


DANGEROUS SILENCE: MAYORS IGNORE CIVIL DEFENSE IN GOVERNMENT PLANS FOR 2024

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Moisés Figueiredo da Silva¹, Leonardo de Souza Modero², Luciano Henrique Trindade³ and Antônio Pires Barbosa⁴

ABSTRACT

This article analyzes the absence of the "civil defense" theme in the government plans filed by the candidates elected in the cities of São Sebastião, Ilhabela, Caraguatatuba, Ubatuba, Bertioxa, and Guarujá, municipalities that were severely affected by the rains of February 2023. The documentary research was carried out based on data provided by the DivulgaCand system, of the Superior Electoral Court, evaluating whether the candidates dealt with civil defense in a complete, superficial way or if there was an omission. The results indicate a worrying neglect of planning for disaster prevention and response policies, especially in regions vulnerable to natural disasters. The analysis highlights the lack of priority given to the issue, even in recently devastated areas, raising questions about the future preparedness of these cities to face climate crises.

¹ Msc

Doctorate student and Master in Smart and Sustainable Cities at Universidade Nove de Julho – UNINOVE
Specialist in Public Administration and City Management, Graduated in Public Management
E-mail: moises@figueiredo.adm.br
ORCID: 0000-0002-3012-3402

² Lawyer

Master's student in the stricto sensu graduate program in Smart and Sustainable Cities at Universidade Nove de Julho
Student of the lato sensu graduate program in Medical and Biomedical Law at the Brazilian School of Law
Specialist in compliance, internal audit and ESG
Graduated in Law from Universidade São Judas Tadeu
E-mail: leonardo@moldero.adv.br
ORCID: 0009-0004-8815-7682

³ Doctor

Dr. in Business Administration from the University of São Paulo
Master in Business Administration from Fundação Getúlio Vargas - SP, degree in Business Administration from the Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo
Professor at the Federal Institute of Education, Science and Technology of São Paulo
E-mail: luciano.trindade@gmail.com
ORCID: 0000-0002-7773-2694

⁴ Doctor

Dr. and Master in Business Administration from Fundação Getúlio Vargas – FGV
Graduated in Medicine
Full Professor of the Professional Master's Program in Health Systems Management and the Academic Master's Program in Smart and Sustainable City Management at Universidade Nove de Julho
Professor of the Undergraduate Program in Medicine in the area of Collective Health and Primary Health Care
E-mail: rbe.pires@gmail.com
ORCID: 0000-0001-6478-6522

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INTRODUCTION

Civil defense plays a key role in public management, especially in regions vulnerable to natural disasters, such as coastal cities in the state of São Paulo, which often face heavy rainfall, floods, landslides, and other extreme weather events. These situations, in addition to putting the life and safety of the population at risk, also generate serious social, economic and environmental impacts. In February 2023, the cities of São Sebastião, Ilhabela, Caraguatatuba, Ubatuba, Bertioga, and Guarujá were severely hit by heavy rains that caused deaths, displacements, and destruction of infrastructure, highlighting the vulnerability of these municipalities to extreme events and the urgent need for effective public policies for prevention and mitigation.

In this context, civil defense stands out as a strategic area for the promotion of preventive measures, emergency preparedness, and the coordination of rapid and efficient responses to disasters. Law No. 12,608/2012, which instituted the National Policy for Civil Protection and Defense (PNPDEC), establishes guidelines for the prevention of disasters, the minimization of their damage, and the recovery of affected areas, attributing to the government the responsibility for the preparation of contingency plans and the implementation of alert and rapid response systems. However, the effectiveness of these policies depends directly on the inclusion of the civil defense theme in municipal government plans, which should provide for actions aimed at reducing risks and preparing for emergency situations.

In the electoral process, the government plans presented by the candidates for mayor are key documents that express the political commitments and public management guidelines that will guide the mandate. These documents, filed with the Electoral Court, allow the population to evaluate the candidates' proposals and, at the same time, offer a basis for monitoring the public policies to be implemented. However, the analysis of government plans submitted in the 2024 municipal elections in São Sebastião, Ilhabela, Caraguatatuba, Ubatuba, Bertioga, and Guarujá reveals a worrying omission in relation to the topic of civil defense, or, in many cases, the superficial approach to disaster prevention and response policies.

