



SUPPORTING
AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT
FOR CIVIL SOCIETY

Enabling Environment Snapshot

Argentina

January 2026

Context

Period covered: October 2025 to January 2026

Argentine civil society has a distinguished history of participation in democratic development, particularly in the defence of human rights and fundamental civil liberties following the last civil-military dictatorship of 1976–1983. This history of active participation represents a recent record of an enabling environment that has come under strain since the La Libertad Avanza government took office in December 2023.

Since then, the enabling environment for civil society in Argentina has deteriorated significantly: even during the election campaign, a [narrative](#) was promoted [to discredit multilateral organisations](#) such as [the United Nations and its 2030 Agenda](#), as well as political parties, [trade unions](#), [social movements](#) and civil society organisations (CSOs). Once in power, this was consolidated by the [lack of institutional mechanisms for dialogue with social organisations](#), undermining their meaningful participation in public affairs. At the same time, the restrictive bias deepened through [security policies](#) that expanded the monitoring of demonstrators and the registration of organisations, raising concerns about possible violations of fundamental rights. Furthermore, the implementation of structural reforms stemming from [DNU 70/2023](#) and the [‘Framework Law’](#)—including emergency measures, [state restructuring](#), labour changes and the RIGI—has contributed to a more tense social climate, characterised by increased conflict, protests and a greater presence of security forces in public spaces, creating a scenario of heightened risk and hostility for civil society organisations.

This trend is also reflected at the international level, as in the government’s withdrawal [from the UN Human Rights Council](#). This decision is aimed at undermining representation within the United Nations system and, in particular, at reversing human rights policies, notably those concerning historical reparations and justice for crimes against humanity. It also has repercussions for the rights of migrants, refugees and displaced persons, and weakens the power of human rights organisations in Argentina to promote a civic culture centred on human rights and the development of state policies on Memory, Truth and Justice.

Having reached the halfway point of its term with sufficient public support to enable structural socio-economic changes (the culmination of which was victory in the [mid-term legislative elections in October 2025](#)), the ruling party is maintaining its course with a policy characterised by the restriction of freedoms and the curtailment of rights. This is underpinned by the [explicit support of the US Government](#), which remains (in its rhetoric and – so far – through some minor practical interventions) the guarantor of this stability.

In any case, the results of the current administration’s policies have a general impact on civil society, but particularly affect the most vulnerable sectors by reducing their purchasing power, social benefits and opportunities for advancement. Furthermore, with the aforementioned support, a phase is beginning in which the government will attempt to implement more far-reaching structural reforms that require legislative backing (i.e., no longer via emergency decrees), which – given the current composition of parliament – is more achievable.

At the time of writing, for example, a parliamentary debate is scheduled on the government’s proposed [labour reform](#), which involves extending the working day, reducing severance pay

and curtailing the right to strike, amongst other measures. Likewise, an [amendment to the Glaciers Act](#) is being pushed to promote new [mining and oil extraction regimes in periglacial zones](#); this has sparked [protests in several cities](#) and [responses of unusual violence](#) that could foreshadow a scenario of sustained conflict in the near future.

In summary, the context presents a combination of factors that seriously undermine the enabling environment for civil society in Argentina: a lack of dialogue, restrictions on freedom of expression and protest, repression, the concentration of power, and [the weakening of rights-based public policies](#).

1. Respect and protection of fundamental freedoms

Since December 2023, the government has pursued an approach that is eroding the enabling environment for civil society: [human rights agendas are being delegitimised](#) (and, by extension, the [thousands of organisations](#) that have them as their guiding principle), and [restrictive public policies are being implemented](#). The “Protocol for the Maintenance of Public Order” ([Resolution 943/2023](#)) and its extension via [Resolution 893/2024](#) have enabled the repression of protests without a court order and promote the surveillance of social actors, both during protests and in subsequent monitoring. This directly affects freedom of [expression, peaceful assembly and association](#), and demonstrates a systematic policy of criminalising protest against anyone wishing to exercise these fundamental civil liberties.

In December 2025, a court ruling was issued on an application for constitutional protection filed by several social organisations monitoring human rights compliance, [declaring the Protocol for the Maintenance of Public Order null and void](#) and urging the Ministry of Security to “guarantee the right to life, personal integrity, health and freedom of expression of protesters, bystanders and journalists during protests”. This ruling [was appealed by the Ministry](#), on the grounds that “there was no ‘real and tangible harm’ that would justify legal action against the protocol”.

