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Covid-19 pandemic in Brazil

Fight like a nurse, facing off with Bolsonaroistas in Brasilia

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As Covid-19 deaths [spiral upward](#) in Brazil, health care workers are not backing down in the face of far-right President Jair Bolsonaro's threats. Nurses in Brasilia, Brazil's capital city organized a May Day action across from the presidential palace. Harassed by Bolsonaro supporters, the nurses stood strong and gained national attention as they courageously fought for their fallen co-workers in the fight against Covid-19. *[No Borders News]*

Since the beginning of the pandemic, President Bolsonaro and his allies have minimized the serious consequences of Covid19. Every weekend, the president's supporters create a mock "death row" and share Fake News about the disease. Us nurses and health care workers are on frontlines in the fight against the pandemic. We're sick of seeing such negligence and irresponsibility by those who should be playing a role in protecting and defending our lives, so we decided to say ENOUGH'S ENOUGH! BASTA! PROTECT OUR LIVES!

On May 1st, an intensive care nurse who works in one of the largest hospitals in the capital city Brasilia had an idea, and nurses unions like DF, COREN-DF and ABEN-DF decided to support workers who were willing to demand an end to coronavirus denialism, ignorance, violence, and Fake News, which has spread very fast in our country.

In an act of silent protest, we put on our lab coats and masks, respecting guidelines for social distancing, and raised black crosses in honor of the victims of the coronavirus in front of the Palácio do Planalto (Brazil's White House). We taped slogans on our backs in defense of the Unified Public Health System (SUS), promoting social distancing, and remembering the names of the health professionals who have died in the battle against Covid-19. The union raised banners asking the population to stay at home and to respect social distancing.

Our objective was to demand that President Bolsonaro support measures for social distancing, including the payment of 600 Reals to Brazilians (a little more than \$100), provide PPE's in our units, and pay more than lip service to our work. We want to save as many lives as we can.

As soon as we arrived at the Praça dos TrÃãs Poderes across from the Palácio do Planalto, we noticed a half dozen of the president's supporters. And as we organized ourselves in rows, they starting shouting aggressively, saying that "We were responsible for the pandemic because we didn't stay home for carnival," "Fora Esquerda," (Leftists get out!), and "Who is paying for this action?" They called us "donkeys," and "idiots" and lots of other things. We listened in silence.

We faced our aggressors, we did not bow our heads, we had the right to occupy that space, we are the ones who are dying and we will not remain silent in the face of such growing ignorance in this country, which only makes the contagion grow and increases the number of deaths. We have a duty to fight the coronavirus, denialism, and all the violence that surrounds it.

During the second half of our action, two Bolsonaro supporters accused one of the nurses of giving them the finger. They used this as a pretext to start threatening her with physical violence, getting very close to her to try to intimidate her with provocative gestures and insults. It was not an accident that they chose to assault a woman, who they assume is fragile and defenseless in their macho and patriarchal views. They got their answer as the nurse looked them in the eyes, silent and steadfast, and refused to back down in the face of aggression, and in the courageous actions of another woman who showed them that when we fight we never walk alone!

Brazilian nurses protest Bolsonaro in front of the presidential palace. Photo credit - Scarlett Rocha / Esquerda Online.

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One of the union's leaders stepped in front of the targeted nurse and faced off with the aggressor. After that, we thought about dispersing, but we had not completed our task because the mainstream media was publicizing our action, so we decided to stay. But it was only possible to do so safely because the police arrived.

While we formed our lines, Bolsonaro's supporters filmed us and claimed that everyone had arrived without a lab coat and that they were distributed on the spot. They even claimed that a homeless person had received a lab coat and money to pretend he was a health professional! They shouted: "Where are your CRMs?" I thought to myself, these people are so ignorant that they don't know the difference between IDs for doctors and nurse! We left as just we entered, silently, defending our patient's lives, asking for respect for social distancing.

On this May 1st we felt the strength of Brazil's nurses. We will continue our work on the front lines, in intensive care units, in nursing homes, in managing the pandemic, and in all other workplaces where we are safeguarding the lives of our fellow Brazilians. I will end by saying that we should all: "Fight like a Nurse."

1 May 2020

Translated from [Esquerda Online](#) by [No Borders News](#).

PS:

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