Even after the tragic consequences of the 2023 rains, which placed these cities in a state of emergency, it is observed that civil defense has not been treated with the necessary priority in the government plans of the elected candidates. Neglect to formulate robust and integrated policies for civil defense reflects a failure to prepare for future

disasters and compromises the ability of these cities to meet the challenges arising from climate change, which tends to increase the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events.

The absence or derisory treatment of the issue in elected government plans demonstrates a misalignment between the reality faced by these regions and the political proposals for risk and disaster mitigation. From this finding, there is a need to analyze in detail the documents submitted to the Superior Electoral Court (TSE), using the DivulgaCand platform, in order to assess how (and if) the mayors elected in these cities mentioned or planned actions aimed at civil defense.

The present study, therefore, aims to investigate the presence, absence or superficial approach of the civil defense theme in the government plans of the six coastal cities directly affected by the rains of February 2023. The analysis focuses not only on the number of times the topic is mentioned, but also on the depth with which policies for the prevention and mitigation of natural disasters are discussed, the integration between short, medium and long-term actions, and the forecast of resources and infrastructure necessary for their implementation.

THE IMPORTANCE OF CIVIL DEFENSE IN MUNICIPAL PUBLIC MANAGEMENT

Civil defense is one of the fundamental pillars for the resilience of municipalities exposed to environmental risks. Its function goes beyond emergency response, as it involves a set of preventive and educational actions aimed at preparing the community and reducing the damage caused by natural disasters. Municipalities such as São Sebastião, Ilhabela and Caraguatatuba, located in the coastal region of the state of São Paulo, periodically suffer from landslides and floods, phenomena aggravated by disorderly urbanization, irregular occupation of risk areas and the lack of adequate urban planning.

Civil defense policies, when properly implemented, can prevent tragedies such as those observed in 2023. These policies include, among other actions: the identification of risk areas, the creation of contingency plans, the carrying out of public awareness campaigns, the training of rapid response teams, and the installation of early warning systems. In addition, community engagement is essential for the effectiveness of civil defense actions, since the informed and prepared population has a greater capacity to react appropriately to emergency situations.

However, the preliminary analysis of the government plans of the cities studied points to an underestimation of these needs. Although some candidates mention the topic, it is rarely treated in detail or integrated with other areas of public management, such as health, education and infrastructure. This omission suggests that, despite recent warnings and tragedies, many managers still do not fully understand the importance of civil defense as a central public policy, especially in coastal cities subject to extreme weather events.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The central objective of this study is to critically evaluate how civil defense was (or was not) incorporated into the government plans of the mayors elected in the cities of São Sebastião, Ilhabela, Caraguatatuba, Ubatuba, Bertioga, and Guarujá in the 2024 elections. By investigating the presence of the theme in these documents, it seeks to identify whether the candidates present concrete proposals for the mitigation of natural disasters and the management of climate crises, or if civil defense is treated superficially, without clear and objective action plans.

In addition, the study intends to discuss the implications of this omission for municipal governance, highlighting the risks associated with the lack of public policies for civil defense and the possible impacts on the population in emergency situations. From the results of the documentary analysis, it is expected to provide subsidies for the reflection on the importance of integrated civil defense policies and for the development of recommendations that can guide the formulation of future government plans.

RELEVANCE OF THE THEME IN A CLIMATE CHANGE SCENARIO

The intensification of extreme weather events is one of the main consequences of climate change on a global scale. The increase in the Earth's average temperature has caused changes in rainfall patterns, sea levels, and the frequency of natural disasters, such as floods and landslides, especially in coastal areas. In this scenario, it becomes increasingly urgent for local governments to develop and implement adaptation and resilience policies to address these challenges.

For the cities analyzed, which are located in vulnerable regions, civil defense should occupy a prominent place in government plans, considering the increase in exposure to natural hazards. However, the observed reality points to a lack of awareness or

commitment to disaster management, which may compromise the ability of these cities to respond adequately to future crises.