The erosion of respect for civil liberties has particularly affected certain sectors. Indigenous communities were exposed to greater violations following the [repeal of Law 26,160](#) by means of an [Emergency Decree](#), leaving their territories without legal protection against extractive and private capital interests (favoured, moreover, by the [Large Investment Incentive Scheme](#) (RIGI)) within what constitutes [an increasingly adverse regulatory framework](#); the peaceful mobilisation of older people (which continues – at the time of writing – every Wednesday) [in defence of their pension rights](#) has been met with [violent repression](#).

Similarly, the Government [issued a decree](#) regulating the right to strike in transport, education and health sectors, which obliges trade unions to guarantee a minimum service of between 50% and 75% in the event of a strike, in contradiction with the provisions of Article 14 bis of the National Constitution and ILO Convention 87, and the considerations of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. Various rulings by appeal courts [have declared these restrictions unconstitutional](#), arguing that the right to strike has constitutional status and cannot be restricted by decree to such a broad extent. Consequently, the exercise of the right to strike is currently the subject of legal dispute and is limited in practice.

The judicialisation of fundamental freedoms is no coincidence, but can be interpreted as a weakening of the regulatory framework that should guarantee them. In this regard, it is worth mentioning the [Supreme Court ruling that reinforces the interpretation that the Superior Court of Justice of the City of Buenos Aires may review domestic cases](#). This decision sets a far-reaching institutional precedent and allows domestic cases to be redirected through local channels, facilitating *forum shopping*. Various organisations and specialist media outlets have denounced the regressive nature of this measure ([Palabras del Derecho](#), [Ámbito Financiero](#), [Perfil](#)), given the track record of the Buenos Aires City Court [regarding](#) the restriction of civil society and opposition voices, as well as its susceptibility to political influence. There has also been a strong institutional response: judges, prosecutors, appellate judges and trade unions have overwhelmingly opposed the measure ([Diario Judicial](#), [Abogados.com.ar](#), [UEJN](#), [Mundo Gremial](#)). The transfer of powers, without legislative debate and through judicial precedent, also disregards the limits imposed by Article 129 of the National Constitution, and the framework established by Congress through the Cafiero Law.

The Milei government has intervened in the legal frameworks regulating the use of the Armed Forces in [internal affairs](#), raising concerns about a possible rollback of the historical limits on military action in a democracy, with potentially [detrimental effects](#) on fundamental freedoms. In this vein, [through Decree 383/2025 and Resolution 828/2025](#), the Argentine Federal Police (PFA) was authorised to carry out cyber-patrolling on social media and public websites, conduct personal and vehicle searches, and detain individuals without a prior warrant, in cases of reasonable suspicion or flagrante delicto, for up to 10 hours.

Specific instances where these measures have been implemented include the [police raid without a warrant on the Ni Una Menos Assembly](#) in September 2025 and the [crackdown on demonstrators](#) protesting against the amendment of the Glaciers Act in December 2025, both in the province of Mendoza.

Added to this are frequent attacks on the press, which [were brought before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights](#) at its 194th Session in November 2025. Nineteen Argentine organisations, representing journalists, academia and civil society organisations, highlighted the government's intimidation of journalists, the repression of journalists during demonstrations and social protests whilst they were carrying out their duty to report, as well as the constant hate speech directed at the media and investigative journalists who report on the government or investigate acts of corruption by the government.

The [Report on Freedom of Expression in Argentina 2025](#), produced by the Department of Communication Sciences at the University of Buenos Aires (UBA), the Argentine Federation of Press Workers (FATPREN) and the Buenos Aires Press Union (SiPreBA), with the support of the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), states that “we are witnessing a systematic pattern of attacks specifically targeting one of the institutions that has defined its social role around the production of information, the presentation of arguments and the pursuit of truth as a service to society: journalism”.

Another development that seriously affects civil liberties (albeit at a more symbolic or indirect level) is the [sentencing of former president and current opposition leader Cristina Fernández de Kirchner](#) to six years in prison and a lifetime ban from holding public office. This event demonstrates an intent to engage in political persecution on the part of the judiciary, which, through trials and rulings – typically timed to coincide with electoral processes – seeks to

restrict the activities of social and political leaders, whether through convictions (as in this case), discrediting (through baseless accusations and cases) or intimidation ([arbitrary arrests during social protests](#)).

This set of government measures and rhetoric implies a rapid erosion of the enabling environment for civil society, characterised by repression, the dismantling of institutions and the violation of its fundamental rights.

