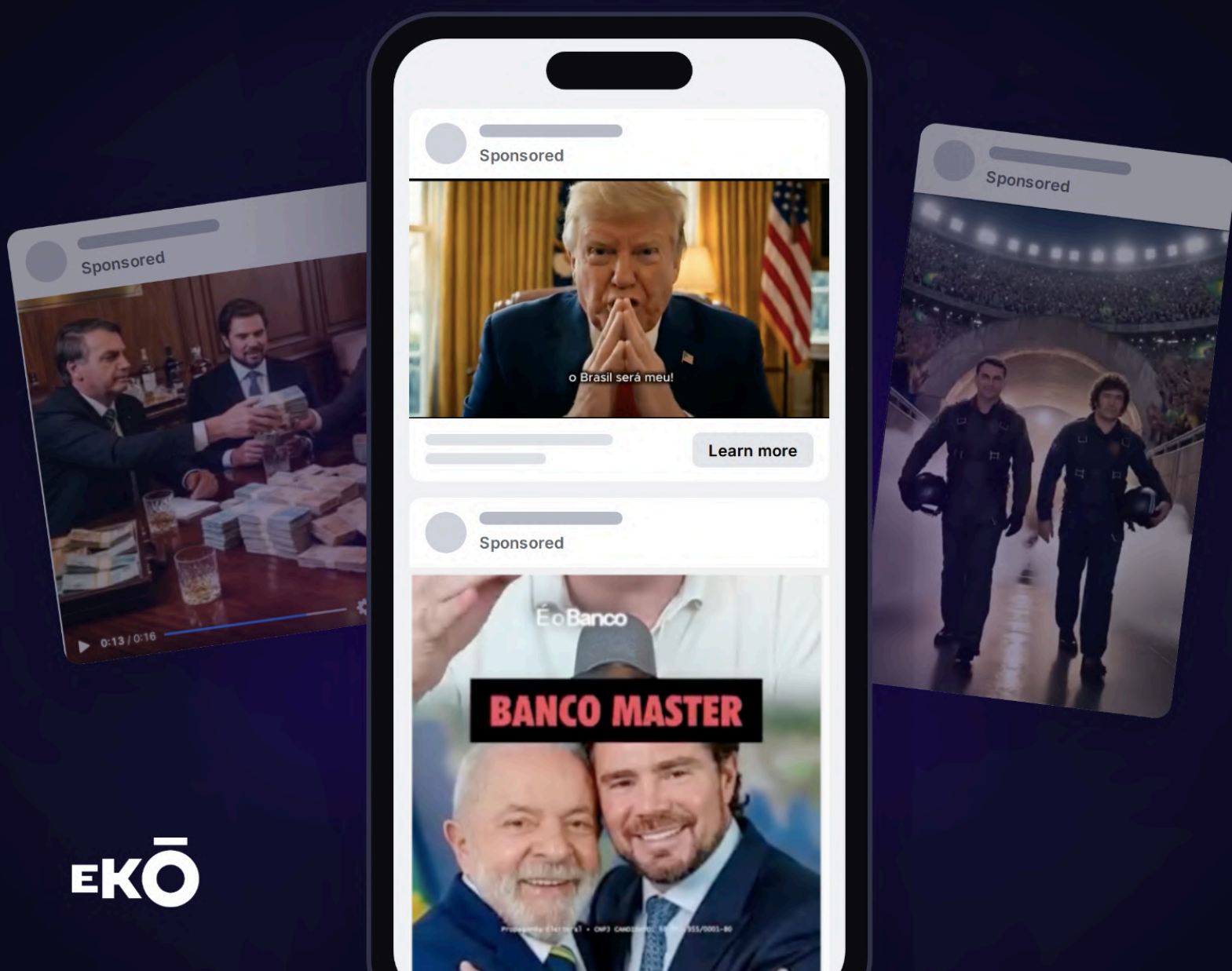


Meta's election disinformation ad machine

Online ads that potentially break platform rules and electoral law generating thousands of views



Introduction

With Brazil's pivotal Presidential election days away, new research shows Meta is publishing — and profiting from — AI-fuelled advertising that spreads election disinformation, anti-democratic narratives and violence on Facebook and Instagram, many potentially in breach of its own guidelines and of Brazil's national electoral laws.

Last week, Meta disabled President Lula's campaign ad account without saying which rules it had broken. Meanwhile, accounts run from abroad kept paying Meta to push deepfakes and disinformation.

