



SUPPORTING
AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT
FOR CIVIL SOCIETY

Enabling Environment Snapshot

Paraguay

November 2025

Context

The new regulatory restrictions, particularly Law 7363/24, which inhibits constitutional rights such as freedom of association, and the continued existence of measures that criminalise the actions of civil society organisations through irregular legal mechanisms, are factors that undermine fundamental rights. These restrictions disproportionately affect groups that are particularly vulnerable due to their socio-economic conditions, age, ethnicity, gender, diversity or place of origin, with many experiencing intersecting forms of marginalisation.

In the current political system, the government, which took office in August 2023, has been cancelling channels of citizen participation, weakening democratic quality, including imposing obstacles to the resolution of pending challenges such as reducing income inequality gaps, very high labour informality, improving precarious health and education services, and remedying the structural concentration of land ownership. In addition to these factors, citizen demonstrations and coordination of peer initiatives continue in pursuit of a more enabling environment and democratic quality based on respect for human rights.

1. Respect and protection of fundamental freedoms

In addition to previous acts of intimidation against journalists, there were new attacks against press workers at the end of 2025: a journalist for a digital newspaper [reported](#) death threats against him by a politician, while [a similar threat](#) was also received by the former press officer of a hospital. Meanwhile, Congress continues to postpone consideration of the 2023 Bill for the Protection of Journalists and Human Rights Defenders, which, [according to previous announcements](#), was to be debated in October 2025. The bill was referred back to committees, and the Senate has [raised objections](#) to the budget allocated as well as the inclusion of human rights defenders in the legislation, arguing that it would overly expand the coverage of beneficiaries. Both of these concerns were already addressed in the [ruling of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights \(IACHR\)](#), which initially gave rise to the bill. The journalists' union [warned](#) about the changes that could be made to the draft legislation, and regional organisations for freedom of expression and information expressed concern, [urging](#) approval of the bill.

Protests by citizens and specific sectors continue. There have been significant [repressive actions](#) against young Generation Z protesters, and [peasant demands](#), especially those related to land, have been criminalised. In a positive development, [the house arrest](#), under bail, of a leader of the yerba mate union was [lifted](#), who at the same time deserved recognition for his work in [defence of human rights](#). He now has freedom of movement, but has not yet been definitively acquitted, which illustrates the type of legal proceedings that are commonly used as new forms of restricting the rights of civil society actors. The application of the recently approved "Anti-NGO Law" (Law No. 7363/2024) has had a negative impact on the exercise of fundamental freedoms, as the new controls and their deterrent effect have resulted in new obstacles to the activities of civil society organisations.

2. Supportive legal framework for the work of civil society actors

Law No. 7363/2024, "Establishing control, transparency and accountability for non-profit organisations", known as the "Anti-NGO Law", was regulated in October and has thus [entered into force](#). The law places severe restrictions on civil society organisations (CSOs), affecting registration conditions, increasing bureaucratic burdens and, in particular, imposing requirements that constrain their autonomy. This represents a very adverse development for the enabling environment.

The law entered into force one year after its approval by Congress, during which time pro-government parliamentarians urged the Executive to implement the new regulations. For the Human Rights Coordinator (CODEHUPY) and other organisations, the new administrative requirements, the penalties provided for and the ambiguity of concepts are a cause for great concern and are expected to have a major impact on rights-based civil society engagement, particularly hindering grassroots or community units with limited capacities, weakening the social fabric and restricting freedom of association and citizen participation in public affairs. The new provision establishes a maximum period of 90 days, starting at the end of October, for civil society organisations (referred to in the law as Non-Profit Organisations, or OSFL) to comply with the new registration requirements. In response, CSO leaders have announced that they will analyse the legal instrument in relation to the guarantees established in the National Constitution and consider appropriate measures, including a possible action of unconstitutionality.

3. Accessible and sustainable resources

The deadline for the re-registration of civil society organisations at the Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF) required by the new Law 7363/2024 expires at the beginning of 2026. This requirement is linked to both access to and use of resources. The implications for the operational capacity of CSOs will soon become apparent.