Thus, this study is also justified by the need to pressure public managers to include civil defense as a priority in their government programs, in order to prepare cities for the challenges of climate change and ensure the safety and well-being of their populations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review on civil defense in Brazil involves an interdisciplinary field, which covers current legislation, the importance of public policies for mitigating natural disasters, and specific studies on the vulnerability of urban and coastal areas. In this section, the evolution of civil defense policies in the country will be addressed, the importance of integrated planning in cities vulnerable to extreme events, in addition to discussing specific data from the disaster that occurred in São Sebastião in February 2023.

THE NATIONAL POLICY FOR CIVIL PROTECTION AND DEFENSE

Civil defense in Brazil is regulated by Law No. 12,608/2012, which establishes the National Policy for Civil Protection and Defense (PNPDEC) and the National Civil Protection and Defense System (SINPDEC). This law was a milestone in the establishment of guidelines aimed at disaster prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery. Before its implementation, the focus of civil defense actions in Brazil was reactive, that is, focused mainly on emergency responses after the occurrence of disasters. With Law No. 12,608/2012, there was a paradigm shift, proposing a preventive approach, with an emphasis on risk reduction.

The PNPDEC determines that municipalities develop specific contingency plans for their risk areas, integrated with regional and national plans. In addition, the law establishes that federative entities must promote education actions for civil defense, seeking to prepare the population to react appropriately in emergency situations (MINISTRY OF NATIONAL INTEGRATION, 2012).

Authors such as Carvalho (2013) and Silva et al. (2016) point out that, although Brazilian legislation is robust, the implementation of these policies faces challenges in many municipalities, especially due to the lack of infrastructure, financial and technical resources. Carvalho (2013) points out that many municipalities, especially smaller ones, lack effective

mechanisms to apply the PNPDEC guidelines, resulting in the perpetuation of vulnerabilities.

The effectiveness of civil defense policies depends, therefore, on an integrated action between the various levels of government, in addition to an articulation between different areas of public management, such as health, environment and urban planning. For Castro and Maia (2018), one of the main challenges of civil defense policies in Brazil is the lack of territorial planning that leads to the disorderly occupation of risk areas. They point out that uncontrolled urbanization, together with the absence of adequate enforcement, results in the continuous exposure of communities to disasters such as floods and landslides.

CHALLENGES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF LOCAL CIVIL DEFENSE POLICIES

The analysis of the implementation of civil defense policies in vulnerable coastal municipalities, such as São Sebastião and Ilhabela, demonstrates that, although federal legislation is clear in its guidelines, local administrations face difficulties in complying with legal requirements. According to Barros et al. (2017), Brazilian coastal cities are among the most vulnerable to natural disasters, mainly due to the combination of geological and climatic factors. In addition, disorderly population growth in these areas puts further pressure on urban infrastructure and exacerbates the risks associated with natural disasters.

In small and medium-sized municipalities, such as those in the northern coastal region of São Paulo, the lack of financial and technical resources limits the ability of local governments to develop and implement adequate contingency plans. Martins and Souza (2020) observe that, in many of these cities, the civil defense issue is treated marginally in government plans, reflecting the lack of priority for preventive actions. For the authors, the prevailing political culture still values reactive actions, aimed at assistance after the disaster, rather than preventive actions that could mitigate the damage.

An example of the importance of preventive planning is the city of Angra dos Reis, in the state of Rio de Janeiro, which has implemented, in recent years, a system for monitoring slopes and risk areas, together with an evacuation plan in case of disasters. According to Pereira et al. (2021), this integration of monitoring technologies and the engagement of the population in awareness programs have been fundamental to reduce mortality and material damage in recent events.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND INCREASED VULNERABILITY OF COASTAL REGIONS

Recent literature on climate change points to an increase in the intensity and frequency of extreme events, such as floods and landslides, especially in coastal regions. According to the report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC, 2021), global warming has the potential to further intensify rainfall in tropical regions, such as the Brazilian coast. These extreme weather phenomena pose additional challenges for civil defense management in municipalities, which need effective warning systems and updated contingency plans.

For Mendonça and Lima (2019), the combination of local factors, such as deforestation, the occupation of preservation areas, and the absence of adequate urban policies, contributes to aggravating the effects of climate change in urban areas. These authors discuss the need for an integrated approach of environmental management and civil defense to mitigate the impacts of extreme weather events, proposing that municipalities develop long-term plans that include climate adaptation actions.