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

Argentina has regulations that allow [social and trade union organisations to operate](#), in particular Law 23,551 on Trade Unions. Non-profit organisations (NPOs) require a simple registration process handled by the General Inspectorate of Justice, which allows them to operate as civil associations in both cases. Trade unions, furthermore, must hold trade union status (granted by the Ministry of Labour) in order to act on behalf of the collective of workers in the sector they represent.

However, in the case of social movements, there are gaps and weaknesses in the regulations regarding representation. [Resolution 118/21](#) allows organisations to represent groups within the Popular Economy and subsistence economy, which, in Argentina, act as a unifying force for various community demands—food, health, education, work, access to justice, etc.— and, above all, as a link between the different levels of a State that fails to establish direct contact. The resolution, therefore, partially addresses the legal vacuum regarding the formal recognition of the activities of organised social movements.

However, difficulties remain in maintaining legal status, accessing banking services, dealing with legislation analogous to that for companies, and the lack of distinction between different types of organisations. These factors make it extremely difficult (if not outright impractical) to formalise the activities of organisations and to recognise the work of the people who sustain them.

In bureaucratic terms, civil society organisations must contend with a [proliferation of regulations](#), which are often contradictory across different local jurisdictions. This results in difficulties in carrying out joint advocacy actions at the national level, the absence of a one-stop shop in the public sector for administrative procedures (in any office of any Ministry, the submission of all documentation is required, thus complicating any process), and the absence of a labour regime that specifically addresses the workers of NGOs and foundations. Currently, there is an effort by government departments to encourage social organisations to adopt a model similar to that of the business sector. An example of this is the new regulation from the General Inspectorate of Justice (IGJ), which opens up the possibility for organisations to incorporate as profit-making companies ([General Resolution 15/2024, Art. 32](#)).

There have also been some recent measures that complicate or restrict civil society's organisational capacities through changes to the legal and registration framework, such as the [abolition of the National Register of Community Canteens and Soup Kitchens \(RENACOM\)](#), published in July 2025. This register, created in 2020, enabled the accreditation,

geographical location and channelling of food aid to more than 40,000 community spaces. The government argues that there were flaws in the database and proposes replacing it with in-person and technological surveys. However, social organisations and the media warn that this amounts to a deepening of food austerity and the marginalisation of key local actors.

3. Accessible and sustainable resources

In Argentina, civil society has played a key role in supporting vulnerable groups, coordinating with different levels of government to implement public policies. This coordination was a primary means of accessing resources to sustain their activities. However, since December 2023, the national government has severed this relationship by [scrapping programmes](#) and [downgrading ministries](#), such as the Ministry of Education, whose functions [were absorbed by the Ministry of Human Capital](#). The [lack of funding](#) led the National Universities to issue a joint statement and [declare a budgetary emergency](#) in March 2024. The underfunding of universities is [worsening](#) with the presentation of the 2026 Budget, which includes significant cuts to this allocation compared to 2023 (the last budget in force), and the Government's [failure to comply with the current University Funding Act](#).

Another sector particularly affected is the Argentine scientific system, with a direct impact on civil society organisations that base their work on research carried out by various state bodies or those dependent on state funding, such as the R&D&I Agency, CONICET, the National Institute of Industrial Technology (INTI) and the National Institute of Agricultural Technology (INTA), amongst others. On 17 July, the Chamber of Deputies' Committee on Science, Technology and Innovation [warned](#) of "the impact of the decrees altering the structure and functioning of key bodies (...), as well as the crisis caused by the government's defunding and attack on science".

Access to international cooperation has also been restricted. Argentina, [classified as an upper-middle-income country](#), receives only marginal official development assistance. CSOs devote enormous efforts to securing funding from various sources, the most significant of which are: agencies from different countries – such as those from Sweden, the US, Ireland and Spain – private foundations and various United Nations agencies.

Funding through the UN is fragmented across [agencies](#) such as UNEP, the ILO and UNHCR, which have been working consistently with specific types of organisations. Although this has led to the formation of some strong links, thanks to [the significant impact that CSOs have at the local level](#), the effectiveness of development cooperation has been increasingly limited, particularly in the area of social policies.

Since late 2023, the government has adopted a [hostile stance towards UN agencies](#), affecting the process of the UN Strategic Cooperation Framework (MECNUD) 2025–2029. This situation was exacerbated by the Milei government's alignment with Donald Trump's foreign policy, which has rejected the 2030 Agenda and eliminated all forms of cooperation with developing countries. Programmes run by the US Department of Labour that [supported CSOs working on labour rights, youth issues](#) and the popular economy were also suspended.

