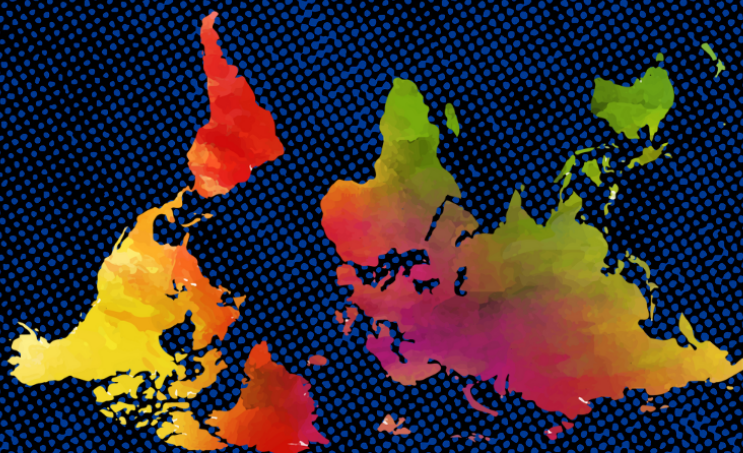




Sexual Politics from July to November 2023

December 2023



First Words

This edition of the SPW newsletter covers the main events in sexual politics since July, roughly the second half of 2023. As we have pointed out in previous editions, especially since the pandemic, the sexual politics of the 21st century is indelibly intertwined with the de-democratizing and authoritarian drift of the times. This drastic turn, which has been underway since the mid-2010s, has deleterious effects on human rights in a broad sense and, more particularly, on rights related to gender and sexuality.

In the second half of 2023, as will be discussed in the following pages, this outlook has worsened in several respects. However, despite the adverse climate, in this issue we also report some good news and talk about resisting setbacks.

Happy reading!

The SPW Team (Sonia Corrêa, Nana Soares, Fábio Grotz, and Tatiane Amaral)

SPW NEWS

Events

On October 30, Sonia Corrêa (SPW) took part in the [panel discussion](#) "How do we address the reactionary wave against sexual and reproductive rights?", organized by the Intergroup for Sexual and Reproductive Rights of the Catalanian Parliament.

In September, on the occasion of the September 28 celebrations, the [debate "The reality of abortion in Latin America, the Caribbean and the US"](#) brought together Sonia Corrêa (SPW), Lilian Abracinskas (MYSU, Uruguay), Barbara Sutton (Albany-Suny University), and Alondra Hernández (Aborto Libre, Puerto Rico).

Relevant contents

New in this issue:

- From the seminar [“Mapping and Resisting the Gender Ghost in Latin America: Geographies of Anti-Gender Movements”](#), held in Rio de Janeiro, in April 2023, we present the video of the dialogue [Convergences and fractures at play in the intersection between anti-gender politics, racism, and coloniality](#) and the article [Genealogies, meanings and Effects of anti-gender feminism in Latin America](#), authored by Diana Granados.
- The article ["The Hydra of Doctor Frankenstein, Contours, meanings and effects of anti-gender politics"](#) authored by Sonia Corrêa, David Paternotte and Claire House, and published in the *Routledge Handbook of Sexuality, Gender, Health and Rights*, edited by Peter Aggleton, Rob Cover, Carmen H. Logie, Christy E. Newman, and Richard Parker.
- Free access to the digital version of the [book *La Reacción Patriarcal*](#) (in Spanish), edited by Marta Cabezas and Cristina Vega. We thank the editors and Bellaterra (Barcelona) for granting the rights to re-publishing it.

War as an Inescapable Fact of Sexual Politics

At this point in the 21st century, the trends towards de-democratization and new forms of autocracy that we have been analyzing since the pandemic are linked to the proliferation of wars and other armed conflicts. The [UN estimates](#) that two billion people live in war zones. This represents a quarter of the world's population, even without considering situations of permanent structural violence that are related to land conflicts and the drug war that has been going on for a long time in Latin America.

In November 2023, the war in Ukraine could already be seen as a chronic conflict, at the same time as the Hamas attack – which killed more than a thousand Israeli civilians and involved the capture of 200 hostages – was unfolding into a carnage perpetrated by the state of Israel against the Palestinian civilian population, causing the displacement of 1.5 million inhabitants in Gaza and the death of more than [18.000 people](#), 60% of whom are women and children (figures from mid- December). According to the UN, 11 people are killed every hour in the conflict and on December, 15th, the IDF "accidentally" killed 3 [hostages who were holding SOS white flags](#).

