How we compile our report

Reporters without Borders (RSF) carried out, throughout 2020 and in the first half of 2021, a systematic monitoring of the relationship between the Brazilian government and the media. In 2020, every three months, the organization published a report that focused on the facts that marked the period and highlighted emblematic cases illustrating aspects of the right to press freedom in the country. In 2021, monitoring became semiannual, with the same aim of covering the emblematic cases of violence against journalists.

This includes monitoring what senior government officials say in order to produce quantitative data on the government’s attitude to the press. We monitor not only President Jair Bolsonaro’s public speeches but also his Twitter and Facebook accounts because we regard them as an important channel of communication with society and the press.

His live broadcasts on social media every Thursday and his public appearances, press conferences and interviews, which are widely covered by the media and by the presidential press office, are also analysed.

As a result of the evolution in data processing, we decided we should also monitor and analyse the social media accounts of other leading figures associated with the federal government, who make a significant contribution to the construction of what we call the “Bolsonaro system” of attacks on the press.

Thus, the Twitter accounts of Vice President Hamilton Mourão, of the 3 sons of the president who occupy elective positions (Eduardo, Flavio and Carlos Bolsonaro), and of some ministers of Bolsonaro who use social media as a means of communication were monitored.

We also monitored violations of the Brazilian government’s requirement to prevent crimes against people exercising their right to freedom of thought and expression. In particular, we monitor violations of its obligation to:

- Strongly condemn attacks on journalists and other communicators and encourage authorities to act diligently and speedily in investigating the facts and punishing those responsible.
- Not make public statements that expose journalists and other communicators to the risk of violence or increase their vulnerability.
- Constantly, explicitly and publicly acknowledge the legitimacy and value of journalism and communication, even when the information disclosed may be critical of or inconvenient for government interests.