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Brazil

Brazilian Women Unite Against Far-Right Presidential Candidate

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A broad coalition of women has come together to protest the Presidential candidacy of far-right politician, Jair Bolsonaro. Organized by the parties of the left, women's organizations, and some members of liberal parties, this coalition will march in cities across Brazil on 29 September.

According to one Brazilian activist, "The political temperature is high, the situation very tense. Bolsonaro gives signs that he is going to start dropping in the polls, and his followers are becoming unnerved. There are targeted attacks, but rather violent ones, against women whom the Bolsonaristas think are organizers of the movement. It is not unreasonable to expect that there will be provocations and confrontations on Saturday 29."

Below is a translation of the coalition statement that will be read at the protests.

Statement of the Women United against Bolsonaro

Equality, freedom, rights and a life without violence

Who are we?

We are women, millions and diverse. We are Brazilian and immigrants. Young and white haired. Black, white, indigenous. Trans and cis. We are LGBTQIs, we love men, women or both. Married and single. Mothers, daughters, grandmothers. We are hardworking, housewives, students, artists, civil servants, small businesswomen, street vendors, homeless, landless. Employed and unemployed. Women of different religions and without religion.

Today, we stand together on the streets of all Brazil because a Presidential candidate, with a speech of hate, with a speech based in intolerance, authoritarianism and backwardness threatens our achievements and our already difficult existence. We are on the street because his economic political program is a setback, a worsening reproduction of President Temer's terrible policies.

Who is Jair Bolsonaro?

Jair Bolsonaro, currently of the PSL and a federal deputy for 27 years, has been affiliated to nine (9!) parties and has had only two bills approved throughout his political life. He presents himself as something "new" but is a real "career politician" who has worked to elect his children and enjoys privileges such as an immoral housing assistance, while thousands of families are homeless and struggle for a decent place to live.

Why are we against Bolsonaro?

– Jair Bolsonaro despises Black people, Indians, LGBTQIs and all those who fight for women's rights. He considers

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quilombolas (the descendants of the rebel slaves) rowdy people. He is an apologist for rape culture. His speeches legitimize femicide. He says of the birth of his one daughter [he has four sons] that he produced a daughter out of “a moment of weakness.” He insists that there is nothing to be done about the wage gap between men and women. For him, spanking boys prevents them from “becoming” gay. His Vice-President running mate, General Mourão, declared that families headed by mothers and grandparents are factories producing misfits.

– He voted in favor of freezing health, education and social assistance expenses for 20 years. He promises to raise taxes on the poor and reduce them on the rich. He has already announced a wave of privatizations, selling the state-controlled companies and all the assets of the Brazilian people. He is one of the authors of a bill that argues that SUS (the public health system) is not required to serve women victims of sexual abuse. He is a supporter of the “School without a Party” project, which, under the pretense of removing ideology from the curriculum, proposes to end pedagogical freedom and the development of critical thinking in relation to the chaotic society we live in.

– He voted in favor of the Labor Reform and the Law of Outsourcing, which is responsible for allowing pregnant women to do unhealthy work, for increasing unemployment and informal work, especially among Black women. He has said that “workers must choose between having rights and having jobs”. He was the only one to vote against the Proposed Constitutional Amendment for domestic workers, which grants to the employees basic labor rights like the payment of overtime hours. He has already committed to approve the proposed Pension System Reform, which increases the retirement age and equalizes up the retirement age between women and men.

– He advocates the deepening of a failed public security policy that tries to fight the growing violence with more violence and militarization. This policy, implemented in the last three decades in Brazil, especially in Rio de Janeiro, has led to more civilians and police killed in clashes and the failure to bring to justice the perpetrators who executed activists Marielle Franco and Anderson six months ago. He defends the release of arms, following the model of the USA, which has the highest rates of homicide and suicide, especially among young people.

– He has as partner, as a candidate for Vice President, a General who defends the seizure of power by the Armed Forces and the elaboration of a new Constitution without popular participation. They both put democracy at risk.

Jair Bolsonaro defends the Military Dictatorship (1964-1985). He says the mistake of the military was to torture instead of kill the “subversives”. He does not hide his admiration for the most notorious torturer of the 1964 military regime, General Ustra.

We do not want dictatorship or fascism, nor the growing of the police slaughter on the streets, which is responsible for a real genocide of Brazilian Black youth. We want freedom, equality, social justice and rights! Bolsonaro is everything that Brazil does not need to overcome the crisis and move forward.

We, diverse and united women, defend the opposite of everything he preaches: we defend respect for differences; the women’s right to live securely and to decide on our own bodies; we defend equal wages between men and women, between Blacks and whites; we defend quotas for those who have been historically wronged and harmed; we advocate quality public services for poor women and their children.

We advocate the broadest freedom to teach and learn, without gag laws, whether at school or at university.

We advocate that people be free to love and be respected for it. We defend the free debate of ideas and democracy.

He preaches hatred, we preach respect. He defends death and torture, we stand for life.

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That's why we say: Not him! (Not even his sons.) Bolsonaro Never! No to Fascism!

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