



CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES
FEDERATIVE REPUBLIC OF BRAZIL

Brasília, March 16, 2020

**REPORT ON JAIR BOLSONARO'S ACTIONS AGAINST
THE PREVENTION AND CONTROL OF THE NOVEL CORONAVIRUS**

Letter number 83/2020

Ref. Report about Mr. Jair Bolsonaro's actions against the prevention and control of the novel coronavirus

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FERNANDA MELCHIONNA, ÁUREA CAROLINA, DAVID MIRANDA, EDMILSON RODRIGUES, GLAUBER BRAGA, IVAN VALENTE, LUIZA ERUNDINA, MARCELO FREIXO, SÂMIA BOMFIM, and TALÍRIA PETRONE federal deputies from the Socialism and Liberty Party (Partido Socialismo e Liberdade - PSOL, in its acronym in Portuguese), respectfully address to you in order to report about Mr. Jair Bolsonaro's actions against the urgent prevention and control of the novel coronavirus.

Overview

Brazil's president, Mr. Jair Bolsonaro, has been showing dangerous scepticism over the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, even after the World Health Organization (WHO) declared it to be a Pandemic, on March 11. Ignoring technical efforts and recommendations by his own Ministry of Health and local authorities in Brazil, Mr. Bolsonaro has encouraged mass gatherings on Sunday, March 15, calling on people all over the country to protest against the National Congress and the Brazilian Supreme Court.

In Brasília, the country's capital, Mr. Bolsonaro also joined one of the demonstrations, breaking his ongoing isolation protocol. The president should be avoiding contact with other people until at least March 25, since after he came back from the United States of America (USA) on Wednesday, March 11, twelve members of his entourage have already tested positive for the coronavirus¹. Despite that, Mr. Bolsonaro cheered demonstrators and took selfies with their mobile phones, wearing no sort of protection.

Bolsonaro's overall scepticism over the novel coronavirus

Despite the fact that the WHO has declared the novel coronavirus outbreak a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC) since January 30, and ignoring the data on the growing numbers of cases around the world and in Brazil, Mr. Bolsonaro said, on March 11, during a speech in Miami (USA): "We have a little crisis, or, in my understanding, it is more about fantasy: the question of coronavirus. This is not everything that the mainstream media spreads all over the world"².

On Sunday, March 15, after joining the demonstrators in Brasília, against recommendations of Brazil's Ministry of Health and breaching his isolation protocol, the president gave an interview arguing that the worries around coronavirus are part of a conspiracy against his government: "We had much serious virus that didn't cause this hysteria. There is certainly an economic interest on this. In 2009, there was a virus too and it wasn't even close to this. But it was the Labor Government (PT) here and the Democrats in the US"³.

Today, March 16, when questioned about his acts last Sunday during an interview, Mr. Bolsonaro insisted on the suggestion of a conspiracy against Brazil's economy: "It's a political dispute (...), a power struggle (...), we can't stop the economy". And said: "let's not oversize this question [of coronavirus]"⁴.

¹ Available at: <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/poder/2020/03/sobe-para-12-numero-de-pessoas-que-encontraram-bolsonaro-e-estao-com-o-novo-coronavirus.shtml>

² Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ai742dM_tNA

³ Available at:

https://www.em.com.br/app/noticia/politica/2020/03/15/interna_politica,1129158/bolsonaro-critica-histeria-pelo-coronavirus-convida-maia-alcolumbre.shtml

⁴ Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M0za8MSO64&feature=youtu.be>

Bolsonaro's irresponsible encouragement of mass gatherings

On February 25, Brazilian press reviewed that Mr. Bolsonaro, through *whatsapp* messages, had been calling on people to participate in demonstrations scheduled for March 15 against Brazil's National Congress and Supreme Court⁵. On March 10, the Presidential Communication Secretary (Secom) also used the government's official account to share the call for the demonstrations scheduled for March 15⁶.

On Thursday, March 12, Mr. Bolsonaro changed his approach and recommended the demonstrations should be postponed⁷. He seemed in line with Brazil's Ministry of Health recommendation that all massive gatherings and big events should be canceled in order to avoid the spread of the novel coronavirus.