The global community's inability to stop this genocidal cycle has been catastrophic. On November 15, the UN Security Council managed, after [repeated deadlocks](#), to pass a [resolution](#) imposing a humanitarian pause to hostilities, but Israel refused to comply. The first successful negotiations for the release of hostages took place only two weeks later. According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, the global scenario of wars and conflicts – which has been fueled by arms interests, autocratism, racism, xenophobia, and hate speech – is likely to worsen as a result of this diplomatic breakdown.

On the other hand, and very encouragingly, the reaction to the carnage has been admirable. In the US, the protests led by [Jewish Voices for Peace](#) against the killing and calling for a ceasefire have gained unprecedented scale and have even been compared to protests against the Vietnam War. For in-depth analyses of the war and its historical and current political implications, particularly for the US, we bring you the voices of three remarkable American feminists: the articles [The Compass of Mourning](#) by Judith Butler and [My Body to Yours- Gaza to the World](#) by Zillah Eisenstein and Rosalind Petchesky [interviewed by Françoise Girard](#). It should be said that in Israel, too, [protests](#) against Netanyahu's war policy have been multiplying. As this edition was being closed these contestations amplified in reaction to the killing of three hostages, as [reported on video](#) by DW.

These conditions would be unavoidable in any examination of sexual politics, but in the case of the war in Gaza, there are more flagrant and repugnant incidents. As this issue was being finalized, a photo circulated on Brazilian social networks of a young Israeli soldier standing in front of a tank parked in the devastated territory of Gaza waving a rainbow flag that read "In the name of Love". This image was posted without criticism or qualification by LGBTTTQIA+ portals, as well as by the AIDS News Agency. In response, an [online campaign](#) was created to repudiate this deplorable pinkwashing strategy, whose motto, inspired by Jewish Voices for Peace, is also that atrocities cannot be perpetrated "In Our Name!".

Persistent De-Democratization and Ultra-Rightization

We closed this issue the day after Javier Milei was elected Argentina's new president. Although this electoral disaster had been predicted since the primary elections in August, it came as a surprise in some quarters. Faced with a scenario that is tragic and very difficult to predict, we offer a selection of articles on [pre-](#) and [post-](#)election dynamics, as well as a [shorter compilation](#) of news and analyses in English.

However, it is worth noting that before Argentina, Ecuador and Guatemala had turbulent elections. In the first case, the election was moved forward when President Lasso [activated the "cross-death"](#) and the country was the scene of brutal political violence. In the first round, candidate Fernando Villavicencio was [murdered](#) after a campaign event. Two months later, the Colombian sicarios accused of the crime [were also executed](#) in the prisons where they were being held.

This violence, unprecedented in the country, is linked to Ecuador's gradual conversion into a transshipment platform for cocaine produced in Peru and Colombia, which is now largely controlled by Mexican cartels. The campaign took place in tense conditions, with ultra-liberal businessman Daniel Noboa defeating Luiza Gonzáles, the Correísmo candidate. As [Pablo Ospina explains](#) (in Spanish) his term of less than two years is set to be a tumultuous one.

Also in August, in Guatemala, the Giammattei government – which had become a regional bastion of ultra-conservatism – [lost the election](#). Bernardo Arévalo, positioned on the center-left, was elected president, contrary to what opinion polls had predicted. Since then, the judiciary and Congress, controlled by the defeated elites -- nicknamed as the Pact of the Corrupt -- have tried to [obstruct](#) his inauguration. The citizenry, however, has reacted vigorously, and, as [Manuela Picq's article](#) reports, the indigenous population that has taken over the country's roads and the capital is at the heart of this

resistance.

In Africa, the autocratic upsurge has continued. Since July, two new coups have taken place, in Niger and Gabon. In the first case, the uprising presents signs of Russian influence. In Gabon, it's worth noting that the coup dethroned the son of long-time dictator Omar Bongo, who had been elected president in 2016 (check a [compilation](#)). These recent events bring to eight the [number of military coups](#) in sub-Saharan Africa since 2020.

Similarly, in Europe, the ultra-right's cycle of political gains has not run out of steam. The Swiss People's Party, 30 years ago considered a fringe extremist group, [won](#) the October parliamentary elections by a wide margin. In November in the Netherlands, [Geert Wilders'](#) Freedom Party, whose electoral strength had already increased in 2017, won [35 of the 150 seats](#) in parliament. Although the formation of a coalition government is not assured, this result has been [interpreted](#) as a powerful sign of the normalization of the ultra-right in continental Europe.

