This special issue of the Rights to Public Security in Maré Bulletin is produced by An Eye on Maré, a project led by the Rights to Public Security and Access to Justice team at Redes da Maré. The project has developed a methodology to monitor the impact of armed violence in the 16 favelas that comprise Maré, systematizing qualitative and quantitative data about public security policies affecting the territory. Extreme circumstances have made this special edition necessary: the statistics showing the dynamic of violence in the territory over the first six months of 2019 surpass comparative indicators for the entire year of 2018.

21

POLICE OPERATIONS
10 of these took place in the Marcílio Dias area of the Maré favela complex, demonstrating the arbitrary and inconsistent reasoning behind the authorities’ actions.

10

ARMED CONFRONTATIONS
RECORDED BETWEEN CRIMINAL GROUPS

10

DAYS OF CLOSURE
OF HEALTH FACILITIES AND SCHOOLS IN THE AREA

27

DEATHS
15 during police operations and 12 during armed confrontations between criminal groups. It is noticeable that the increase in police operations has had a direct impact: increasing the violence between armed groups.

FIRST SEMESTER | 2019

DATA ON THE DYNAMICS OF VIOLENCE WITHIN THE TERRITORY OF MARÉ IN THE FIRST SIX MONTHS OF 2019

THE 22ND AISP or “Integrated Public Security Area” (AISP) comprises six suburban areas of Rio de Janeiro: Maré, Benfica, Bonsucesso, Higienópolis, Nacopéia and Ramos. Over the first six months of 2019, this area saw a welcome reduction in fatal encounters with police compared to the previous year. This is not reflected in Maré where the total doubled in fact: 50% of all the deaths during police operations recorded in the whole AISP area were in Maré.

PERIOD | 22ND AISP* | MARÉ
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2018 Jan-June | 74 | 14
2019 Jan-June | 54 | 27

* integrated public security area (AISP)
In 2017, the project An Eye on Maré registered 41 police operations with 20 casualties; in 2018 the number of operations reduced to 16, less than half the previous year’s level. There was also a small decrease in the number of deaths on days where police operations were held in Maré [19 in total]. This trend has now sharply reversed, with the alarming total of 21 police operations and 15 deaths over the first semester of 2019.

It is also noticeable that in these first six months, schools and health centres had to close down for 10 days as a result of police operations, equalling the number of closure days for the whole of 2018. Such closures cause a major negative impact on the psychological, emotional, social and economic lives of an important sector of the city’s population, especially young people and children. Maré is the 9th most populous neighbourhood in Rio, with over 147 thousand people living in the territory.

Another important aspect is the use of helicopters, known by residents as the “air caveiro”, in eight out of a total 21 police operations so far in 2019. Police operations resulted in a total of 15 deaths, 14 of these during helicopter-based actions. Though there is no formal proof that police helicopters were the source of the bullets that caused these deaths, data collected by Redes da Maré indicates that the use of armoured helicopters has introduced militarised strategies into police operations, contributing to the increase in lethal violence. The Redes da Maré team has received a number of reports of wrongdoing from residents, through which the rising death toll can be linked to the coordinated use of police armoured helicopters and cars. The police strategy has been to create an armed cordon in the streets encircling members of civil armed groups, so they have no chance of escape. In many cases the consequence has been for these individuals to take refuge “under siege” in the houses of nearby Maré residents. The police response has been biased and arbitrary — ranging from psychological and physical abuses to summary execution. The most emblematic of these actions took place on 6 May 2019, when eight young people were killed, with indications of summary execution, inside two houses in the Conjunto Esperança area.

The current situation is a major setback in a situation that had been improving. In 2017, a Civil Injunction (Ação Cível Pública/ACP) was granted covering the Complex of Maré with the aim of reducing violence, or at least assuring the legality of police operations: it enforced a set of compulsory measures on those operations, including prohibiting actions during school hours, obliging police vehicles to use cameras and GPS devices at all times, and requiring the presence of ambulances. These measures were successful in reducing the indicators of violence in 2018 as compared to 2017. However, the data presented above shows a sharp escalation in violent actions since the beginning of 2019. Among a variety of reasons, two factors are prominent: firstly, the very public support that has been offered by Federal and State Government leaders to the use of lethal violence as the main strategy for public security issues in Rio de Janeiro; and secondly, the suspension followed by the overturning of the Civil Injunction (ACP) granted to cover Maré. The justification given was that democratically elected leaders have the right to implement their public security policies without judicial intervention.

In practice, this decision endorses the public security policies of current State and Federal representatives, which apply a “warranty logic” and take a militarised, confrontational approach against criminal networks operating in residential areas. The consequences reverberate in day to day life in Rio’s favelas, as is the case with Maré. As our data shows, there is a clear increase in lethal violence and contraventions of residents’ basic rights.