THE SÃO SEBASTIÃO DISASTER IN 2023

In February 2023, the north coast of São Paulo, especially the city of São Sebastião, faced one of the biggest natural disasters in its history. Torrential rains resulted in landslides, flooding, and widespread damage, causing the deaths of at least 65 people and leaving hundreds homeless (G1, 2023). According to the UOL Notícias portal (2023), rainfall reached volumes of more than 600 mm in 24 hours, which represents an extreme rainfall index even for a region with a high incidence of rainfall.

The disaster exposed weaknesses in both the city's infrastructure and the preparation for extreme weather events. Many of the affected areas were on slopes with a history of landslides, and the irregular occupation of these regions aggravated the consequences of the disaster. According to the Institute for Technological Research (IPT), some of these areas had already been classified as high-risk zones, but control and inspection policies were insufficient to prevent new tragedies.

The 2023 disaster illustrates the importance of robust civil defense plans and ongoing preventive actions, such as mapping risk areas, developing early warning systems, and integrated urban planning. Even after successive warnings from experts, the actions implemented in São Sebastião were insufficient to mitigate the damage. This highlights the

relevance of discussing the presence (or absence) of civil defense in the government plans of these cities, especially after such devastating events.

IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS ABOUT LITERATURE

The literature review shows that, despite the existence of a robust legal framework for civil defense in Brazil, the implementation of the policies provided for in the PNPDEC faces significant obstacles, especially in smaller and more vulnerable municipalities. The absence of robust civil defense policies in the government plans of the cities on the north coast of São Paulo aggravates the exposure of these regions to natural disasters, as demonstrated by the extreme event that occurred in São Sebastião in 2023.

The omission of the topic in the government plans elected for the 2024 period in cities such as São Sebastião, Ilhabela, Caraguatatuba, Ubatuba, Bertioga, and Guarujá reflects the need for a critical review of how public managers are dealing with the growing risks of climate disasters. The integration between civil defense and urban planning, education of the population and infrastructure development are essential for the prevention of new tragedies.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology of this study was designed with the objective of investigating and categorizing the presence or absence of the theme "civil defense" in the government plans of the mayors elected in the cities of São Sebastião, Ilhabela, Caraguatatuba, Ubatuba, Bertioga and Guarujá, filed with the Electoral Court in 2024. Given the focus of the study, the methodology adopted involves a documentary analysis of the government plans registered by the candidates in the **DivulgaCand** system, provided by the Superior Electoral Court (TSE). The analysis was both quantitative and qualitative, and was carried out in three main stages: data collection, categorization of plans and content analysis.

DATA COLLECTION

Data collection was carried out in the DivulgaCand system, a public platform of the Superior Electoral Court, which provides documents and information related to candidates in municipal, state and federal elections. For the purposes of this research, the government plans submitted by the candidates elected to the mayoralty of the cities of São Sebastião, Ilhabela, Caraguatatuba, Ubatuba, Bertioga and Guarujá, six municipalities in the northern

coast region of São Paulo, directly affected by the heavy rains of February 2023, were accessed.

The documents were extracted from the DivulgaCand platform in PDF format, as made available by the candidates during the candidacy registration process. The extraction of the documents was carried out in November 2024, after the conclusion of the electoral process, ensuring that all elected candidates had already submitted their plans to the Electoral Court. After collection, the documents were converted to text format, using optical character recognition (OCR) tools, when necessary, to enable content analysis.