On December, 4th, as we were finishing this review, the [cover story](#) of the Washington Post echoed Republican Congresswoman Liz Cheney's prediction that a Trump victory in 2024 would lead to the installation of a fascist regime in the US. This is not language usually used by conservatives and the mainstream US press. Three days later, the news came that in Peru -- where a deep political crisis has been unfolding since late 2022 when Pedro Castillo was evicted and arrested-- the judiciary has granted the [release of the ex-dictator Alberto Fujimori](#) from jail. This decision, which was enabled by a new high-level judicial turmoil, creates further uncertainties in relation to the political future of the country.

In such a bleak landscape, it is vital also to underline the good news. In Europe, quite surprisingly, the Law and Justice Party, the driving force behind Poland's democratic erosion since the 2000s, suffered a heavy defeat in the parliamentary elections. The opposition [won a majority of seats](#) in parliament to form a new government, which is seen as an opportunity to halt the rise of authoritarianism in the country and in Europe. The result was [celebrated](#) in many quarters and as this edition was being closed the new government headed by Tusk was formed.

No less importantly, four months after the early elections of July 23rd in Spain, the PSOE and Junts [negotiated an agreement](#) to form a new government. Pedro Sanchez, in his [inauguration speech](#), forcefully confronted the far right. Vox, the far right party for its part, has reacted to the [agreement](#) with a virulent campaign against the prime minister and the amnesty for Catalanian independents that secured the governance

agreement.

Exceptional news has also reached us from Nicaragua, where the Ortega-Murillo tyranny continues to worsen. Since July, the country has [withdrawn from the OAS](#) and [expelled 12 priests](#) who were imprisoned for political reasons. But on November 19, the population took to the streets with flags and sang the national anthem to celebrate the selection of Sheynnis Palacios, a young woman who had taken part in the 2018 protests, as Miss Universe. Daniela Arcanjo, in an [article for Folha](#), analyzes how this spontaneous protest impacted both the Nicaraguan regime and neighboring El Salvador, which hosted the contest as part of Nayib Bukele's strategy to establish his image as a cool dictator.

Lastly and still more relevant, as this edition was closing, news came from Guatemala that after much back and forth, Arevalo will assume the presidency in early January 24th. And, on December 17th, in Chile, quite suspiciously, the new re-revised conservative Constitution -- whose drafting was dominated by the ultra-right party of Jose Antonio Kast -- [was rejected](#) by 55 to 44% of votes.

Anti-Gender Politics

Against the backdrop outlined in the previous section, anti-gender politics continues its course with unabated force.

In Putin's "warrior Russia", as is known, the anti-gender specter has often been deployed for geopolitical purposes since the invasion of Ukraine. This trend has worsened since July, when a [law was passed](#) abolishing the rights of transgender people. At a conference in August, defense and security officials [resorted to anti-gender rhetoric](#) to denounce what they call "different types of perversion" promoted by the West. At the end of November, the Supreme Court [banned](#) the LGBTQIA+ movement, defining it as terrorism, and two days later bars, saunas, and clubs [were raided](#) by the police in Moscow.

In Italy, the public prosecutor's office [challenged in court](#) the legitimacy of registering same-sex partners on birth certificates. This follows a decision by the Ministry of the Interior which, at the [beginning of the year](#), banned the official recognition of same-sex parents by local governments. Cases of de-parenting have multiplied, especially in the Veneto region in the north of the country, which has long been dominated by the Northern League, the other ultra-right party that is part of Georgia Meloni's government.

In the UK, the anti-gender war has not run out of steam either. At the Conservative Party's annual conference, Prime Minister Rishi Sunak [reiterated](#) his position that "a woman is a woman and a man is a man" and defended measures to ensure that gender issues [discussed in schools](#) are approved by parents. In Scotland, a major conference of "gender critical" feminists was even attended by the UN special rapporteur on violence against women and girls.

In reaction to these developments, Belgium's deputy prime minister, Petra De Sutter, a trans woman, has [strongly opposed](#) the policies adopted in the UK. This is the first time that one European state authority openly criticizes the positions taken by the British government on the rights of trans people. The Belgian reaction, however, must be also placed in relation to the national context where, for the first time, robust anti-gender offenses have taken shape. A sex education program for teenagers and pre-teens, adopted in September, [became the target](#) of attacks and brought ultraconservative forces onto the streets and social networks in a coalition that [surprised](#) many analysts.

