BRAZILIAN PROTESTS

One banner displayed drawings of Rio de Janeiro Governor Sergio Cabral and Mayor Eduardo Paes aiming guns at the face of Christ the Redeemer, one of the most recognizable symbols of the city.

History and Current Status:

After over a month of protests, millions of Brazilians participated in the demonstrations and five died in violence against the police or victim of accidents. One of the key groups is the Free Fare Movement, which started the protests and still advocates for the elimination of all transit fees.

Most recently, protests are ongoing in Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo, and dozens of other cities; however, these protests have gone down in participation since the Thursday, June 20th march (more than a million protestors).

June 24th poll:
- 75% of Brazilians support the protests but only 6% admitted having participated in the demonstrations; 35% of those who stayed away confessed having been tempted to join the protests.
- Regarding the motives for the protests, 77% mentioned the deficient transport system; 47% dissatisfaction with politicians of all parties; 32% corruption; 31% poor education and health care and 18% inflation.
- Asked about the main problems of Brazil: 78% mentioned healthcare; 55% law and order; 52% education; 26% drugs; 17% corruption and 11%, extended misery.
- 40% support the current Confederation Cup, 31% are against and 28% are middle of the road. And as to the 2014 world cup, 43% strongly support the event, 27% remains divided and 29% is against.

Strengths:
- Inclusive movement: protestors come from all social classes, ranging from the poorest favelas to middle-class and well-off youth, from indigenous populations marginalized by the government's land policies to those fed up with inequality and corruption.
  Trade unions have shown support for the movement
- Massive popular support (75% of Brazilian population)

Weaknesses:
- Lack of unity of the movement and of protestors demands
- Ongoing struggle between groups trying to control and claim the protests, especially opposition parties eying next year's presidential elections
- Lack of concrete demands for reforms (besides those regarding public transport fees)
- Violence, massive robberies and looting during and after demonstrations as well as surrounding soccer games.

Partial successes:
The protestors have already won several victories:
- Various city authorities have reversed increases in public transport fares
- The president of the senate, Renan Calheiros, has proposed free transport for all students.
- President Rousseff said over $20 billion will be invested in public transports.
- Congress also voted to use all the royalties from newly discovered oil fields for education and health
- A constitutional amendment was rejected by the Congress – a newspaper described it as a direct result of "pressure from the streets". The amendment would have limited the power of federal prosecutors to investigate crimes, and might have therefore open the way for more corruption.
- A parliamentary working group, in charge of making proposals for political reforms, was created.
- A new law including higher penalties for corrupt officials has been fast-tracked through senate. Rousseff backed the bill, and it was approved within 48 hours.

Notable nonviolent actions:
- Massive demonstrations of millions around the country (widespread use of music and singing during the marches)
- Singing of national anthem on the roof of the National Assembly, in subway stations, during demonstrations
- A video emerged showing Brazilian Military Police, who are initially attempting to control the protests, sitting down and joining in the movement.
- A group of activists organize 'hackdays', investigating and publishing data on who owns the transit systems – ran by private companies – and looking for connections between business people and politicians
- Calls for general strike on July 1st. On social networks, the message was: "On July 1, 2013, Brazil will grind to a halt."
- The five largest workers' unions have called for a strike – not a general one – on July 11th (day before they will meet with President Dilma Rousseff). The demands associated with the strike include: a shortening of the working day, an increase in pension benefits, and more investments in health and education.
  BUT the unions specified that the strike is unrelated to calls, on social networks, to paralyze the whole country on July 1st.
- In Brasilia, protesters lined up 594 soccer balls in front of Parliament to show the "ball is in the court of the Congress to pass the reforms demanded by those on the streets,"

Open source analysis by CANVAS team based upon inputs from Gastromotiva

- 500 soccer balls were lined up on Rio de Janeiro's Copacabana beach, painted with red crosses, resembling a cemetery. "We have 500 soccer balls which represent the 500,000 people who were killed in Brazil in the last 10 years. The country organizing the World Cup and the Olympics allows human lives be cut short every day in our streets. The purpose of this demonstration is to ask our public officials who show political willingness to construct magnificent stadiums, following the FIFA model, to also offer up to hospitals using the FIFA model, schools using the FIFA model, security using the FIFA model. What we are asking for is reasonable" Antonio Costa, president of Rio's Peace Organization, said.

<u>Recommendations:</u>
- Organizing meeting of leaders of various organizations (workers unions, students union, civil society groups, etc) to create a unified movement identity (e.g. manifesto) as well as a single strategy. The objective is for the protest movement to adopt nonviolence at the ideological level and to set clear, concrete goals that the struggle aims to achieve.
- Taking urgent steps to delegitimize the violence taking place during the protests, dissociate itself from it, and find creative ways to actively prevent it. It must be kept in mind that each instance of violence not only makes the movement less credible in the eyes of the government, but more importantly drives potential participants away and is likely to turn the population against the protest movement.