CRITERIA FOR CATEGORIZING PLANS

For the analysis, the government plans were initially categorized into three groups, according to the presence of the civil defense theme:

- Group 1 - Plans that address civil defense in a complete way: This group included government plans that presented clear and detailed proposals for civil defense, including preventive actions, natural disaster response planning, resource allocation, and integration with other areas of public management, such as health and infrastructure. In addition, the plans included in this group explicitly mention current legislation, such as Law No. 12,608/2012, and demonstrate understanding of the importance of risk prevention and mitigation.
- Group 2 - Plans that mention civil defense in a superficial or derisory way: Plans that mentioned the theme "civil defense", but in a vague or poorly developed way, were classified in this group. The candidates whose plans were included in this group did not present concrete or detailed proposals, limiting themselves to mentioning civil defense without specifying disaster prevention actions or mitigation strategies. This group also included plans that cited civil defense only as part of a generic set of public security actions.
- Group 3 - Plans that do not mention civil defense: This group gathered the government plans that did not make any mention of civil defense or natural disaster risk management. Even in cities known to be vulnerable to extreme weather events, such as those on the north coast of São Paulo, some elected government plans did not include actions aimed at preventing and responding to disasters.

CONTENT ANALYSIS

The content analysis of the government plans was carried out using the thematic analysis technique. According to Bardin (2011), thematic analysis consists of identifying nuclei of meaning from which it is possible to interpret and organize the textual material. In this sense, central themes were identified in government plans related to civil defense, natural disasters, urban planning and risk prevention.

For the plans that addressed the topic in more detail (Group 1), a more in-depth analysis of the proposals was carried out. Specific actions aimed at civil defense were identified, such as training programs for the population, implementation of early warning systems, mapping of risk areas and integration with other areas of public administration. The consistency of the proposals in relation to the local context was also evaluated, considering the disasters that occurred in February 2023 and the vulnerabilities of these cities.

In the plans that mentioned the theme in a superficial way (Group 2), the analysis focused on identifying the superficiality of the proposals, verifying the lack of detail or concrete actions for disaster prevention. The justifications or explanations, when present, on how civil defense would be approached during the mandate were analyzed, seeking to understand whether the issue was treated only as a formality or as a genuine concern.

Finally, in the plans that did not mention civil defense (Group 3), a discussion was held about the possible implications of this omission. Considering the recent history of natural disasters in the region, the absence of proposals in this field is particularly worrying, and the analysis sought to highlight the consequences that this omission can have for governance and the security of populations.

JUSTIFICATION FOR THE CHOICE OF THE CITIES STUDIED

The cities of São Sebastião, Ilhabela, Caraguatatuba, Ubatuba, Bertioga and Guarujá were selected for this study for several reasons. First, these municipalities were hit hard by the heavy rains and landslides of February 2023, which caused deaths, damage to infrastructure, and hundreds of evictions. This context of vulnerability to disasters makes it crucial to analyze how civil defense was addressed by the elected mayors in these regions.

Second, these cities have a geographical location that makes them especially susceptible to extreme weather events. The combination of rugged terrain, intense urbanization, and lack of adequate urban planning contributes to aggravating the risks of

natural disasters, such as landslides and floods. Thus, it is expected that the civil defense theme will be a priority on the agendas of the mayors elected in these cities, especially after the events of 2023.

Finally, the choice of these cities allows a comparison between municipalities of different sizes and socioeconomic characteristics, but which share common challenges in terms of vulnerability to disasters. This comparative approach enriches the analysis, allowing us to verify whether there are significant differences in the way the topic was treated in smaller or larger cities.

STUDY LIMITATIONS

As with any study, this research also has limitations that must be acknowledged. First, the documentary analysis is limited by the quality and detail of the government plans submitted by the candidates. Some shots can be brief or generic, which limits the depth of the analysis. In addition, government plans represent commitments and political proposals, but do not guarantee the execution of concrete actions during the mandate. Therefore, although the analysis reveals the commitment (or lack thereof) to the civil defense theme, it cannot predict, with certainty, the implementation of the proposed policies.

Another aspect to be considered is the fact that the study is based only on the government plans made available by the DivulgaCand system, not including possible campaign statements or other sources of information that could complement the understanding of the candidates' intentions in relation to civil defense. However, as government plans are official documents, submitted to the Electoral Court and accessible to the public, they provide a reliable basis for the analysis of political commitments.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

After the categorization and qualitative analysis of the government plans, descriptive statistical methods were applied to quantify the frequency and detail with which the civil defense theme was addressed in the documents. The quantitative analysis involved the creation of graphs and tables that represent the percentage of elected candidates who mentioned civil defense in their plans, the depth with which the topic was addressed, and the distribution of these mentions among the different municipalities analyzed.