In Spain, the autonomous community of Madrid, governed by Isabel Ayuso (PP), has tabled a [law](#) to the local parliament, which radically alters current legislation on the right to gender identity, including abolishing the right to self-determination. The PP has enough votes to pass the law and, although the national law passed at the beginning of the year has legal primacy, autonomous governments have the power to restrict public policies under its own legislation.

In Canada, the political actions of anti-gender forces have also taken unprecedented turns. In September, a series of [coordinated protests](#) in over 80 cities across the country mobilized diatribes against inclusive education policies and conspiracy narratives against "trans children". PressProgress [detailed](#) the creators and purposes of the mobilization. This anti-trans offensive by conservatives has been [analyzed](#) as a remarkable transformation in the political climate and the democratic gender agenda in the country.

And, the US continues to be one of the global epicenters of anti-gender offensives, as shown by the monitoring of anti-trans bills coordinated by the ACLU. By the end of October, [almost 600 bills](#) had been introduced in state legislatures to eliminate the rights of trans people. It is worth noting, however, that in several states these legislative initiatives did not deliver votes for ultraconservative candidates in November's mid-term elections, as expected. [Mother Jones analyzed](#) several cases in which the perverse use of the anti-trans agenda did not translate into electoral victory, for example in Kentucky, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Ohio.

In Brazil, despite Bolsonaro's electoral defeat, anti-gender politics remain in turmoil. In September, a resolution by the National Council of LGBTQIA+ People on education became the [target of attacks](#). Two Bolsonaro MPs, one of them Nikolas Ferreira, claimed on social media that the Lula government is imposing the installation of unisex toilets in the public education system. The Ministry of Human Rights requested a judicial investigation of [this deliberate propagation of fake news](#) by the Federal Public Prosecutor Office. In Belo Horizonte, the capital of the state that elected Ferreira, the city council [passed a law](#) banning the use of neutral language in the city's public and private schools. This law overruled the mayor's veto of a previously approved law and its effects are already being felt in the municipal education system. For a breakdown of the tabled and approved bills aimed at banning gender-neutral language nationwide, we the [article](#) by Iran Ferreira de Melo and Gustavo José Barbosa Paraíso (in Portuguese).

Anti-Gender Politics in Sports

Further setbacks in terms of trans people's participation in elite competitions have also been registered since July 2023. In the UK, trans women were [banned](#) from taking part in women's rowing tournaments, a rule that applies to all athletes who represent the country in international races. In November, the International Cricket Council [banned](#) trans women who have gone through "male puberty" from taking part in international competitions. The most emblematic and absurd case, however, is the new rule adopted by the International Chess Federation, which in August [banned](#) trans women from women's tournaments. This decision bluntly implies the revival of the absurd nineteenth-century thesis that men are naturally more intelligent than women.

New and Old Stages of Anti-Gender Politics

Between July and November 2023, three international events took place that signaled to the consolidation and, more importantly, normalization of anti-gender agendas.

In July, the Women Deliver Conference took place in Kigali, Rwanda, for the first time in Africa. Since 2007, this event has been gathering activists from all over the world to discuss women's rights, reproductive health, and rights. The conference took roughly 6,000 people to Kigali and, unfortunately, it became one of those stages. Katalin Novák, president of Hungary -- one of the most important leaders of the anti-gender and anti-abortion agendas in Europe -- spoke at its opening plenary. Her presence had not been announced in advance, and Novák skillfully used this privileged opportunity of opening a "feminist conference" in Africa, to widely disseminate her ideological

positions. Her presence at the event, it should be noted, is part of a more ambitious geopolitical agenda that the Orbán regime is implementing in Africa that includes, among other initiatives, a [military mission in Chad](#). We recommend [Françoise Girard's article](#) on the meaning and effect of Novak's presence at Women Deliver, which also analyzes how the concomitant presence of Sall Macky, the president of Senegal, was also criticized by African feminists.

The second eventful stage was set, not surprisingly, in Hungary: the [Third Budapest Demographic Forum](#). The program, as in the previous fora, addressed the defense of the "family" and traditional values as a solution to the so-called European demographic winter. It's worth mentioning that the 2023 event featured two African speakers, one woman and one man, and four Muslim speakers ([see here](#)).

Finally, on November 16 and 17, the Fifth Transatlantic Summit, organized by the Political Network for Values (PNfV), took place at the UN headquarters in New York. The biennial event, held since 2014, brought together far-right politicians and extremist civil society groups from Latin America, the US, Africa, and Europe, especially Hungary, to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). The space at the UN was provided at the request of Guatemala. More than 35 speakers committed themselves to "rescuing the original meaning" of the UDHR in order to fight against what they call "false rights" and "non-universal rights", i.e. sexual and reproductive rights, rights to health and sex education for children and adolescents and LGBTQIA+ rights, and especially the rights of trans people.