The research conducted by corporate accountability group Ekō uncovered dozens of ads in Meta's ad library including deepfake attack ads and ads pushing conspiracy theories, election disinformation and hate speech.

Between 25th August and 2nd September 2026, Ekō researchers searched Meta's Ad Library using terms and phrases tied to recent news, viral hashtags, and other key issues surrounding the candidates and the election circulating in Brazil. Researchers identified hundreds of ads and selected this sample of 30 of the most problematic, nearly all of them appear to breach both Meta's community guidelines and Brazil's national laws including unlabelled AI-generated material, and accounts administered outside of Brazil.

Key findings include:

- 26 ad accounts identified in the research spent a total of \$223K USD (R\$1.1M) on ads — and many of them appear to be shadow accounts not authorized to run electoral or political ads in Brazil at all.
- The 30 ads analysed in the research gathered between 2.2M–2.58M impressions by the time researchers reviewed it — and it is a small fraction of what Ekō found circulating in Meta’s Ad Library.
- Unlabelled, AI-generated deepfakes targeting presidential candidates Lula and Bolsonaro breach Brazil’s rules on disclosing AI-generated campaign content, and its bans on ads that attack political opponents.
- Some of the accounts identified were administered outside Brazil including in Guatemala, Colombia and Peru; and some of the ads were paid for in foreign currency. Brazilian law bars foreign financing of election advertising, directly or indirectly.
- A handful of accounts presented themselves as ‘news’ pages or journalists to sidestep Brazil’s ad-authorization, which exempt official media outlets promoting their own work.
- The majority of the ads identified were correctly labelled as ‘social, political or electoral’ ads. This category of ads receives more careful vetting, given its potential impact. The ads broke the rules anyway, which makes the breaches even more worrying.
- Meta identified and removed some of the ads after several hours or days for breaching rules — but only after many had gathered thousands of impressions.
- A significant number of the profiles appear to be previously dormant pages reactivated and repurposed to publish dozens of ads in a matter of days — a pattern that looks like a coordinated unauthorised election-ad hub. The ad content they are publishing appears to break Meta rules and Brazil’s laws.

Election advertising is a lucrative business for Meta, one of only two platforms authorised to run ads this election cycle. Candidates had already spent \$3.4M dollars (R\$17,476M) on election ads between 16th August and 2nd September. That total spend does not include the many illegitimate actors posting and paying for ads, such as those identified in this report, which Meta also profits from.

This is Ekō's third investigation into how Meta's AI systems and advertising business are failing Brazil's election. The [first exposed](#) what Meta's own AI chatbot was telling Brazilian voters — recommending and amplifying election disinformation on request. The [second showed](#) that Meta's ad-review system would approve AI-generated hate speech and disinformation submitted as a real-world test. This report shows what is already live and running in Meta's public Ad Library.

Meta – a history of disrupting Brazil's elections

This isn't the first time Meta's ad business has boosted election disinformation in Brazil. In 2022, social media platforms like Meta, YouTube and TikTok all amplified far-right narratives to millions of people across Brazil. Despite warnings from experts, civil society and regulators, the platforms failed to take robust measures – helping to fuel real world violence culminating in the attempted coup in Brasilia in January 2023.

Now AI tools can generate disinformation at unprecedented speed and scale, and Brazil is once again the test case for whether an election can be defended against a flood of conspiracy theories and hate speech.

In addition to the growth and widespread use of AI, Brazil faces another risk, being the possibility that [foreign actors](#) are trying to destabilise the elections from the outside. Experts are increasingly concerned by signs that the US is attempting to tip the balance. In July, it's reported that two Trump officials had been denied entry visas for a planned meeting with Bolsonaro and plans to sow doubt over the integrity of Brazil's election system. Soon after, the visa of Brazil's ambassador to Washington was [revoked](#).

Brazil's current legal framework on political advertising, including use of AI

Brazil's government has passed strong laws to hold tech companies accountable for the misuse of AI, and for pushing electoral disinformation.

Political advertising in Brazil is tightly regulated by the Brazilian Superior Electoral Tribunal (TSE). Only candidates, political parties and official campaigns are permitted to pay for electoral ads. Media outlets are also

allowed to advertise but only to promote their own coverage. Everyone else is barred from paying to boost electoral content.

Even authorised advertisers face limits. For example, ads cannot personally attack political opponents and any AI-generated content must be clearly labelled. Brazil's [laws](#) guard against political and electoral advertising from outside Brazil. Candidates and political parties may not receive, directly or indirectly, donations in cash or in kind (including through advertising of any kind) from foreign sources which in effect bars foreign-funded political advertising outright.

