical, and human resources.

Consequences of Unintended Pregnancy in Adolescence

Unintended pregnancy during adolescence has severe negative impacts on young people's life trajectories, including high school dropout rates. Only 4 out of 10 women who experienced teenage pregnancy completed high school. They also face greater challenges entering the job market and accessing quality employment, earning one-third less in wages²².

Since 2017, Argentina has implemented the National Plan for Unintended Adolescent Pregnancy (Plan ENIA), which has contributed to integrated and coordinated responses. This has significantly reduced the adolescent fertility rate by 49% over four years²³, with approximately 24,000 fewer teenage pregnancies²⁴.

Additionally, unintended pregnancies among adolescents (15 to 19) have decreased by 30% and among children (10 to 15) by 14%, with many resulting from sexual abuse and rape²⁵.

¹⁹ Directorate of Statistics and Health Information, Ministry of Health of the Nation, Vital Statistics. Basic Information Argentina 2021. Available at: <https://bancos.salud.gob.ar/sites/default/files/2023-03/serie-5-nro-65-anuario-vitales-2021.pdf>

²⁰ GCABA. Ministry of Health. Sexual and Reproductive Health in the City of Buenos Aires. Situation and Response. Update 2022. Coordination Health Sexual, HIV, and STIs, 2023. Available at: https://buenosaires.gob.ar/sites/default/files/2023-09/Situaci%C3%B3n%20y%20respuesta%20-%20Actualizaci%C3%B3n%202022_0.pdf. GPBA. Ministry of Health. Epidemiological Report. Abortion in the Province of Buenos Aires. 2022. Available at: <https://www.ms.gba.gov.ar/sitios/aborto/files/2023/10/1-final-INFORME-EPIDEMIOLOGICO-ACCESO-AL-ABORTO-PBA-2022.pdf>

²¹ See, <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20240306-argentina-s-milei-tells-school-kids-abortion-is-murder>

²² UNFPA, Socioeconomic Consequences of Adolescent Pregnancy in Argentina, 2020. Available at: <https://argentina.unfpa.org/es/Consecuencias-socioeconomicas-del-embarazo-en-la-adolescencia-en-Argentina>

²³ UNFPA, Unintended Pregnancy in Adolescence in Argentina, 2024. Prepared by Federico Tobar, Senior Advisor on Health Systems Strengthening and Financing. UNFPA, New York.

²⁴ In 2018, approximately 69,803 adolescents aged 15 to 19 years and 1,938 girls under 15 years had a child. In 2021, these figures were 46,236 adolescents aged 15 to 19 years and 1,394 girls under 15 years.

²⁵ UNFPA, Unintended Pregnancy in Adolescence in Argentina, 2024. Prepared by Federico Tobar, Senior Advisor on Health Systems Strengthening and Financing. UNFPA, New York.

Despite these achievements, the national government has suspended funding for offices in the provinces where ENIA operated, undermining the Ministry of Health's role in federal implementation. The National Ministry of Health terminated the contracts of 619 specialists and cut the provision of supplies²⁶.

Early motherhood contributes to perpetuating cycles of intergenerational poverty, affects national productivity, and has severe health impacts. It is unacceptable for girls and adolescents to disproportionately suffer from the economic adjustment effects. The national government must sustain and strengthen the ENIA prevention plan rather than dismantling it.

Femicide: Women Are Still Being Killed

Femicide is the most severe form of violence against women. In 2023, a woman was murdered every 28 hours in Argentina for gender-based reasons, according to civil society reports²⁷. Additionally, 49 femicides were recorded in different provinces during the first two months of this year²⁸.

In over half of the cases, the perpetrator is someone known to the victim, typically a current or former partner²⁹. These statistics highlight the persistent problem of violence against women and people of other gender diversities, requiring an urgent, effective, and comprehensive response from authorities and society as a whole.

Public policies for the prevention, sanction, and eradication of gender-based violence must be a government priority. Amnesty International is concerned about the denial of gender violence and gender inequality by the national executive, through toxic, abusive, and violent narratives. Additionally, due to the economic crisis, the actual budget for gender policies has been reduced by 33% compared to 2023, which is a more significant cut than the overall national budget, which was decreased by 24%. This indicates a disproportionate reduction in funding for gender policies³⁰.