Among the panelists at this year's edition were Angela Gandra, former national secretary for the family in the Bolsonaro government, and Congressman Nikolas Ferreira. Gandra's presence continued the long-standing relationship she has with PNfV, as she is a member of its board. The invitation to Ferreira signals the priority that the PNfV gives to training young leaders. The congressman spoke "on behalf of youth" on the panel NY75's commitment to universal human rights, which included other young voices trained by the network to "defend life, family, and freedom". We recommend [Andrea Dip's article](#) on the summit, published by Open Democracy, and more especially the report prepared by Ipas and Empower on the history of PNfV and the objectives of the event: "[The Political Network for Values: Global Far-Right at the United Nations](#)".

UN Arenas

As far as international forums and arenas are concerned, there is some good news to report. We highlight [Brazil's election](#) to the UN Human Rights Council at the beginning of October. On that occasion, Brazil also [announced](#) its membership in the Equal Rights Coalition, an alliance of UN member states committed to ending discrimination and violence against LGBTQIA+ people. It is also worth mentioning that both the [Human Rights Committee](#) and the [Committee on Economic and Social Rights](#) have questioned Brazil's abortion legislation and recommended its reform to ensure the protection of the human rights of women and girls.

At the level of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Graeme Reid, who until recently headed Human Rights Watch's LGBTQIA+ unit, [was elected](#) as the new Independent Expert on Human rights, Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity, replacing Victor Madrigal. We welcome his election and thank Victor for the remarkable work he performed since 2018.

However, in the UN panorama, there are also disturbing facts to note, especially with regard to the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women and Girls, Reem Alsalem. As mentioned in the previous newsletter, her position was [criticized](#) by feminist and LGBTQIA+ networks for not recognizing the rights of transgender people to self-determination. The mandate had a visit scheduled to Brazil in August that [was postponed](#) (in Portuguese) by the government until the second half of 2024. This decision provoked reactions from the rapporteur herself, including a long interview with Gazeta do Povo, a well-known Brazilian ultra-right media outlet. The postponement was also criticized by national feminist networks and collectives aligned with her positions. In October, the National LGBTQIA+ Council issued a [public statement](#) criticizing the Rapporteurs' views and conduct in reaction to the delay of the mission to Brazil. The statement identified the contradictions between Alsalem's views and Brazilian legal norms and public policies regarding the right to gender identity.

Finally, as this newsletter was being finalized, we received the good news that the UN Working Group on Discrimination against Women and Girls has [published a report](#) calling for the decriminalization of sex work.

LGBTQIA+ Rights

As in previous issues, very negative news comes from sub-Saharan Africa. In July, Ghana's parliament finally [unanimously passed](#) a law that criminalizes both individuals who identify as LGBTQIA+ and the promotion and defense of their rights. Subsequently, the supreme court [rejected](#) a lawsuit challenging the law. Given Ghana's importance, these setbacks could have a very negative impact on the regional situation, which is already very bleak.

In Uganda, four men [were arrested](#) for allegedly practicing same-sex relations. This is an effect of draconian legislation that stipulates the death penalty and life imprisonment for homosexual conduct enacted in May this year. In Nigeria, two police interventions were also reported. In August, police in Delta state [arrested](#) dozens of people taking part in an event described as a gay wedding. The action was broadcast live. In October, in Gombe state, security forces [arrested](#) 76 people gathered at a party. An ABC report [analyzed](#) the trend of mass arrests.

In Iraq, a bill [was introduced](#) in August that defines same-sex relationships and the mere expression of gender identity as criminal offenses. Radical punishments such as life imprisonment are proposed. Human Rights Watch [has commented](#) on the bill.

In Lebanon, the climate is also deteriorating with regard to LGBTQIA+ rights. In August, two bills [were introduced](#) criminalizing same-sex relations and the "promotion of homosexuality". In August, Reuters reported that a drag queen show in Beirut [was stormed](#) by a mob of religious conservatives. These events took place weeks after the leader of the radical Islamist group Hezbollah [uttered](#) homophobic insults in his speeches.

In Kyrgyzstan, a law inspired by Russian legislation from the 2010s [came into force](#), banning the "dissemination of information about LGBT people and rights to minors". Even in Australia, the social atmosphere has deteriorated for trans people. The Trans Justice Project's report [showed in numbers](#) the escalation of opposition to trans rights in the country: one in two trans people has been the target of hate speech.