These rules are designed to make it clear who is paying to influence voters. The findings of this report appear to show shadow advertisers who have found a way around these rules in order to push electoral ads favoring different candidates. Many of the accounts in the research are able to promote this political content while hiding who is behind them or where their money comes from. By posing as news outlets, fan pages or ordinary users, they can run ads that appear to fall outside the authorisation regime entirely. In doing so they are able to run attack ads, dodge AI labelling requirements, and appear to be publishing ads from abroad using foreign funding.

Below are some examples of the types of ads researchers identified in Meta's ads library. The research was conducted between 25th August and 2nd September and filtered for ads in Portuguese language only. Ekō researchers used Meta's ads library to identify the problematic ads through a keyword search using terms including: Lulinha, Bolsomaster, INSS, and Tariflávio.

Examples of ads

1.) Soldados do Capitão (Captain Soldiers)

This is an example of what appears to be a dormant account, which was then reactivated and published a flurry of ads in August 2026.



(“Captain” is one of the many nicknames of ex-President Jair Bolsonaro used by his followers):

[This attack ad](#) tries to smear Lula’s son, Lulinha. In the video, a candidate running for a seat in Brazil’s elections, visits an office in Madrid alleging that it is connected to Lulinha’s company. The implication is that Lulinha (and Lula) isn’t transparent about his business affairs, and by implication connecting to the corruption allegations against Lula. The video was initially posted on the candidate’s account but has been reposted by this [Facebook page](#), which describes itself as a “news and media” platform. However, it is not an officially

With 0 posts, 0 followers, and no other channel, profile or website attached to it, the account has already paid for 62 ads with a total spend of \$1143.38 USD.



DOCUMENTOS REVELADOS PELA IMPRENSA

Lulinha abre empresa na Espanha em meio a investigações do INSS

Filho do presidente foi citado no inquérito da Polícia Federal e em depoimentos; defesa nega irregularidade e se contrapõe à divulgação para escandalizar

Elisavete Braga, no 'Cariacô' Brasil



LULINHA ABRE EMPRESA NA ESPANHA EM MEIO A INVESTIGAÇÃO



Soldados do Capitão

Identificação: 122095084094010221

3 seguidores • Site de notícias e mídia

Formas de pagamento para anúncios sobre temas sociais, eleições ou política

Exigimos que os anunciantes verifiquem a forma de pagamento para cada anúncio sobre temas sociais, eleições ou política. Um anunciante pode declarar várias formas de pagamento.

Valor total gasto R\$ 1.987

4 de ago de 2020 - 22 de ago de 2026 in Brasil

O valor total estimado que este anunciante gastou em anúncios sobre temas sociais, eleições ou política.

