



Federative Republic of Brazil  
**Chamber of Deputies**  
PSOL Leadership

Brasília, September 22, 2021

Letter n. 67/2021

Re: Clarifications about the remarks by president Jair Bolsonaro at the General Debate of the 76th Session of the UN General Assembly

To:

**All Member States**

United Nations

**Mr. António Guterres**

General Secretary of the United Nations

**Ms. Michelle Bachelet Jeria,**

United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Dear Sir/Madam,

Yesterday, president Jair Bolsonaro systematically lied to the entire international community at the General Debate of the 76th Session of the United Nations' General Assembly. The Brazilian president tried, desperately, to hide his own responsibility over the ongoing environmental devastation, the deep economic crisis, and the catastrophic management of the Covid-19 pandemic in Brazil.

More than a year and half after the new coronavirus was declared a global emergency by the World Health Organization, Bolsonaro even used the UN to advocate for false early treatment for Covid-19. Besides shaming the esteemed Brazilian diplomatic tradition and disrespecting the UN itself, Bolsonaro insulted millions of families who have lost their loved ones during this global pandemic.

As elected parliamentarians we feel it is our duty to counter Bolsonaro's lies, distortions and attacks. This is why we share the following report, urging the General Assembly to disregard all the false information provided by the Brazilian president. We also call on all Member States to publicly condemn his actions and words against democracy, science, the environment, human rights, and the spirit of international cooperation itself.

### **1. Lies and distortions about Covid-19 and measures against the pandemic**

While the whole world is trying to overcome the pandemic with social distancing measures and vaccination, **Bolsonaro used the UN to openly defend the false early treatment.** Despite all medical and scientific evidence against it, the Brazilian president has openly



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advocated for the use of Hydroxychloroquine and yesterday he said he was himself “one of those who underwent early treatment”.

Having declared he has not yet been vaccinated and usually appearing without wearing a mask, the Brazilian president **lied when he said he has always “defended fighting the virus and unemployment simultaneously”**. Bolsonaro did neither. He has repeatedly acted against the prevention and control of the novel coronavirus, actively denied the purchase of vaccines. All this, together with his continuous effort to spread dangerous fake news about the pandemic, has led the country to nearly 600 thousand deaths by Covid-19.

Yet, Bolsonaro continues to target governors and mayors who have implemented lockdown measures in the country. Yesterday at his speech he also **lied about isolation and lockdown measures having “left a legacy of inflation”**, ignoring that it has been his economic policy that led Brazil to the highest inflation monthly rate in 25 years, and one of the highest annual rates in the entire world.

The president also **lied about having spent about USD 40 billion in programs for jobs and income assistance** in the pandemic context: not even the total amount of the Economy Ministry's expenses related to Covid-19 accounts to that number. **Inflating the data on emergency aid payments**, Bolsonaro presented the average amount paid over the entire year of 2020. It is also important to highlight that even these values were originally lower, and it was the opposition, not Bolsonaro, who pressured for the current numbers.

## **2. Lies and distortions about environmental protection**

Bolsonaro praised Brazilian environmental legislation in his speech yesterday ignoring that under his government this protection system has been dismantled and that **he is pushing for new legislation that will suspend environmental licensing and legalize land grabbing**.

Differently from what he said, **human and financial resources for environmental bodies were not doubled**, but the opposite: more than BRL 240 million were cut from the Ministry of the Environment and the two major preservation institutes (ICMBio and IBAMA) had their budgets and scope of action restrained. Under Bolsonaro, fines for environmental illegalities fell to the lowest level in two decades, field operations dwindled and the billionaire Amazon Fund is paralyzed since 2019.

**Deforestation of the Amazon is not being reduced**, as Bolsonaro tried to suggest at the UN: in the first two years of his government, it grew 56%, and fires all around the country have reached unprecedented levels. He also **inflated the data on the untouched native vegetation** in the country and in the Amazon specifically, and gave **imprecise numbers about the country's area occupied by agribusiness activities** - which when considering livestock accounts to 27% of Brazil's area, not only 8% as he said.



