



## OPEN LETTER TO PRESIDENT JAVIER MILEI MONTHS INTO HIS ADMINISTRATION

Dear Mr president,

We are sending this open letter to make you aware of Amnesty International's serious concerns about the human rights situation in Argentina under your government. We recognise that the economic and social crisis that the country has been going through for years has demanded change. However, we are alarmed that in 10 months of government, poverty has not decreased but, on the contrary, has increased. Moreover, public freedoms are under threat.

The following are some of the points that are of concern to us, and we therefore call on you to respect and guarantee the human rights of all people.

### Freedom of expression under attack

Amnesty International regrets that his administration is leading a **violent and intolerant confrontation**—a tactic drawn from authoritarian playbooks—that uses hate and misinformation as a strategy to silence and censor anyone who thinks differently, including journalists, opposition leaders, and grassroots organizations. These messages have been amplified by government officials, especially on the digital platforms X and TikTok, which has often unleashed a barrage of abuse and hate.

Since his administration started, Amnesty International has documented attacks on and harassment of at least 30 journalists, a pattern that severely jeopardizes freedom of expression. Smear campaigns, slander, and stigmatization have been used by public officials and their supporters to intimidate a free and independent press that questions or challenges the government's actions.

His administration has also clamped down on physical civic space, especially the rights to **freedom of expression and peaceful assembly**. The Ministry of Security issued a protocol that severely restrict peaceful protests and authorize abusive use of force, as well as indiscriminate use of less lethal weapons (tear gas and rubber bullets shot at people's faces), water cannons, and surveillance mechanisms on social media. When combined with arbitrary arrests and the criminalization of grassroots protests, the aim seems to be to instill a climate of dread to quash any discontent that could rightly be given voice under freedom of thought and expression, rights which must be guaranteed according to Argentina's international human rights obligations.

We draw attention to the case of [Matías Aufieri](#), who [lost sight in his left eye](#) after being struck by a rubber bullet during a protest on 1 February 2024 outside the National Congress building. Or to the [dozens of people who were arbitrarily arrested](#) and taken to detention centres on 12 June during the protests against the "[Ley de Bases](#)," which included serious austerity measures.

In a [letter](#) sent to his government, special rapporteurs of the United Nations called on the government to revise the rules it had passed to restrict peaceful assembly, checking them against international standards to avoid violating these and other rights. The Committee on the Rights of the Child, in its [recommendations](#) from September of this year, called for strengthening children's rights to freedom of association and peaceful assembly by repealing the parts of the Protocol that restrict their right to participate in protests. Meanwhile, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) [expressed its concern](#) about Argentina's disproportionate use of state force and condemned state actions to associate social protests with a "coup d'état" and to brand protesters as "terrorists."

We are also concerned by the steps the Argentine authorities have taken towards regulations that combine technologies with [artificial intelligence for mass and indiscriminate surveillance of people](#), in the name of security. These measures create a system of "cyber-policing" that violates the rights to privacy, freedom, and intimacy.

### Hunger and financial vulnerability do not advance freedom

In terms of the economy, adjustment policies coupled with escalating prices have had a direct impact on low- and medium-



income households [and increasing the population that falls below the poverty line](#). On the international stage, the government boasts of a historic surplus, the first in 16 years. But this surplus has taken a heavy toll on the population: the number of [people living in poverty rose](#) from 41.7% in the last quarter of 2023, when the new administration took office, to 52.9% in the first quarter of 2024. Meanwhile, over one million children [go to bed hungry](#), and the minimum pension for older people is not enough to cover the [Canasta Básica Total](#), which is the set of basic expenses like food, clothing, and transportation.

Furthermore, in the first quarter of 2024, the minimum pension for older people reached lows of almost half the income level defined as the poverty threshold. These lows have never been reached for as long as the National Institute for Statistics and Censuses has been using its current measurement method, which it implemented in 2016. The impact on older women is even more alarming given their historic overrepresentation in the informal workforce: [only 12.1% of women at the retirement age](#) of 55 to 59 years old currently have made the 20 years of retirement fund contributions required by Argentine law in order to receive a pension.