Rótulos	Gasto por rótulo
Soldados do Capitão	R\$ 1.987

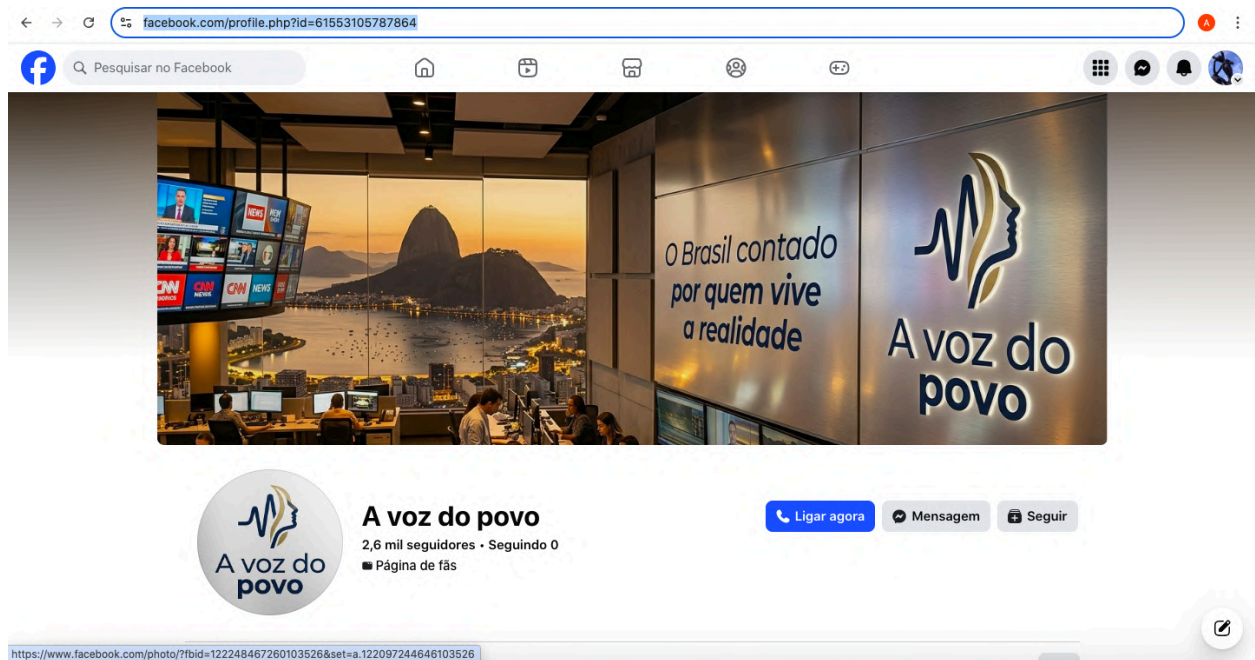
Gasto da semana passada R\$ 1.507

7 dias • 16 de ago - 22 de ago de 2026 in Brasil

O valor estimado que esse anunciante gastou durante a última semana em anúncios sobre temas sociais, eleições ou política.