With regard to CSO initiatives undertaken with public funds from the General National Budget (PGN), the Director of the Hospital de Clínicas, a public healthcare facility, [informed the press](#) that under the law known as the "Anti-NGO Law", several non-governmental organisations had problems with the disbursement of funds. Among them was a foundation that cooperates with the institution to purchase medicines and supplies for children with heart disease, which put children awaiting urgent surgery in limbo. Following advocacy to the MEF, the pending amount was transferred directly from the MEF portfolio. However, this late transfer of funds [did not remedy the urgent situation](#) as it had to be used to pay for supplies owed.

The government's argument for new and greater requirements for control and transparency in the allocation of resources to CSOs contradicts how other examples of public expenditure are treated. The recent agreement established by the Paraguayan side of the binational Itaipú hydroelectric plant (Paraguay-Brazil) with an NGO for the amount of approximately [USD 850,000](#) to be used for a four-month project of Christmas celebrations and the preservation of traditions, sparked [debate](#) about the [opaque management of the social expenditures](#) available to the hydroelectric plant, amounting to [USD 650 million per year](#). Concerns were raised that this amount is not recorded in the National Budget and is not subject to controls by competent bodies such as the Comptroller General of the Republic. The case raises [questions about governmental priorities](#), illustrates the discretion of government requirements for CSOs as compared to public transparency, and reduces civil society's trust in official public bodies. It also raises concerns about ambiguous criteria imposed by the new regulatory framework (Law 7363) for the control of CSOs in the management of resources.

4. State openness and responsiveness

The transparency and accountability of the Paraguayan government continues to be limited. In November 2025, [Law No. 7593 on Personal Data Protection](#) was [enacted](#), although it has yet to be regulated. This was the result of a [long process](#) that involved the participation of specialists from various CSOs. The achievement of passing the law has been accompanied by criticism regarding the failure to amend the controversial Article 24, which [restricts access to public information](#) on the remuneration of public officials.

Furthermore, the international Open Government Partnership (OGP) initiative, of which [the country has been a member](#) since its inception in 2011, currently has no mechanisms in development after its latest Action Plan 2022-2024. The corresponding Joint Committee, which included civil society organisations and government institutions in its Executive Committee, appears to be inactive and there is no information about the development of a new Action Plan. CSOs that were part of the Joint Committee had requested OGP leadership members, at the end of 2024, to activate the Rapid Response Protocol in response to the enactment of Law 7363 on the control of CSOs, given the violation of fundamental rights. In turn, the [Parliamentary Commission "Open Parliament,"](#) created in 2015 with the aim, among others, of coordinating actions with civil society organisations linked to issues of transparency, accountability, and citizen participation, remained [inactive](#) throughout the 2025 annual period.

In general, the environment is not conducive to participation, although this has not prevented CSOs from cooperating with some [government](#) ministries, [judicial](#) bodies, or [municipal governments](#).

A significant event during the period was the [delivery](#) of the first land titles to rural families in Marina Cué in Curuguaty, in the east of the country, 13 years after the tragic eviction of campers, known as the "Curuguaty Massacre", which resulted in the deaths of farmers and police officers and led to a summary trial and parliamentary coup against the government of former bishop Lugo. This measure was preceded by an extensive [active process by CSOs](#) to secure the [definitive release](#) of the [imprisoned peasants](#) as well as support for their settlement and legal acquisition of the claimed plots of land. This reflects civil society's capacity for coordinated actions, the filing of lawsuits and dialogue with the state in a context characterised by very limited openness of the state to civil society participation. In this case, "listening to the state" required constant monitoring of various judicial stages, as well as recurrent and active mobilisation of different social and political actors for more than a decade.

5. Political Culture and Public Discourses on Civil Society

The discrediting of civil society organisations, particularly by the pro-government sector of Congress, reached a milestone in July 2025 with the completion of the [work](#) of the Bicameral Commission for the Investigation of Illegal Activities (CBI), whose primary focus was "Money laundering linked to political financing through non-profit organisations (NPOs)". This Commission was [established](#) during the debate on the "Anti-NGO Law," No. 7363. The conclusions of this study did not confirm the hypothesis of foreign political intervention through NGOs. However, the CBI reported that it would send its Final Report to the Public Prosecutor's Office and the United States government, [claiming](#) that a large percentage of the funds from US cooperation with CSOs, via USAID, were used to finance political actors. In August, the Foreign Minister [delivered](#) the CBI Report to the US Embassy. In October, accepting as true the allegations of foreign political interference through CSOs, the new Paraguayan ambassador to the US [informed the press](#) that in his first meeting with the US president, the latter had pointed out that under his administration "no non-governmental organisation (NGO) – especially those of European origin or linked to progressive policies – will ever again interfere in Paraguay's internal affairs". Subsequently, in November 2025, the head of Congress, together with other parliamentarians and national authorities, held a meeting in Washington with the US Under-Secretary of State, during which the CBI Final Report, which was referred

