

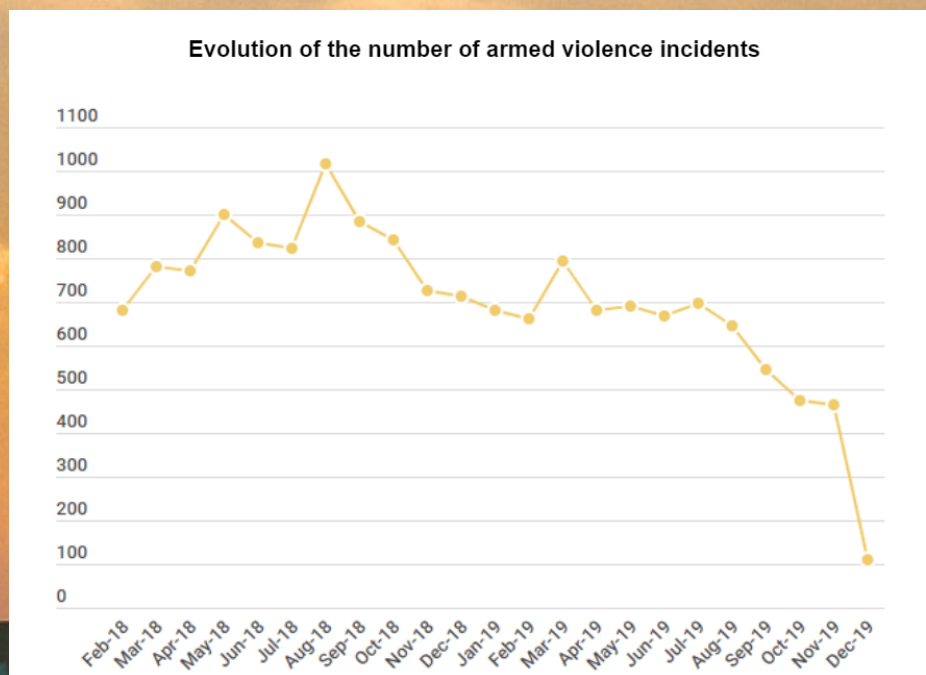
# Urban violence in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, between 2018-19



## Introduction

Wilson Witzel, a far-right former judge and ex-marine, won the governorship of Rio de Janeiro State in October 2018. He declared war to gangs and favelas. He implemented a new policy in January 2019 against urban violence in the state : the security agents are authorized to shoot-to-kill people if there are violent events and can use lethal force against suspect. He declared the state of Rio de Janeiro will become the safest state in Brazil, due to more policemen in the favelas. On the other hand, NGOs and inhabitants feared this policy will change nothing or generate more violence. We will thus explore in this note : How did urban violence evolve since the election of the new governor ?

## Methods used and Results



Graph 1

The number of armed violence incidents in Rio de Janeiro State increased until August 2018, and then decreased until November 2018. It then remained quite constant until July 2019, except from a peak in March 2019. Finally, violence seems to be decreasing in the last few months. But for the end of 2019, the month of December is not complete yet so the value is not correct nor relevant. The decrease observed from July 2019 is also to be taken with caution because it could be explained by the time that it takes to the team of Fogo Cruzado to collect, verify, and publish the data.



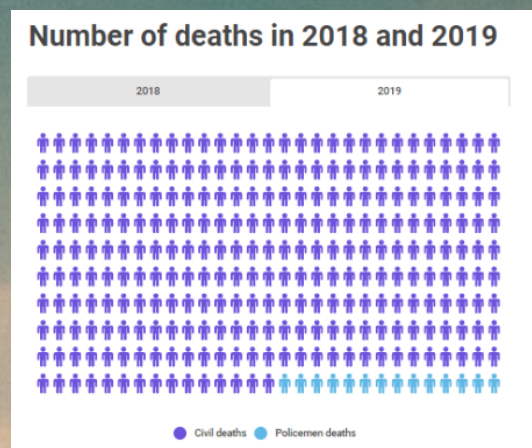
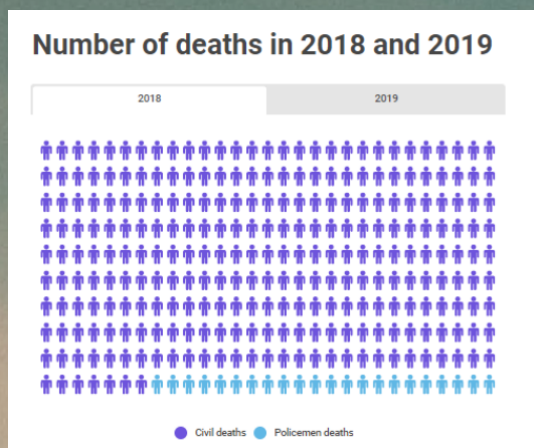