Fechar

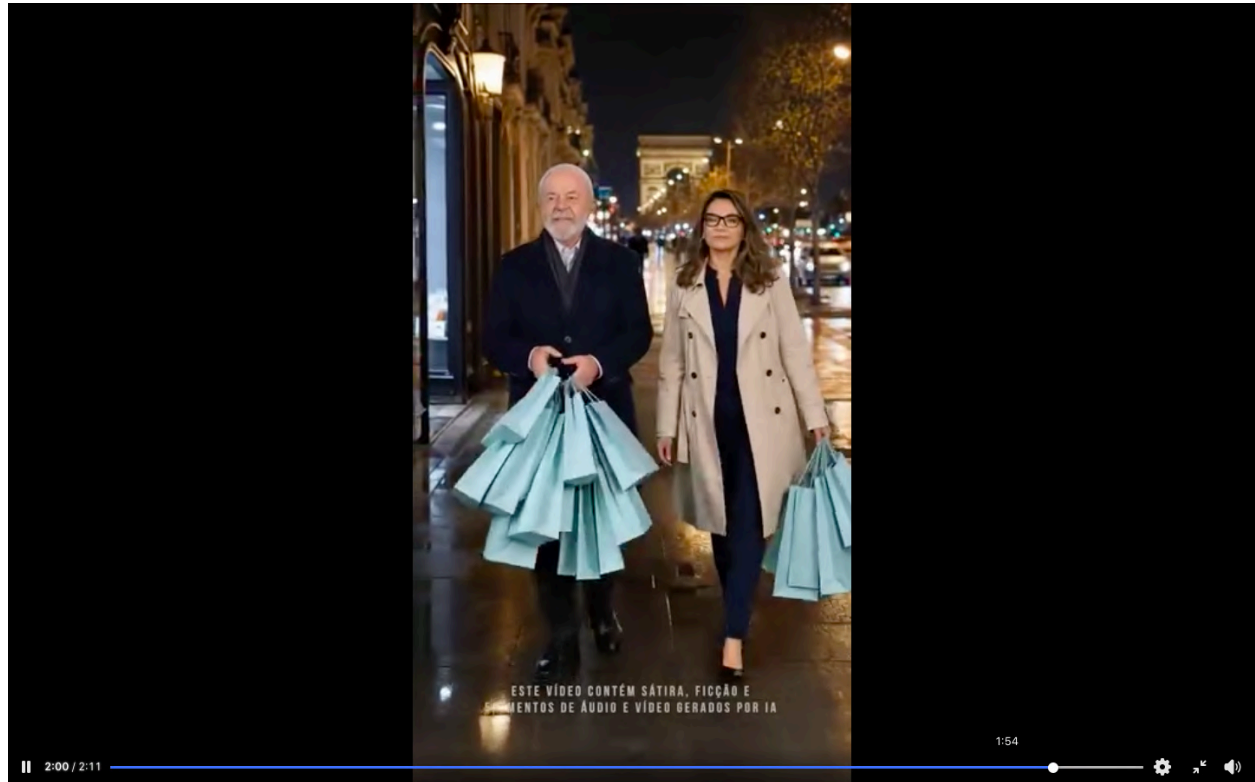
2.) A Voz do Povo

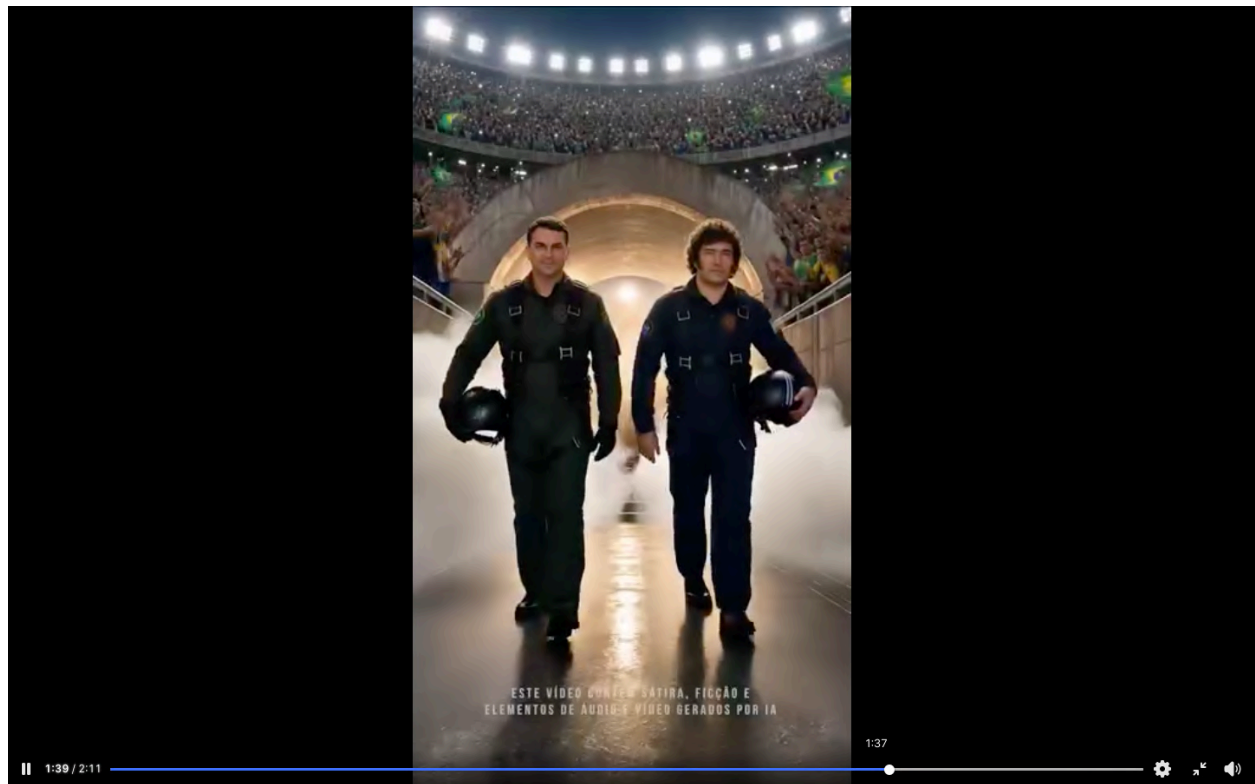


This account describes itself as a ‘fan page’. The page was created in 2023, has been recently updated, and has 2,500 followers. Like several other accounts identified in this research, it appears to be acting as a hub for illegal electoral ads. The account has a phone number, an email and other registration information on file with Meta. Researchers attempted to contact the account using the phone number and email it has on file with Meta and received no response to either. The administrators of this account are located in Guatemala and Peru. It has paid for a total of 20 ads, many containing unlabelled AI content.

In the [example ad below](#), an AI-generated video features Flávio Bolsonaro and Argentinian President Javier Milei – portraying Bolsonaro as a strong man – and characterising Lula and his wife as luxury shoppers in Paris. It says:

“Mission: Free Brazil from Communists”. The ad breaks Brazil’s laws because the AI content isn’t labelled.





[A second ad](#) from the same account attacks Brazil's Superior Electoral Court and raises doubts about the integrity of Brazil's electoral system. The video features Eduardo Bolsonaro, Flávio Bolsonaro's brother, alongside Fernando Cerimedo, an Argentinian political ally discussing unproven claims of election fraud in 2022 and 2018.

