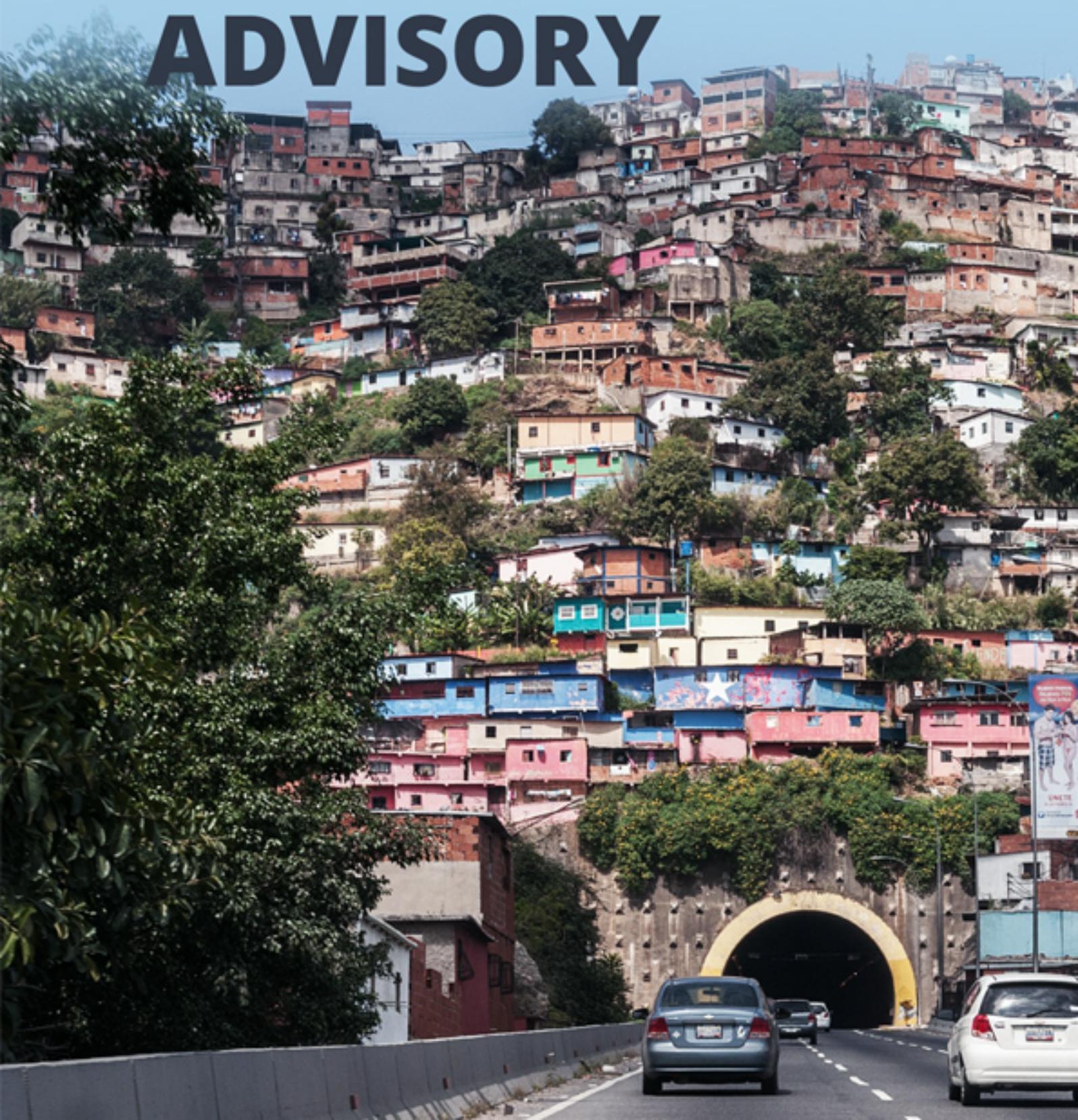


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# TRAVEL ADVISORY



TRAVEL ADVISORY 18 OCTOBER 2018

# Brazil elections spark uptick in political violence

## KEY POINTS

- The 2018 presidential election cycle has experienced unusually high levels of unrest and divisive campaigning, prompting clashes between rival supporters. A recent survey has recorded 70 separate incidents of political violence since 30 September.
- With no presidential candidate reaching the required 50 percent of the vote to win the election on 7 October, a second round is due to take place on 28 October. Nationwide protests remain likely as both candidates have the ability to mobilise large public support.
- Travellers in Brazil should continue to monitor political development, avoid all planned demonstrations and consider minimising their movements on the 28 October due to the risk of further clashes between rival supporters.