Figure 2

The 2018 pictogramme shows the number of total deaths in the state of Rio de Janeiro during the year 2018. Civil people are represented in purple (1360 deaths) and policemen in blue (113 deaths). The total number of death is 1473, which means 4 people per day. The 2019 pictogramme shows the number of total deaths in the state of Rio de Janeiro during the year 2019, after the new policy of Wilson Witzel. Civil people are represented in purple (1375 deaths) and policemen in blue (71 deaths). The total number of death is 1446, which means 4 people per day (honestly, 3,9 people per day but there are still two weeks in December).

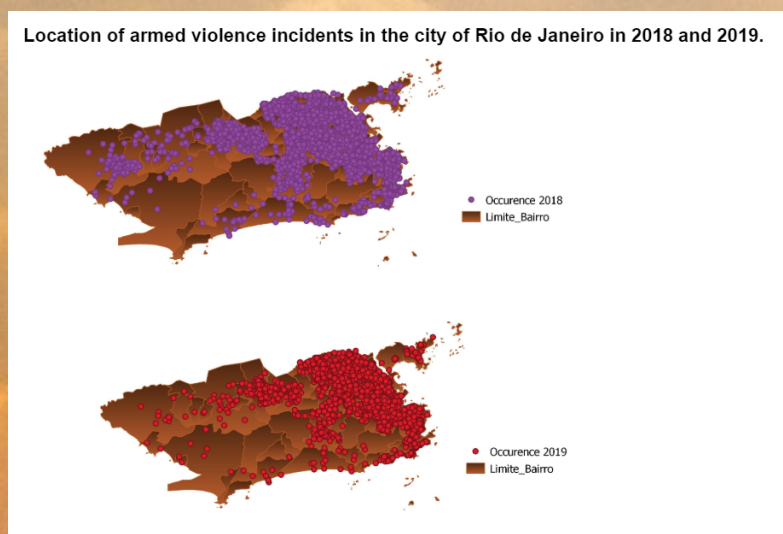


Figure 3

Armed violence remains concentrated in the most dense areas of the city, mainly in the Zona Norte, which concentrates precarious, segregated and isolated neighborhoods where drugs gangs are ruling the territory. There is much less violence in the Zona Oeste, where favelas are mostly ruled by extortion militias rather than drug gangs. This has been indeed proven in many studies of criminal governance.

We can also see that the touristic and economic center of the city, the Zona Sul, is not exempted from armed violence, but the incidents are mostly occurring in the hills where favelas are located.

Between 2018 and 2019, the only evolution concerns the Zona Oeste where there has been slightly less incidents this year. This again could be explained by the presence of militias in these neighborhoods, and their reinforced links with the new governor Witzel and his team.



# Conclusion

Finally, even if it is very early to draw conclusions, it seems that the number of police deaths is decreasing, confirming that the licence to kill implemented by Witzel to protect the police agents is effective for them. But this also hides an increase of civilian deaths. The overall urban violence in Rio de Janeiro seems to have dropped in the last few months, but the data might be flawed and thus this result needs to be verified in six months. Another interesting result concerns the location of armed violence incidents revealing that zones ruled by militias saw a higher decrease in urban violence, suggesting that peace agreements through corrupted police and politicians linked to militias and Witzel governorate could have happened. It is too early and too limited to formulate any policy recommendations, but this preliminary study suggests the need for further research about the proportion of civilians and police killed (and maybe the authors of the killings), and the links between militias and Witzel.

## Data Used

To explore the evolution of urban violence in Rio de Janeiro, we used data produced by the Brazilian organization Fogo Cruzado created in 2015 and operating since 2017. It's a collaborative digital platform registering all the incidences of armed violence in the metropolitan region of Rio de Janeiro through various sources : an app where any user can signal an event, an informants network of collectives and residents all over the territory, as well as press and authority informations. All these sources are crossed to obtain the more complete data about the occurrences of armed violence, the location, the date and the number of deaths and injured, either civilians or police. Fogo Cruzado recently opened an API for open consultation of all the data they have. Indeed, they want to be "transparent, collaborative and innovative". Nevertheless it is worth noting that it is necessary to login with an email address to access the data. <https://fogocruzado.org.br/sobre-a-api/>



## References

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