Detalhes do anúncio

Plataformas  Categorias  Tamanho estimado do público: >1 mi  Valor gasto (BRL): <R\$100  Impressões: 9 mil a 10 mil  **A voz do povo**
Patrocinado • Pago por A voz do povo
Identificação da biblioteca: 1079029701262024

...

O que você achou deste vídeo?



Eduardo Bolsonaro

Fernando Cerimedo

Veiculação do anúncio



Valor gasto

<R\$100 (BRL)

O valor total estimado que você gastou em um anúncio durante sua programação. [Saiba mais](#)

Impressões

9 mil a 10 mil

O número de vezes que um anúncio apareceu em uma tela, o que pode incluir várias visualizações pelas mesmas pessoas.

[Saiba mais](#)Idade e gênero  Homens  Mulheres  Desconhecido

30%

20%

Fechar

3.) Contra a Maré

Meta

Biblioteca de AnúnciosRelatório da Biblioteca de AnúnciosAPI da Biblioteca de AnúnciosConteúdo de marca

Resumo de dados

4 versões de anúnciosIdentificação da Biblioteca: 4448571515288304



Sobre o anunciante

Contra a Maré

Identificação: 976137498916351
207 seguidores • Criador(a) de conteúdo digital

Formas de pagamento para anúncios sobre temas sociais, eleições ou política

Exigimos que os anunciantes verifiquem a forma de pagamento para cada anúncio sobre temas sociais, eleições ou política. Um anunciante pode declarar várias formas de pagamento.

Valor total gasto R\$ 142.520

4 de ago de 2020 - 22 de ago de 2026 in Brasil

O valor total estimado que este anunciante gastou em anúncios sobre temas sociais, eleições ou política.

Rótulos

Contra a Maré

Gasto por rótulo

R\$ 142.520

Fechar

This account has spent \$27,608.98 in the last 90 days alone. The ad above depicts the family of Jair Bolsonaro and poses the question of whether they are an organized criminal gang. This breaches multiple laws including rules that prohibit political attack ads and labelling AI content.

4. Ricardo Molina



This is an [example ad](#) from the account of São Paulo state candidate, Ricardo Molina. Under Brazilian law, he is authorised to run electoral ads, however these ads posted by his account break numerous rules. The ads use AI-generated content that isn't labelled and the ads push allegations of corruption against Lula and his Workers' Party — potentially breaking rules that prohibit political attack ads on opponents. Molina is a significant advertiser on Meta, having placed more than 1,300 ads in total. He has spent just over \$6000 USD in the last 90 days.

Meta

Biblioteca de AnúnciosRelatório da Biblioteca de AnúnciosAPI da Biblioteca de AnúnciosConteúdo de marca

Detalhes do anúncio



Público do anúncio

Os anunciantes podem direcionar seus anúncios para determinados públicos com base em idade, gênero e localização.

Tamanho estimado do público

100 mil a 500 mil

O tamanho estimado do público é uma estimativa de quantas Contas Meta atenderam aos critérios de direcionamento de um anunciante quando o anúncio foi criado... Ver mais

Veiculação do anúncio

Valor gasto

R\$300 a R\$399 (BRL)

O valor total estimado que você gastou em um anúncio durante sua programação. Saiba mais

Impressões

Fechar

Meta

Biblioteca de AnúnciosRelatório da Biblioteca de AnúnciosAPI da Biblioteca de AnúnciosConteúdo de marca

Detalhes do anúncio



Impressões

60 mil a 70 mil

O número de vezes que um anúncio apareceu em uma tela, o que pode incluir várias visualizações pelas mesmas pessoas. Saiba mais

Idade e gênero

HomensMulheresDesconhecido

18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Unknown
2%	6%	18%	19%	15%	12%	0%
0%	1%	3%	6%	10%	12%	0%
0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