Looking to the Caribbean and Latin America, in Jamaica, the supreme court [denied](#) the repeal of the sodomy law, which dates back to the colonial era. The defeated litigation had been in the making, with great difficulty, since the 2000s (find out more about the decision [here](#)). In Brazil, the fury of the ultra-right is threatening the right to equal marriage granted by the supreme court in 2011. A bill to overturn the 2011 decision was

approved by the Federal Chamber of Deputies' Committee on Welfare, Social Assistance, Children, Adolescents and the Family, provoking criticism and protests from all quarters. We [compiled an analysis](#) of the case. And, as this issue was being finalized, news was circulating that the government [was backtracking](#) on the new model of the national identity document – which, as announced in May, eliminated the discrepancy between the sex on the birth certificate and the social name.

Good News

At the beginning of October, Mauritius [decriminalized](#) sodomy after the supreme court ruled that a provision in the penal code that prohibited consensual same-sex relations was unconstitutional and discriminatory.

In Japan, the supreme court [ruled unconstitutional](#) a law that forced transgender people to undergo sterilization surgery in order to legally change their gender. In Hong Kong, at the end of October, a court ruling [ensured](#) that same-sex couples have inheritance rights. The previous month, a lesbian couple obtained, also through a court decision, [parental recognition](#) of their child conceived and born through reciprocal in vitro fertilization.

In Germany, at the end of August, the government [approved](#) the Gender Self-Determination Act, which simplifies the civil change of sex and gender.

Even in Brazil, despite many bad signs, there is good news to share. In Congress, the [Parliamentary Front in Defense of Citizenship and the Rights of the LGBTQIA+ Community](#) was created. The supreme court [issued a ruling](#) that makes it possible to equate transphobic verbal offenses with racial slurs. In addition, the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) [included](#), for the first time, questions about gender identity and sexual orientation in the National Demographic and Health Survey (PNDS). The federal prosecutor's office translated the [Yogyakarta+10 Principles into Portuguese](#). In addition, in August, the Higher School of the Federal Public Prosecutor's Office [held a course](#) on the genealogy of these normative frameworks and their potential application in Brazil. The seminar's content and debates can be accessed [here](#) and [here](#).

Gender and Feminisms

The case with the greatest global repercussion in the second half of 2023 was the scandal of the non-consensual kissing by the former president of the Royal Spanish Football Federation, Luis Rubiales, of the player Jenni Hermoso, during the delivery of the champions' cup for the women's team at the World Cup. [Suspended](#) from football for three years, Rubiales remained in office for a significant time despite global pressure after the televised act. We have [compiled news and analysis](#) of the case, especially highlighting the defense that the Spanish far right has made of Rubiales.

In addition, tragic news reached us from Afghanistan and Iran. In the first case, the number of suicides among women [has skyrocketed](#) after the Taliban regained control of the country in 2021: every day a woman takes her own life. The Guardian [reported](#) on Afghans' and health workers' testimony. In Iran, parliament [passed a law](#) in September that toughens penalties (fines and imprisonment) for women who do not wear the Islamic headscarf. A month later, a teenage girl [died](#) after being detained by police for not wearing a headscarf.

In Brazil, in August, legitimate defense of honor, still used as a defense for those accused of femicide, was finally [declared unconstitutional](#) by the supreme court. And, on the National High School Exam, held in November, the theme of the essay was the [invisibility of care work](#), a theme that gained prominence during the pandemic. Folha de São Paulo [addressed](#), in the "Todas" newsletter, the topic of women's invisible work.

EFLAC 15

From November 22 to 25, the 15th Latin American and Caribbean Feminist Meeting (EFLAC) took place in El Salvador. More than 1,600 people participated in the meeting with a very diverse profile: black, indigenous, people with disabilities, young people and "mayoras", as they say in Spanish, and a large number of trans and non-binary people. Twelve substantive topics were debated in broad assemblies: democratic setbacks and fundamentalism; transforming hegemonic economic models; full feminist protection; free and legal abortion; diverse and emancipatory genders and sexualities; body-earth-territories resisting and advancing; gender violence: we want to be alive, free and diverse; resistant and resilient feminist cities; decolonial feminisms, anti-racism and intersectionality; diversities, dissonances and feminist debates; feminist power and autonomy, keys to emancipation; and art and culture as a field of transformation.

The [final declaration](#) aimed at autonomy and sovereignty over bodies and territories

and marked the launch of a regional network to demand from states the prevention, combat and eradication of violence against women. In the final plenary, feminists [expressed solidarity](#) with Nicaraguan women who resist the tyranny of the Ortega-Murillo regime and repudiated the genocide in Gaza. El País provided a great review of the meeting ([in Spanish](#)).