Instead of addressing the situation, his government has announced its interest in increasing the retirement age or making pension amounts proportional to contributions. This would [result in incomes that fall below even the minimum pension threshold](#) and that would not cover people's living expenses. **This measure would unquestionably push more older people, especially women, into poverty.**

## Freedom is gender-blind

We also condemn the war that his government has waged against the **rights of women**.

Mr President: every hour, [five children and adolescents under age 20 become mothers](#) in Argentina. Although many of these pregnancies are unintended or even the result of sexual violence, **his administration has backpedalled on a successful policy**. The [Plan for Preventing Unintended Adolescent Pregnancies](#) (Plan ENIA, for its Spanish acronym) helped lower the adolescent fertility rate by 49% in the last four years, as reported by the United Nations Population Fund. Despite this success, the Ministry of Health dismantled the plan by [terminating the contracts of 619 experts](#) and cutting off supplies. It was then left up to provincial governments to decide whether to continue these contracts and to figure out how to fund them.

Regarding sexual and reproductive health, his presidency has used his office on national and international stages to characterize voluntary termination of pregnancy as the "[bloody agenda of abortion](#)," along with other stigmatizing rhetoric and false information. While the abortion law remains in force, despite attempts in Parliament to repeal it, the policies of his administration administration threaten the ability to purchase and distribute supplies that are essential for **guaranteeing safe abortions** in the country.

Policies to address gender violence have also been eroded, with a [significant drop in staff](#) for Helpline 144, a telephone number that women who are victims of violence can call to receive support. The undermining of this institution **puts the lives of thousands of women in the country at risk**, given that a femicide occurs every 35 hours in Argentina, as reported in the [registry of femicides](#) of the Supreme Court of Justice of the Nation.

There is an urgent need to reverse measures against public policies that guarantee the human rights of all people, and Amnesty International calls on you to:

1. Abstain from violent and intimidating speech and messages, especially towards journalists and media, that foster a climate of harassment and censorship and restrict freedom of expression.
2. Respect and protect the full exercise of freedom of expression, of assembly, of association, and the right to defend human rights by repealing Resolution 943/2023, passing laws and regulations that respect human rights, and ensuring that international human rights standards on the use of force are enforced.
3. Avoid wrongful use of criminal measures to harass protesters as a way of restricting the right to peaceful protest.



4. Guarantee decent living conditions for older people by providing resources and quality services, and urgently address the plight of those who receive a minimum pension and are unable to cover their basic living expenses.
5. Do everything possible to protect people's income and quality of life as prices and living costs rise, with a non-regressive and human rights approach.
6. Guarantee the right of women, in all their diversity, to live a life free of violence. This includes rolling back institutional measures that have curtailed the response to victims of gender violence, as well as their protection and access to justice, and securing the funds needed to strengthen public policies designed to reduce gender inequality.
7. Ensure the right to health and reproductive choice, among other aspects, by providing the supplies and resources (budget, staff, materials, facilities) that enable continued access to sexual health and reproductive care and services throughout the country, including access to abortion.
8. Guarantee the continuity and strengthening of the National Plan for Preventing Unintended Adolescent Pregnancies, including a budget large enough for the supplies, facilities, and technical and human resources needed to effectively and correctly implement the program.

Freedom, Mr. President, is not an isolated concept, it is a human right recognised and protected by international law that binds the Argentine State and all its institutions. Freedom is indivisibly related to the recognition, without discrimination, of the right of people to live a dignified life, free from violence, with access to quality public services, and to not have their lives and integrity put at risk.

**Mr. President, for freedom to advance, you, as head of state, must guarantee and ensure the fulfilment of all human rights equally.**