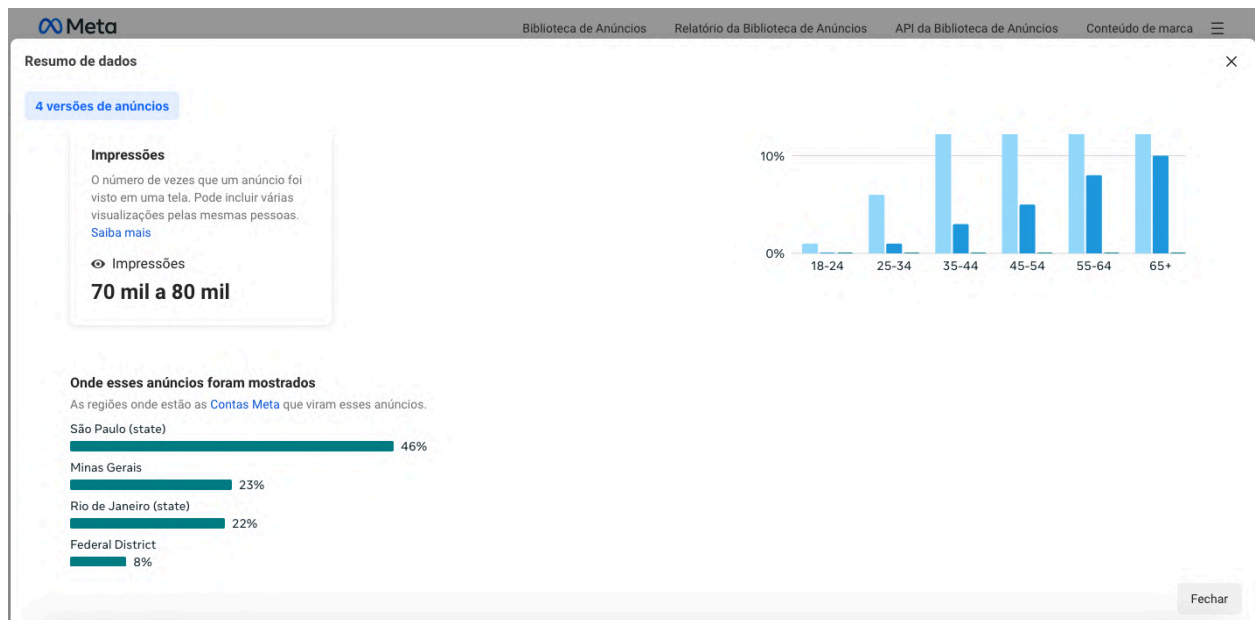
Localização

São Paulo (state)

Fechar

5.) Lente Escura

This account is paying for deepfake ads attacking political opponents. The ads feature an AI-generated meeting between Bolsonaro and Trump, ending with Trump shouting “Brazil will be mine!”. It received between 30–35k impressions, and the account has spent over \$20K USD in the last 90 days.



Meta

API da Biblioteca de AnúnciosConteúdo de marca

Detalhes do anúncio

Categorias

Tamanho estimado do público: >1 mi

Valor gasto (BRL): R\$400 a R\$499

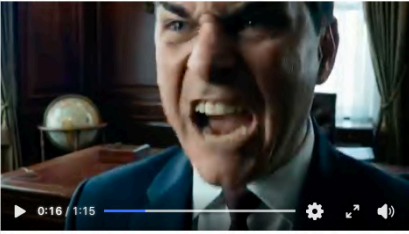
Impressões: 30 mil a 35 mil

Lente Escura

Patrocinado • Pago por Lente Escura

Identificação da biblioteca: 781620965037094

O tema continua repercutindo entre especialistas e cidadãos. Comente.



Público do anúncio

Os anunciantes podem direcionar seus anúncios para determinados públicos com base em idade, gênero e localização.

Tamanho estimado do público

>1 mi

O tamanho estimado do público é uma estimativa de quantas Contas Meta atenderam aos critérios de direcionamento de um anunciante quando o anúncio foi criado... Ver mais

Veiculação do anúncio

Valor gasto

R\$400 a R\$499 (BRL)

O valor total estimado que você gastou em um anúncio durante sua programação. Saiba mais

Fechar

Meta

API da Biblioteca de AnúnciosConteúdo de marca

Detalhes do anúncio

Categorias

Tamanho estimado do público: >1 mi

Valor gasto (BRL): R\$400 a R\$499

Impressões: 30 mil a 35 mil

Lente Escura

Patrocinado • Pago por Lente Escura

Identificação da biblioteca: 781620965037094

O tema continua repercutindo entre especialistas e cidadãos. Comente.



Lente Escura

Identificação: 369000932968533

122 seguidores • Artista de videogame

Formas de pagamento para anúncios sobre temas sociais, eleições ou política

Exigimos que os anunciantes verifiquem a forma de pagamento para cada anúncio sobre temas sociais, eleições ou política. Um anunciante pode declarar várias formas de pagamento.

Valor total gasto R\$ 103.769

4 de ago de 2020 - 29 de ago de 2026 in Brasil

O valor total estimado que este anunciante gastou em anúncios sobre temas sociais, eleições ou política.