Other sources such as the European Union ([Global Gateway](#)), [Sweden](#) or AECID (through public-private partnerships for development, triangular cooperation and knowledge transfer)

offer cooperation, but with low CSO involvement. The [National Directorate for International Cooperation](#), the official body responsible for this area, has not involved CSOs in the planning or distribution of funds, limiting their capacity for political advocacy and access to resources essential for sustaining an enabling environment for participation. Furthermore, the Global Gateway has been identified as a tool for silencing voices that might oppose the consolidation of extractivist models, rather than serving as a sustainable funding tool for CSOs.

4. State openness and responsiveness

Although there is an official, collegial body involving citizen participation for debate and consensus-building on strategic priorities for the country's development – the Economic and Social Council – the current administration transferred it to the remit of the Secretariat for National Strategy within the Office of the Chief of the Cabinet of Ministers ([Decree 45/2023](#)) and, in practice, it has been discontinued. This is indicative of the current government's relationship with organised civil society. In other words, although there are a large number of institutional forums, they have not been convened during this period.

[Labour, pension and education reforms](#) have been implemented without public participation or consultation, undermining democratic principles and access to rights. The same occurred with the [declaration of public interest](#) regarding the exploration of unconventional hydrocarbons in the province of Río Negro, published via Decree No. 629/25. This opens the door to the private initiative of Pan American Energy (PAE) to explore unconventional hydrocarbons in the block known as “Cinco Saltos Sur”, which includes part of Lake Pellegrini. In neighbouring blocks that have already been awarded or are currently active, such as Cinco Saltos Norte, Confluencia Sur and Confluencia Norte, community tensions have already arisen due to negative (environmental and cultural) impacts that were not properly addressed.

Social dialogue (between employers, workers and the State) is institutionalised under [Decree 1095/2004](#). Within the National Council for Employment, Productivity and the Minimum, Vital and Adjustable Wage, as a permanent forum for dialogue between representatives of workers, employers, the national government and the Federal Labour Council (provincial governments), issues relating to labour relations are assessed. This includes income redistribution, support for the unemployed, the creation of genuine and decent employment, and the fight against undeclared work, amongst others. Institutional weakness is also evident in this forum, as, since it is not a law passed by the National Congress, the current government convenes it but, faced with the impossibility of reaching agreements, establishes minimum wage increases by decree and does not promote the functioning of the committees that address the more structural problems of the world of work.

Other forums for dialogue with civil society established by law include those related to the National Plan for Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation, which, under [Law 27.520](#), requires the convening of an expanded roundtable with social organisations, trade unions and businesses. However, since the Milei government took office, this regulation has been undermined, as the dialogue forum is not convened or is used merely as an information-sharing platform where civil society has no opportunity to influence or contribute.

The regional integration bodies in which Argentina participates have forums for social dialogue and dialogue with CSOs, such as the Organisation of American States (OAS), MERCOSUR, UNASUR, CELAC and the EU-CELAC dialogue, always with either deliberative or merely

declaratory powers. Even there, a tendency to close off dialogue is evident, as was the case with the [formal objection](#) lodged by the Government with the OAS to ‘distance itself’ from the inclusion of the organisation [Católicas por el Derecho a Decidir](#) (CDD) during the 55th General Assembly held from 25 to 27 June in Antigua and Barbuda, on the grounds that its commitment to legal abortion violated the “right to life from conception”.

The only binding forum in which employers, workers and states participate is the Mercosur Social and Labour Commission.

5. Political culture and Public Discourses on Civil Society

The current government [promotes a devaluation of, and even narratives of political polarisation with, social organisations](#), particularly those working on the ground with the poor and vulnerable. Furthermore, [it has publicly stigmatised public sector workers, labelling them “activists”](#) and downplaying the value of their work. In line with this trend, the media stigmatise organisations, particularly trade unions, social movements, youth groups, and even social sports clubs (non-profit CSOs established with the aim of strengthening community ties through the practice of sports and/or social gatherings, which – like public libraries – exist throughout the country and are highly significant socio-cultural actors at the local level).

Media coverage amplifies negative narratives through fake news published in newspapers such as *La Nación*, *Clarín* (the two largest national media conglomerates with the greatest impact in the country), or television channels owned by the same companies that form pro-government media oligopolies and parrot the rhetoric of the Presidency, which [accuses](#) organisations and individuals exercising their right to freedom of expression and protest of attempting to destabilise the government and of being coup plotters.