Moreover, programs such as the 144 Helpline and the *Acompañar* program, which provide support, advice, and economic assistance to women and LGBTIQ+ people facing violence, have been heavily cut by 12% and 69%, respectively³¹. Maintaining access to justice is crucial through public policies like the *Acercar Derechos* (PAD) program or the State Legal Aid Office, which ensure free legal representation for violence victims. The *Micaela Law*, which mandates gender training for state workers, is essential for ensuring proper interministerial and interjurisdictional handling of gender violence situations. Despite its importance, the national executive has proposed a bill to limit its scope and effectiveness.

It is the responsibility of the national executive to strengthen and sustain public policies for the prevention, care, and protection of women and LGBTIQ+ individuals. Breaking the cycles of violence requires ensuring women's economic autonomy, creating job opportunities, and promoting fair

²⁶ See, Official public announcement, available at <https://www.argentina.gob.ar/noticias/salud-redisen-el-plan-enia>

²⁷ Observatory "Now that you see us". Available at: <https://ahoraquesinosven.com.ar/reports/femicidios-2023>

²⁸ Observatory "Now that you see us". Available at: <https://ahoraquesinosven.com.ar/reports/49-femicidios-en-los-dos-primeros-meses-del-2024>

²⁹ National Registry of Femicides of the Argentine Justice System, 2022 Edition. Office of the Woman, Supreme Court of Justice of the Nation.

³⁰ The Adjustment That Widens the Gap: What Happens with Gender Policies? ACIJ, ELA, Amnesty International, CELS, Economía Feminista, Fundar, and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Argentina. Available at: <https://acij.org.ar/un-ajuste-que-agrande-la-brecha/>

³¹ Ibidem

working conditions. Additionally, access to justice is crucial for women and girls to obtain protection measures and seek redress for violated rights.

Diversity

LGBTI+ individuals have achieved significant progress in recognizing their rights due to the collective struggle of the diversity movement in Argentina. However, despite advanced laws, systemic discrimination and exclusion from access to housing, education, health, and employment profoundly impact their living conditions.

Recently, discriminatory discourses that pathologize and dehumanize LGBTIQ+ individuals have intensified, inciting violence and contributing to hate crimes. When such narratives come from a country's highest authorities, the power imbalance increases, amplifying the dangerous and harmful effects of hate speech.

According to the National Observatory of Hate Crimes Against LGBTI+ Individuals, there were 133 hate crimes based on sexual orientation, gender identity, and/or expression in Argentina during 2023.

Lesbicidio and Hate Speech

On the early morning of May 6, a man attacked two lesbian couples at their boarding house, throwing a Molotov cocktail into their room while they were asleep.

Three of the women—**Pamela Cobas, Roxana Figueroa, and Andrea Amarante**—died from the attack, with significant portions of their bodies burned in the fire. Sofía Castro Riglos, the sole survivor, was discharged in the first week of June.

This attack was not an isolated incident and sends a collective message that instills fear among LGBTI+ individuals.

The accused, Justo Fernando Barrientos, has been charged with double aggravated homicide “for treachery” and “for creating a common danger by starting a fire.” However, in the provisional qualification of the case, the National Criminal and Correctional Court No. 14, presided over by Edmundo Rabbione, did not include the aggravating factors of “hate towards sexual orientation, gender identity, or expression” or the mediation of gender violence, as provided by our Penal Code.

5. CONCLUSIONS

In a global and local context marked by deepening divisive and dehumanizing rhetoric, toxic and hostile narratives, and the spread of confrontation, hatred, fear, and fake news, along with the implementation of austerity plans and institutional decay, urgent responses are needed. Now more than ever, people must be at the center of the government's priorities.

We welcome efforts to combat corruption and to expose any illicit actions or practices. We applaud plans aimed at lifting people out of years of crisis and distrust.

However, if there is a genuine desire for Argentina to adopt a course that can ensure economic security, freedom, and rights for its people, it is the responsibility of this government to achieve this effectively and within the bounds of the rule of law.

In this pursuit and with these goals, this government will find in Amnesty International a tireless ally and collaborator. Amnesty International works every day, and will continue to do so, to achieve these objectives, here in Argentina and around the world.