Rótulos	Gasto por rótulo
Lente Escura	R\$ 103.769

Gasto da semana passada R\$ 0

7 dias • 23 de ago - 29 de ago de 2026 in Brasil

O valor estimado que esse anunciante gastou durante a última semana em anúncios sobre temas sociais, eleições ou

Fechar



6.) Olho no Erro

This account has published multiple ads and has spent over \$36k USD in the last 90 days. [This ad](#) includes an AI-generated image attacking Flávio Bolsonaro, and was posted in June.

The ad has title text saying, “The house came down for the Bolsonaro family” and uses AI-generated imagery of stacks of cash to claim that Bolsonaro family was bankrolled by imprisoned former banker Daniel Vorcaro. The ad was viewed between 125–150k times.

Meta

Biblioteca de AnúnciosRelatório da Biblioteca de AnúnciosAPI da Biblioteca de AnúnciosConteúdo de marca

Resumo de dados

8 versões de anúnciosIdentificação da Biblioteca: 1546838700357605



Público do anúncio

Os anunciantes podem direcionar seus anúncios para determinados públicos com base em idade, gênero e localização.

Tamanho estimado do público

>1 mi

O tamanho estimado do público é uma estimativa de quantas Contas Meta atenderam aos critérios de direcionamento de um anunciante quando o anúncio foi criado... Ver mais

Veiculação do anúncio

Valor gasto

R\$1 mil a R\$1,5 mil (BRL)

O valor total estimado que você gastou em um anúncio durante sua programação. Saiba mais

Fechar

Resumo de dados

8 versões de anúncios

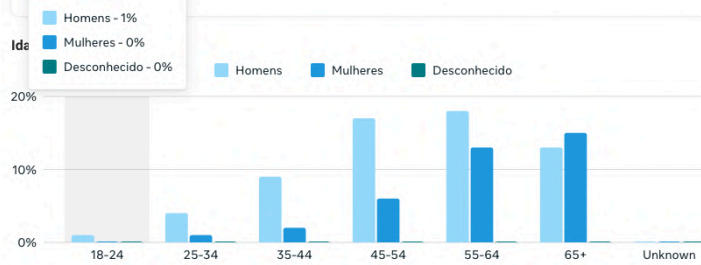
Identificação da Biblioteca: 1546838700357605 X



Impressões

125 mil a 150 mil

Anúncio apareceu em uma tela, o que pode incluir várias visualizações pelas mesmas pessoas.



Fechar

Conclusion

Meta is profiting from AI-driven election disinformation, and it's doing so in the open. The ads identified in this research sit in Meta's public Ad Library and show unlabelled deepfakes of presidential candidates, AI-generated images fabricating meetings between political figures, attack ads run by shadow accounts with no followers or history, and ads paid for by accounts based outside of Brazil. All of these ads were approved, run, and generated revenue for Meta.

Meta's decision last week to disable President Lula's campaign ad account, makes the double standard hard to ignore. Meta is willing to act quickly and without explanation against a candidate days before the vote. Meanwhile, the shadow accounts and unlawful ads documented in this research are allowed free reign, amassing millions of impressions.

Brazil has built rules specifically to stop this, including bans on illegitimate political advertisers, foreign-financed campaign ads, and stringent AI labeling. Meta is failing all at once, across dozens of accounts identified in this research.

Although the company had every tool it needed to catch this, it has deprioritized its business' Trust and Safety to doubling down to becoming a business model of disinformation and hate. As AI has made disinformation faster and cheaper to produce than ever, this research gives a glimpse into the consequences of Meta's choices. Days before Brazil's critical election, Brazilian voters and democracy deserve much more.

Recommendations:

Meta

- Immediately remove the ads and suspend the accounts identified in this report, and conduct a review of its Ad Library in Brazil for similar violations.
- Verify advertiser identity and eligibility before approving political and electoral ads, not after they have already run and gathered impressions.
- Enforce Brazil's ban on foreign-funded political advertising, including where payment is made in foreign currency or account administrators are based outside Brazil.
- Enforce AI-content labelling requirements consistently, and remove accounts that repeatedly run unlabelled AI-generated political ads.

Brazil's electoral authority (TSE):

- Investigate the accounts and ads identified in this report and apply Brazilian electoral law, including removal orders and penalties, where breaches are confirmed.
- Require Meta to audit the platform's compliance with Brazilian electoral advertising law, requiring the company to provide information, clarifications and a description of the measures it will take to correct the failures identified in this report, with a fixed deadline for compliance.