Furthermore, the media presence of diverse voices and the decentralisation of news production (the basis for federal and community-based communication) has been drastically curtailed following the [dismantling and institutional censorship](#) imposed on the Radio Nacional media complex, the only national broadcaster operating not for commercial gain but in the public interest, and which was often the sole accessible media outlet for certain communities. Layoffs, budget cuts and a growing recentralisation of programming have led to an information blackout in many regional offices. The Argentine Federation of Press Workers (FATPREN) [has denounced this situation](#), which affects the ability of regional stations to produce their own content, cover local issues and maintain professional teams. As these offices are directly linked to local organisations in their regions (always in dialogue regarding the production of information and, in many cases, even sharing resources – human, and building resources, etc. – with them), the voices of communities are further weakened and a public discourse that renders them invisible is consolidated.

In the recent context, public discourse regarding LGBTIQ+ people and the gender perspective in general marks a clear step backwards, with [tangible effects on civil society](#). Furthermore, other groups subject to criticism in the pro-government media are rural communities and indigenous peoples. Official policies have been aimed at provocation, such as [the removal of the name of the Chamber of Indigenous Peoples from the Casa Rosada](#) (the seat of the Executive Branch of the Argentine Republic), or the [repeal of the territorial emergency decree DNU 805/21](#) and [police persecution in these territories](#).

In the education sector, [budget cuts](#) to the system and the elimination of social programmes are deepening exclusion and reducing civil society's capacity for democratic participation. Furthermore, the persecution and criminalisation of certain social groups is intensifying through interventions in legal frameworks that specifically affect them, as in the case of migrants (with restrictions on access to healthcare and education) and trans and LGBTIQ+ communities (with fewer legal safeguards and punitive policies).

All of this operates in such a way that the capacity for action and participation of these groups is seriously threatened and, in many cases, limited by the undermining of the causes for which they work, greater difficulties in accessing support and resources, and encountering regulatory constraints and/or penalties.

6. Access to a secure digital environment

The digital participation landscape remains extensive but unequal. New [surveys by INDEC](#) for the third quarter of 2025 show an increase in [internet access penetration](#), reaching 90.1%. However, the vastness of the territory and [the concentration of providers](#) result in significant regional disparities in actual usage. This is how access, production and consumption (which are also linked to infrastructure access, knowledge and acquired skills) are limited for the most marginalised sectors.

On the other hand, the digital environment is the political sphere most frequently used as a means of amplifying the aforementioned hate narratives directed at various groups within civil society, both by pro-government media and by [groups of cyber activists known as libertarians](#). There is a marked increase in the use of official government social media accounts (most notably, though not exclusively, that of the President) to reproduce such narratives and also to spread [false information](#). One example of this has been the President's promotion of the fraudulent cryptocurrency \$LIBRA, the criminal implications of which have yet to be clarified.

Challenges and Opportunities

The main challenge for civil society at present is to overcome the fear instilled by the Executive Branch, both in terms of physical safety at demonstrations or protests, and regarding the threats received by public sector workers not to demonstrate or participate politically or civically in public spaces.

Furthermore, there is a devaluation of social activism and the actions of civil society, particularly those of human rights, labour rights and environmental rights defenders.

The rapid increase in social unrest, coupled with the loss of rights and quality of life and the resulting repression by the security forces, presents a difficult combination. The prolonged nature of this conflict and the serious economic crisis represent an enormous challenge to the active participation of civil society. However, we can also state that demands such as those relating to human rights and the call for Memory, Truth and Justice, as well as funding for education, health, science and pensions, remain the most unambiguous calls.

Civil society should address the challenge of increasing social conflict to the extent that it does not fragment its demands and manages to bring together and articulate them within a rational, democratic and inclusive narrative. It is important to identify, as an opportunity to contribute to

this narrative, the influence on the process of shaping party [agendas](#) ahead of the next presidential elections (2027).

As for the nature of the influence required on these agendas, we believe it is necessary to acknowledge that there is a certain degree of public support for the current administration. This requires an in-depth analysis, which would certainly need to include a review of the concrete outcomes most valued by society in recent government administrations (economic variables perceived as key – inflation and the US dollar exchange rate), above the many others mentioned here that affect the Enabling Environment.

It is also important to study the new ways in which public figures (official or otherwise) are constructed, their appeal to values of progress and individual freedom over collective processes, and the channels and dynamics through which their discourses circulate.

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