The data was organized in such a way as to allow a clear visualization of the general trends, highlighting the number of elected mayors who completely ignored the topic, those

who dealt with it superficially and those who presented robust and detailed proposals. This statistical analysis was complemented by a qualitative discussion about the results, highlighting the differences between the municipalities and the possible reasons for the observed variations.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the proposed methodology, we can now carry out a comprehensive analysis of the government plans of the elected mayors for the cities of Bertioga, Caraguatatuba, Ilhabela, São Sebastião, and Ubatuba. The objective is to investigate the treatment given to the civil defense theme, categorizing government plans into three groups: complete, superficial or omitted, based on the quantitative and qualitative analysis of the documents provided.

The following is a detailed analysis for each of the government plans, highlighting the level of attention given to civil defense and natural disaster management policies.

BERTIOGA - MARCELO VILARES (2025-2028)

The government plan of Marcelo Vilares, mayor-elect of Bertioga, addresses broad issues related to urban infrastructure, environment and security. However, the specific treatment of civil defense is superficial. The plan mentions actions related to drainage and macro-drainage of regions susceptible to flooding, which may be indirectly related to civil defense. However, there is no structured proposal for the prevention of natural disasters, nor is there a clear planning of preventive actions, such as training the population, warning systems or mapping of risk areas.

Categorization: Shallow

Analysis: Despite treating drainage in a timely manner, Marcelo Vilares' plan presents a limited understanding of civil defense policies. There is no integrated approach that includes preventive measures for natural disasters, much less coordinated actions with other areas of management, such as health and safety. The lack of detail highlights a worrying gap, considering Bertioga's vulnerability to extreme weather events.

CARAGUATATUBA - MATHEUS VENEZIANI (2025-2028)

Matheus Veneziani's government plan for Caraguatatuba is also focused on traditional areas of public management, such as education, health and infrastructure, with

emphasis on sanitation works and urban improvements. However, there is no specific mention of the civil defense theme in any section of the document. Even in a municipality that, like others in the region, regularly faces risks of floods and landslides, the absence of policies aimed at preventing disasters reveals a serious flaw in government planning.

Categorization: Total omission

Analysis: The fact that Caraguatatuba was one of the cities severely affected by the rains of February 2023 makes the complete omission of the civil defense theme in Matheus Veneziani's plan even more critical. The absence of proposals for disaster prevention compromises the safety of the population and suggests a lack of preparation to deal with climate crises that are predictable in the region.

ILHABELA - TONINHO COLUCCI (2025-2028)

Toninho Colucci's government plan for Ilhabela tangentially mentions aspects related to civil defense, with emphasis on the proposal to install a **meteorological radar** in the northern region of the island. This is an important advance in terms of monitoring weather events, which can contribute to disaster forecasting. In addition, the plan discusses drainage works that can help mitigate the impacts of flooding. However, there is a lack of a more robust civil defense policy that includes the preparation of the population, alert systems, and integration of a contingency plan with other government spheres.

Categorization: Shallow

Analysis: The proposal for a weather radar demonstrates a valid concern with predicting extreme weather events, but the plan fails to integrate this technology with a broader civil defense strategy. The lack of preventive actions, such as training the population or developing evacuation systems, limits the impact of this measure, which leaves Ilhabela vulnerable to future disasters.

SAINT SEBASTIAN - REINALDINHO (2025-2028)

São Sebastião was one of the cities most affected by the rains of February 2023, with dozens of deaths and widespread destruction. Given this scenario, Reinaldinho's government plan briefly mentions the challenges faced by the municipality after the heaviest rainfall ever recorded in Brazil, but does not present concrete proposals for the management of future disasters. The focus of the document is on containment and drainage works, but, as in other municipalities, the issue of civil defense is treated

superficially, without the inclusion of detailed contingency plans, training of the population or integration of an emergency response system.

Categorization: Shallow

Analysis: Although São Sebastião has faced one of the biggest climate disasters in its recent history, Reinaldinho's government plan lacks a robust civil defense policy. The absence of proposals to prepare the city for future disasters is worrying, considering the vulnerability of the region. Actions aimed at infrastructure works are important, but insufficient to deal with the complexity of the challenges imposed by climate change.