## SITUATIONAL SUMMARY

**Political Violence:** Following the first round of the Brazilian election, two candidates will face each other in a run-off vote on 28 October. Far-right candidate Jair Bolsonaro narrowly missed out on obtaining the 50 percent of the vote needed to obtain an outright victory in the first round and will subsequently face the more moderate, left-wing candidate Fernando Haddad in a second round. The build up to the 7 October election has seen an increase in tensions throughout Brazil leading to incidents of politically motivated violence targeting journalists and minority groups. Several independent groups collecting information on violence related to the election stated that there has been 70 such politically motivated incidents since 30 September. Nationwide demonstrations and political rallies are expected in the coming weeks as both Haddad and Bolsonaro seek to assemble their support in urban centres. Political rallies are likely to provoke counter demonstrations by rival supporters leading to localised clashes.



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## SOLACE GLOBAL COMMENT

Brazilian politics has been dogged by corruption for decades and the 2018 presidential election has provided a platform for the voting citizens to reject the current political status quo that has protected the old guard of politicians. Corrupt practices have become ingrained within the current social structure throughout Brazil. The state is the main employer in many parts of the country while the allocation of state contracts predominantly ends up in the hands of politicians who have been accused of using money siphoned from these contracts to run re-election campaigns. While corrupt practices including vote buying, have increased, budgets have been slashed in other areas including public security and health care as the country experiences its worst ever recession. Both remain continually under resourced and consequently Brazil is experiencing a dip in global development indicators while subsequently having to deal with an organised crime epidemic. Both also have severe implications on the average Brazilian with crime rackets applying their own taxes on business owners in exchange for 'security' and health care facilities remaining severely under resourced.

As such, the 2018 presidential election has provided an opportunity for voters to hit back at the current political system opting to support relative newcomers to the political system; **including those away from the middle ground on the political spectrum**. Jair Bolsonaro's of the national conservative Social Liberal Party won 46 percent of the vote in the first round and has run his campaign focused on tackling crime and corruption within the country; winning significant support. Alongside these key agendas, Bolsonaro has been vocal in his approach to certain divisive topics; including, woman's rights, migrant rights and the LGBT community, while also accusing the media and journalists of being a part of the problem that has led to the corruption epidemic. While his agenda gained considerable support in Brazil, a country dominated by Catholicism, it has also led to strong opposition from liberal voters.

His opponent in the Presidential run-off is Fernando Haddad of the left-wing Workers Party who gained 29.1 percent of the first-round vote. The Workers Party, while seen as a viable political option, has been embroiled in a significant number of corruption scandals over the last decade and has been in power for 14 of the last 16 years; in which time Brazil has sunk into recession while crime rates have spiralled. While Haddad offers himself as a more moderate politician, but voters fear he will maintain the current status quo. Bolsonaro has been able to leverage current corruption investigations on the Workers Party to boost his own campaign.

The clear ideological division between supporters has prompted the uptick in political violence and this is likely to continue in the build up to, and immediately after, the Presidential runoff. On 8 October, the day after the first-round vote, a Haddad supporter was killed after becoming embroiled in a political row with Bolsonaro supporter in a bar. On the same day, at an anti-Bolsonaro rally organised by the LGBT community, 19-year old woman was attacked by five men who carved a swastika into her stomach with a knife. Since 30 September, 70 such incidents have occurred according to data collected by the Brasil.io data lab, Agência Pública, and Open Knowledge Brazil. While such events remain localised and unlikely to impact upon business travel, larger scale clashes between rival supporters during political events remain a threat to the wider security environment as they could stretch the capacity of the security forces.

On 11 October, thousands of people took to street in Sao Paulo in opposition to Bolsonaro's current narrative, highlighting the hostility felt towards his policies by certain sections of the society. Further demonstrations will take place leading up to the second round as voters show support for their preferred candidates. Given the recent uptick in political violence there is a likelihood that there will be localised clashes between rival supporters creating residual disruption in urban centres. While business travellers are not likely to be targeted, additional precautions should be considered due to the spill over impact of such clashes. Further consideration should be given to the reallocation of security forces to political events, leaving other parts of the country susceptible to an increase in crime.



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## SECURITY ADVICE

## MODERATE POLITICAL RISK



- Travellers should avoid all election-related gatherings due to the risk of violence. Consult local media, in country contacts and Solace Global Alerts for details of any planned or ongoing demonstrations in your area.
- Significant traffic disruption is likely in the vicinity of such rallies, especially in major urban centres, on major routes and around key transport and business hubs. Plan routes circumventing areas prone to unrest, alternatively allow additional time if travel through affected areas is unavoidable.
- Anticipate heightened security at public venues, at rally locations and in the vicinity of election-related venues. Exercise vigilance around protest areas and polling stations; follow all official directives.
- Violent crime poses a significant risk to travellers, especially during election period when security forces will be overstretched. Maintain caution and exercise awareness of the local geography, taking care to bypass low income, high density areas where crime rates spike.
- Carry personal identification documents at all time in case you need to transit through a checkpoint.



Solace Global remains available to provide the full range of Travel Risk Management services to clients. Solace Global is also able to provide comprehensive crisis management, in-country journey management, tracking, response, and evacuation services.

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