Abortion and Reproductive Rights

Brazil

The best news of the period with regard to the right to abortion was the [beginning of the proceedings](#) on the Action for Noncompliance with Fundamental Precept (ADPF) 442 in the supreme court. The action, presented in 2017, calls for the decriminalization of abortion up to the 12th week of pregnancy. The [favorable vote](#) of Rosa Weber, presented as the judge's last act before retirement, restarted the legal and political debate on the issue.

The proceedings were, however, suspended by the president of the court, Luís Roberto Barroso, based on procedural arguments. However, the case has had a significant impact globally, with commentators from different continents drawing parallels with the green wave that has been covering Latin America on the topic for some time. We produced an [extensive compilation](#) on the ADPF.

Rosa Weber's vote was cast on the eve of September 28, the Latin American and Caribbean Day of Struggle for the Decriminalization of Abortion, a date whose story was the subject of an [article by Nana Soares](#) that also maps gains and challenges in the fight for the right to abortion in Latin America.

More good news comes from the results of opinion polls regarding the arrest of women who abort, analyzed in a meta-analysis exercise by Cfemea, SPW, and CESOP-Unicamp. The results show that, between 2019 and 2023, the number of people opposing the imprisonment of women for abortion [grew](#). On average, this rejection was always greater than 50%, considering variables of age, education, race/ethnicity, and religion. [Revista Piauí analyzed](#) the data in detail in the "Equalities" section.

However, there is also bad news, because, as we know, the forces against the right to abortion are not abating. In August, they caused the [cancellation of a debate](#) on pregnancy termination through telemedicine at the federal public defender's office. And, since Rosa Weber cast her vote in favor of ADPF 442, regressive proposals have

appeared in the legislature, among them, another PEC (49/2023) proposing the amendment of the constitution to expand the right to life from conception. The text [is part of a set of 35 proposals](#) restricting the right to abortion presented in the senate and chamber since the beginning of this year.

Furthermore, in the first semester, Lula appointed his personal lawyer, Cristiano Zanin, as minister of the supreme court. In his first decisions, Zanin [revealed himself](#) to be very conservative in matters relating to criminal law, social inequality, and LGBTQIA+ rights, even voting against equating homophobia with racial slurs. At the end of November, Lula appointed Paulo Gonet and Flávio Dino, current minister of justice, to the attorney general's office (PGR) and the supreme court, respectively, which has raised new concerns.

According to [Folha de São Paulo](#) and [O Globo](#), Gonet is a practicing Catholic and defends the right to life from conception, and his appointment has been widely applauded by ultra-right figures. As director of the Superior School of the Public Ministry of the Union, during the administration of Augusto Aras, he allowed courses that contested the right to gender identity in childhood and adolescence. Flávio Dino's appointment has been criticized for being contrary to a broad and intense campaign for the appointment of a black jurist to the Court ([here](#) and [here](#)). Dino has, in the past, [expressed opposition](#) to changes in abortion law. His position on LGBTQIA + rights is not so clear. In general terms, it is not clear how he will position himself regarding issues of this nature that are already being processed or will reach the supreme court.

The Americas

In the rest of the continent, there is plenty of other good news. In Mexico, the supreme court [declared unconstitutional](#) the section of the penal code that criminalized abortion at the federal level. The decision came a week after the same court [ruled](#) that the articles of the Aguascalientes state penal code that penalized abortion were invalid, urging the local legislature to modify the text. This decision complements and expands the 2021 decision that recommended that local judiciaries suspend all criminal abortion cases that were being processed in the states.

In the case of Peru, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child [recognized](#) that the indigenous girl Camila (pseudonym) had her rights to life and health violated. Pregnant due to rape by her father, she was forced by medical and police authorities to undergo prenatal care, was denied the right to terminate the pregnancy and, when she suffered a miscarriage, was prosecuted for self-abortion. This decision opens up the possibility of

expanding access to abortion in the country.

Even in the US, there are positive trends. In Ohio, voters [approved](#) the inclusion of the right to “make and carry out one's own reproductive decisions” in the state constitution; marijuana regulation was also endorsed at the polls. This was not the only victory in defending and promoting reproductive rights. In Kentucky, the governor [was re-elected](#) after a campaign in which he included the right to abortion in his platform. And, in further proof that the issue has garnered support and mobilized resistance in the face of the ultra-conservative offensive, the Republicans [lost the majority](#) in the Virginia legislature to Democrats. This result is a clear response to the position of the state governor, a staunch opponent of abortion. O Globo [analyzed](#) the centrality of the issue in the elections, listing the cases in which the issue was decisive in the result.