UBATUBA - FLÁVIA PASCOAL (2025-2028)

Flávia Pascoal's government plan for Ubatuba is the most comprehensive in terms of civil defense policies among the municipalities analyzed. The document includes detailed proposals for the restructuring of civil defense throughout the municipality, with the creation of security bases distributed from north to south. In addition, the plan provides for the monitoring of risk areas and the acquisition of new equipment for civil defense, such as vehicles, boats and motor pumps. The mayor-elect also proposes the creation of a Security Monitoring Center, which will be integrated with surveillance and control systems for risk areas. These measures demonstrate a more significant commitment to disaster management.

However, despite the positive focus on civil defense, the plan could still be more detailed with regard to the training of the population and the creation of evacuation and shelter systems. Civil defence seems to be seen mostly as a matter of infrastructure and equipment, while population preparedness, a key element in disaster management, could be more emphasised.

Categorization: Complete but with gaps

Analysis: Flávia Pascoal's plan represents a significant advance in relation to the other municipalities, especially due to the attention given to the restructuring of civil defense and the monitoring of risk areas. However, there is a lack of more robust elements related to the empowerment of the population and the integration of a long-term policy to prevent disasters. Flávia's proposal demonstrates a deeper understanding of the importance of civil defense, but there is still room for improvement, particularly with regard to education and community preparedness to respond to emergencies.

Table 1: Comparative table of the approach to the civil defense theme in the government plans of the elected mayors in the cities of Bertiooga, Caraguatatuba, Ilhabela, São Sebastião and Ubatuba (2025-2028).

City	Mayor-elect	Approach to the Civil Defense Theme	Breakdown of Proposed Actions	Categorization
Bertiooga	Marcelo Vilares	Superficially mentioned	Specific macro-drainage actions, without integrated disaster prevention and response policies	Shallow
Caraguatatuba	Matheus Veneziani	Complete omission	No direct mention of civil defense or disaster risk management	Total omission
Ilhabela	Toninho Colucci	Superficially mentioned	Proposal for the installation of meteorological radar, but without integration with disaster response actions	Shallow
São Sebastião	Reinaldinho	Mentioned superficially, with reference to the rains of 2023	Focus on containment works, but without a comprehensive civil defense plan	Shallow
Ubatuba	Flávia Pascoal	Mentioned in full, but with some gaps	Detailed proposals for restructuring civil defense, security bases, and monitoring of risk areas, but without sufficient focus on community capacity building	Complete, but with gaps

Source: Author

GENERAL ANALYSIS OF GOVERNMENT PLANS

The analysis of the government plans reveals a worrying pattern of contempt or superficial treatment of the civil defense theme in most of the municipalities on the north coast of São Paulo. Even after the catastrophic rains of February 2023, which devastated

the region and demonstrated the extreme vulnerability of these cities, most elected mayors do not include robust civil defense policies in their government plans.

- Marcelo Vilares (Bertioga) **and** Toninho Colucci (Ilhabela) make superficial mentions to the theme, but their proposals lack an integrated and multidisciplinary vision for disaster prevention.
- Matheus Veneziani (Caraguatatuba) completely omits the topic of civil defense, which is particularly worrisome, given the recent history of disasters in the city.
- Reinaldinho (São Sebastião) mentions past disasters, but fails to present a comprehensive preventive plan to deal with future extreme weather events.
- Flávia Pascoal (Ubatuba), in turn, offers the most complete proposal, with plans for the restructuring of civil defense, acquisition of equipment and monitoring of risk areas, although there is still a lack of a stronger focus on training the population.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of the government plans of the elected mayors in the cities of the north coast of São Paulo — Bertioga, Caraguatatuba, Ilhabela, São Sebastião and Ubatuba — reveals a worrying panorama in relation to civil defense, especially considering the vulnerability of these cities to natural disasters. The absence of robust policies aimed at the prevention and mitigation of natural disasters demonstrates an alarming negligence, which puts at risk not only the infrastructure of these municipalities, but, mainly, the safety and lives of their inhabitants.