to as an instrument of intimidation to restrict freedom of expression and of the press in the State Department's annual report on human rights in the country, was also delivered. [The press was then informed](#) that the document had been received with interest and appreciation and that a new chapter in the relationship between Paraguay and the United States had begun. These statements directly or indirectly accompany official narratives about CSOs as vehicles for *the foreignisation of public policies*, that need to be combated and sanctioned.

Narratives about non-transparent actions by CSOs are also being circulated on social media by representatives of the ruling party. Thus, it is not unusual to see [statements](#) on X linking citizen protests, such as those by Generation Z, to sectors seeking political uprising, including local NGOs and human rights defenders. Another example is provided by the Minister of the Interior, who recently stated that "indigenous leaders are poisoned by NGOs," which led to a [statement by the affected population](#), pointing out that misinformation and prejudice are being promoted. While these narratives are not homogeneously present in the country, they negatively impact inclusion and dialogue.

The recent [resolution by the Ministry of Education](#) to remove the word *gender* from educational materials was [also brought to COP 30](#), where the governments of Paraguay and Argentina attempted to prevent the inclusion of LGBTIQ communities in gender action, proposing that the word should only mean "male and female". Such decisions and positions obstruct policies and commitments on gender equality, with restrictive effects on greater equity in civic participation.

The issue of participation of indigenous peoples gained the government's attention due to mobilisations to [demand](#) changing the head of the Paraguayan Indigenous Institute (INDI), which the government complied with. At the same time, the entity's headquarters in Asunción, whose [closure](#) gave rise to multiple protests, have [not yet been reopened](#).

Despite the restrictions, citizen participation continues, as evidenced by the presentation of [various demands](#) and the generation of [CSO initiatives](#) in interaction with their peers, observed in [different social sectors](#).

6. Access to a secure digital environment

The digital environment remains partially enabling, with evidence of government surveillance of social organisation networks, one example of which was the [confirmation](#) of surveillance conducted by the National Police during the Generation Z [demonstration](#) last September. A detailed investigation was reported to have been carried out by the Cybercrime Unit as a preventive measure in response to suspicions that young people wanted to commit criminal acts. This was [described by CSOs as illegal](#) as it was carried out without a court order and motivated by the government's fear of protests. Likewise, the use of biometric data by various companies and institutions without the explicit consent of individuals has been generating criticism, and one such case was recently [reported](#) by a senator to the Consumer Protection Secretariat. Technicians from social organisations [have indicated](#) that biometrics should only be used when necessary, as misuse or leakage could lead to human rights violations. These concerns highlight the need for an independent agency to monitor and ensure data transparency.

During the period in question, the [Personal Data Protection Act](#) was enacted, which provides regulations in this area and must be implemented. According to a [civil society organisation](#) specialised in this area, this law, although not perfect, is "a good start", with Access, Rectification, Cancellation and Opposition (ARCO) principles included, and with international transfer criteria and more advanced security measures than previous provisions. Among the remaining weaknesses, in addition to [the aforementioned Article 24](#), is the absence of an independent agency to monitor both the public and private sectors, which limits the autonomy and applicability of the law, enacted in November.

The civil society organisation TEDIC-Tecnología y Comunidad has released recent shadow [reports](#) that will be presented at Paraguay's Universal Periodic Review in 2026. These reports illustrate the persistence of restrictions on digital rights and freedoms, threats in digital environments to human rights defenders and journalists, online gender-based violence, surveillance of CSO networks, and the continuation of major challenges in reducing the digital divide that particularly affects the most vulnerable populations and geographical areas furthest from major urban centres. These components reveal various pending limitations on access to a basic secure digital environment, or on greater security for civil society actors.

Challenges and Opportunities

Over the coming months, one of the challenges for an enabling environment for CSOs will be the implementation of Law 7363 and the conditions it may impose. Coordination and the strengthening of alliances will therefore be a positive step towards greater resilience. New measures for the development of informed analysis and the consolidation of CSOs' operational capacities are also necessary.

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