However, in early December, a conservative cloud has cast shadow over the abortion politics. US Supreme Court [announced](#) it would rule on whether to curtail the access to largely used mifepristone abortion pill countrywide. The announcement came at the same time as a major judicial battle in Texas, where a woman with a high-risk pregnancy was [denied](#) by the state Supreme Court a request to terminate it ([learn more here](#)).

In contrast, in Russia, Putin, in alliance with the Orthodox Church, has also moved towards restricting the right to abortion established in 1955. News reports [describe](#) an increasing siege on the right to abortion. In October, the Ministry of Health [determined](#) that, starting next September, misoprostol and mifepristone will only be available for sale with a medical prescription. The rule is valid until 2030. And, to corroborate the connections between authoritarianism, warmongering, and repression of women's reproductive rights, Putin himself, at the end of November, [urged](#) that Russian women give birth to more than "seven, eight children" to stop the country's demographic decline, which has accelerated significantly since the start of the war against Ukraine.

Farewells

In the second half of the year, we had a lot of losses.

Playwright, director, and actor Zé Celso [left us](#) in July, victim of a fire in the apartment where he lived. An icon of theater and the struggle for freedom in art and life, he was lamented in many quarters. Articles published in [Folha](#), the [BBC](#) and [Piauí](#) reveal the many angles of his exceptionally creative life trajectory.

In October, Brazilian feminism lost activist [Nalu Faria](#), whose journey was captured in a beautiful tribute made by [Abong](#). Also passed away was sociologist [Neuma Aguiar](#), whose contribution to feminist studies in Brazil was unequivocal. Her memory was remembered by [Dawn](#) and the [National Association of Postgraduate Studies and Research in Social Sciences \(Anpocs\)](#). Finally, the field of studies and activism in gender, sexuality, and religion lost its much-loved [Cris Serra](#).

Sexuality & Art

We highlight the exhibition of [Rosa Gauditano](#) photos and the Lesbian Sauna installation at the 35th São Paulo Biennial. The [work](#) was also highlighted in several specialized occasions (such as [Culturize-se](#) and [Nonada](#)). These interventions must be situated within the broader framework of the Diversity Biennial, as defined by a [review by Folha de S. Paulo](#). According to the article the creations displayed in the exhibition "lead to queer stories without monopolizing the route, but expanding the discussion for other interpretations involving sexuality and gender". It is important to mention that, in previous biennials, lesbian niches, desires, and affections have never had so much space.

We Recommend

Academic writings

De-Democratization

[Populism's four driving emotions, and how to cultivate emotions supporting democracy: An interview with Eva Illouz - Sociologisk Forskning](#)

[Hannah Arendt would not qualify for the Hannah Arendt prize in Germany today - Samantha Hill - The Guardian](#)

[Science, technology, and society for a post-truth age: Comparative dialogues on reflexivity - Emine Öncüler Yayalar, Melike Şahinoğlu](#)

Anti-gender politics

[Varieties of TERFness - DiGeSt - Fall 2023 Special Issue of Journal of Diversity and Gender Studies](#)

[Genealogies, meanings, and effects of anti-gender feminism in Latin America - Diana Granados - Engenderings - Department of Gender Studies/London School of Economics](#)

[Gender Equality for Show: Serbian Performative Europeanisation - Adriana Zaharijević and Zorana Antonijević](#)

Press articles

De-Democratization

[How Leonard Leo Weaponized the Courts Against Democracy - The Nation](#)

[How a Trump adviser manipulates free speech to advance his causes and 'hurt his adversaries' - The Guardian](#)

Anti-gender politics

[The Next Targets for the Group That Overturned Roe - The New Yorker](#)

[A New Report Exposes the Network of Extremist Groups Behind the Anti-Trans PR Machine - Them](#)

Abortion

[5 Takeaways From Inside the Overturning of Roe v. Wade - New York Times](#)

[Brazilian politicians funded an online anti-abortion campaign ahead of Supreme Court ruling vote - Global Voices](#)

Other resources

[Anti-gender and anti-LGBTQI mobilisation in Hungary: Evolution, actors, networks - Full report - Political Capital Policy Research and Consulting Institute](#)

[Intersex Legal Mapping Report - Ilga](#)

[Convergence of interests, resurgence of oppression: 2023 patterns of attack](#)