In February 2023, the region faced one of the worst climate tragedies in its history, with torrential rains that devastated cities like São Sebastião, leaving dozens dead and thousands homeless. Given this reality, it was expected that the government plans of the mayors elected in the 2024 elections would feature a significant emphasis on civil defense policies. However, the data indicate that the topic was treated superficially or was not even mentioned in most of the documents analyzed.

COMMON FAULTS AND CONSEQUENCES

The pattern of neglect observed in government plans reflects a broader structural problem that affects several Brazilian cities, especially those with fewer financial and technical resources. Carvalho (2013) observes that many Brazilian municipalities face

difficulties in implementing the National Policy for Civil Protection and Defense (PNPDEC), instituted by Law No. 12,608/2012, due to the lack of infrastructure and technical training of local managers. This situation is aggravated in regions that are more vulnerable to natural disasters, such as coastal cities in the state of São Paulo.

In the cases analyzed, only the government plan of Flávia Pascoal, elected mayor of Ubatuba, presented more detailed proposals for the restructuring of civil defense, including the creation of security bases, monitoring of risk areas and acquisition of essential equipment for emergency operations. Even so, there is a lack of actions aimed at training the population and developing a culture of disaster prevention. The integration of the population in civil defense actions is essential for disaster responses to be effective, as highlighted by Barros et al. (2017) in their studies on vulnerability and community response to disasters.

In the other municipalities, such as Caraguatatuba and São Sebastião, the government plans either completely ignore the issue of civil defense or address it in a punctual way, without the necessary depth to deal with the complexity of disaster management. This lack of preparedness has direct consequences on the ability of these cities to face extreme weather events, which will become increasingly frequent and intense due to climate change, as pointed out by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC, 2021).

THE IMPORTANCE OF INTEGRATED AND PREVENTIVE POLICIES

The absence of a robust and integrated approach to civil defense in the government plans analyzed can be attributed, in part, to the lack of a political culture that values preventive actions. According to Mendonça and Lima (2019), the Brazilian political culture tends to prioritize reactive emergency actions, which take place after the disaster, rather than preventive policies that seek to minimize risks and damage. To reverse this situation, it is essential that civil defense policies are integrated with other areas of public administration, such as health, education, the environment, and urban planning.

Carvalho (2013) also highlights the importance of community participation in the formulation and execution of civil defense policies. The population must be informed and trained to act proactively in emergency situations. This includes, for example, conducting regular training, disseminating information about risk areas, and creating community evacuation plans. Municipalities such as Angra dos Reis, in the state of Rio de Janeiro,

have already adopted this approach successfully, implementing slope monitoring systems and empowering the population to react appropriately in the event of disasters.

THE WAY FORWARD

The cities analyzed must urgently rethink their civil defense strategies. Recent tragedies demonstrate the need for a paradigm shift in disaster management, which must move from a reactive approach to a policy of risk prevention and mitigation. This includes the implementation of early warning systems, continuous mapping of risk areas, investments in resilient infrastructure and, above all, the education and training of the population to deal with emergency situations.

In addition, civil defense should be seen as a governance priority, with adequate investments and the articulation of partnerships between the different levels of government — municipal, state and federal. The full implementation of the National Policy for Civil Protection and Defense (PNPDEC) is a crucial step in this direction, but its effectiveness depends on the ability of local managers to translate national guidelines into concrete actions adapted to regional realities.

The increase in the frequency of natural disasters in Brazil and in the world, as a result of global climate change (IPCC, 2021), makes the need for more comprehensive and preventive civil defense policies urgent. Local governments should be proactive in creating contingency plans and allocating resources to ensure the safety of their populations. The success of these policies will ultimately depend on the political commitment of elected officials and the ability to integrate civil defense into a sustainable urban development strategy.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The analysis of the government plans of the cities on the north coast of São Paulo shows a serious gap in civil defense planning, with the partial exception of Ubatuba. The absence of detailed proposals for the management of natural disasters, especially in vulnerable regions, puts the safety of the population and the sustainability of municipalities at risk. In order for these cities to successfully face the challenges posed by climate change and the frequent occurrences of extreme events, it is essential that elected officials prioritize civil defense in their political agendas, adopting an integrated, preventive, and participatory approach.

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