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The president also presented **false information about Brazil's renewable energy matrix**: it accounts for 48,4% and not 83% as he mentioned. This number might deteriorate, considering a new government ordinance in favor of thermoelectric plants, which can increase GEE emissions in this sector by 30%. It is also important to highlight that in December 2020, Bolsonaro presented to the UN an updated NDC which, in practice, allows the country to increase its GEE emissions in comparison to what it had committed in 2015.

Different from Bolsonaro, **it is not true that simply promoting “the resurgence of the rail modal” equals positive changes for the environment**. He is hiding the fact that most of this infrastructure serves agribusiness and mining interests, which includes further deforestation. Ferrogrão, for instance, the main railroad project in the country, will tear the Amazon Forest in two, drastically affecting local communities and their forms of life, especially indigenous and traditional black communities (“quilombolas”), and leading to unfathomable environmental impacts.

### **3. Other lies and attacks**

It is important to notice that Bolsonaro began his speech by **attacking the press**, saying he was going to present Brazil “differently from what is published in newspapers or seen on television”. This is not an isolated event: according to Reporters Sans Frontières, only in the first semester of 2021, Bolsonaro attacked the press 87 times.

The Brazilian president continued his speech **lying about the absence of any concrete case of corruption in Brazil** in the last 2 years and 8 months. As widely known, there are several ongoing corruption investigations involving his allies and family members, including those related to the purchase of Covid-19 vaccines. Bolsonaro's former Environment Minister, Ricardo Salles, is also under investigation for his involvement in a wood-smuggling scheme.

Bolsonaro also used the UN General Assembly to **attack LGBTQI+ rights**, stating that “We have the traditional family as the foundation of civilization”. This affirmation not only excludes LGBTQI+ and single mother families from his model of “civilization”, but it also fuels the violence that makes Brazil one of the most dangerous countries for LGBTQI+ people, where more trans people are killed in the whole world.

Reviving the rhetoric of the dictatorship times, Bolsonaro lied about Brazil being at the verge of socialism before his election. He also insisted on **lying about the Brazilian development bank being used to finance projects in “comunist countries with no guarantees” and at the expense of taxpayers**. The truth is that the National Bank for Economic and Social Development (BNDES) carried out 148 operations in 15 countries, always with guarantees and never covering defaults with public taxes.

Bolsonaro also **lied about granting “visas to Afghan Christians, women, children and judges”**. Inter-Ministerial Ordinance number 24 from September 3 provides for the granting



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of temporary visas and residence permits for the purposes of humanitarian reception for Afghan nationals, stateless persons and persons affected by the situation of serious or imminent institutional instability, serious violation of human rights or international humanitarian law in Afghanistan - there is no criteria of religion or other.

Finally, it is important to note that the Brazilian president finished his speech **lying about demonstrations on September 7 in Brazil**. Differently from what Bolsonaro said, it was not millions but only a few thousands that participated in the events - far from being the “biggest demonstration in our history”, as he claimed. It is also important to highlight that “democracy” was not in the agenda of such demonstrations, as he argued, but the opposite: protestors were calling for a coup and the closing of the Brazilian Supreme Court. This is the spirit Bolsonaro chose to bring to his speech.

Sincerely yours,

Talíria Petrone  
PSOL Leader

Áurea Carolina  
PSOL deputy - Minas Gerais

David Miranda  
PSOL deputy - Rio de Janeiro

Fernanda Melchionna  
PSOL deputy - Rio Grande do Sul

Glauber Braga  
PSOL deputy - Rio de Janeiro

Ivan Valente  
PSOL deputy - São Paulo

Luiza Erundina  
PSOL deputy - São Paulo

Sâmia Bomfim  
PSOL deputy - São Paulo

Vivi Reis  
PSOL deputy - Pará