However, on Sunday, March 15, Mr. Bolsonaro shared several images and videos of demonstrations in different cities in his social media accounts, irresponsibly encouraging people to participate in the gatherings throughout the day⁸. Latter, Mr. Bolsonaro himself joined the demonstrators in Brasília, disrespecting a local ordinance from the Federal District government which forbid any event with more than 100 people⁹ to happen in the city.

Breach of isolation protocol

Mr. Bolsonaro returned from the US on March 11 under the suspicion of having been contaminated by the novel coronavirus. The president says he has tested negative, but the Minister of Health has recommended that another test should be done in the coming days¹⁰.

Since twelve members of his entourage to the US were diagnosed with the virus, it was expected that he would follow the protocols of self-isolation that all others who travelled with him are following. According to the Institutional Security Office (GSI) all members of the entourage whose "tests are negative, will continue in self-isolation, following the health authorities protocol"¹¹.

However, despite recommendations from the WHO about the 14 days incubation period of the virus and express orientations from the Brazilian Ministry of Health on self-isolation, Mr. Bolsonaro decided to join the demonstration on Sunday, March 15, in Brasília. Against appeals of his medical team, Mr. Bolsonaro joined demonstrators,

⁵ Available at: <https://brpolitico.com.br/noticias/bolsonaro-manda-video-convocando-para-ato-anti-congresso/>

⁶ Avalibale at: <https://twitter.com/secomvc/status/1237522976280424449>

⁷ Available at: <https://www.facebook.com/jairmessias.bolsonaro/videos/885793518527705/>

⁸ Available at: <https://twitter.com/jairbolsonaro>

⁹ Availabe at: <https://g1.globo.com/df/distrito-federal/noticia/2020/03/11/ibaneis-afirma-que-vai-suspender-aulas-e-eventos-por-cinco-dias-por-conta-do-coronavirus.ghtml>

¹⁰ Available at: <https://g1.globo.com/politica/noticia/2020/03/13/bolsonaro-fara-novo-teste-de-coronavirus-e-ficara-em-isolamento-diz-ministro-da-saude.ghtml>

¹¹ Available at: <https://noticias.uol.com.br/ultimas-noticias/agencia-estado/2020/03/15/ao-ir-a-manifestacao-bolsonaro-contrariou-medicos-e-auxiliares.htm>

parading in his car before stepping out of the official residency to cheer dozens of people with no sort of protection. The pictures below and the video¹² he shared on his official Twitter account illustrate how irresponsible Mr. Bolsonaro's actions were.



Credit: SERGIO LIMA / AFP (AFP)

During an interview today, March 16, Mr. Bolsonaro said: “If I decided to shake hands with the people, this is my right”. He added: “If I have contaminated myself, this is my responsibility. Nobody has nothing to do with this”. He also argued: “I will not live locked in the Alvorada Palace [the presidential official residency] waiting for another 5 days”¹³.

Conclusions

In the light of the events described above, we urge the WHO's DG and the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to health to request from the Brazilian Permanent Mission to the UN in Geneva and from Brazil's Ministry of Health explanations for the irresponsible and dangerous acts by Mr. Jair Bolsonaro described herein. The president's actions and open scepticism over coronavirus disrespect Brazil's obligations under the WHO's Constitution and the general spirit of global cooperation against pandemic diseases.

We recall that the International Health Regulations (IHR), an agreement between 196 countries including Brazil, allow the WHO to “take into account reports from sources other than notifications or consultations” and “then communicate information on the event to the State Party in whose territory the event is allegedly occurring” (IHR, Article 09). According to the IHR, each State Party, when requested by the WHO, shall verify and

¹² Watch here: <https://twitter.com/jairbolsonaro/status/1239249800626950146>

¹³ Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M0za8MSO64&feature=youtu.be>

provide an initial reply to, or acknowledgement of, the request from the WHO and provide the available public health information on the status of the events in question within 24 hours (IHR, Article 10, 2).

In addition, we recall the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet's remarks on the novel coronavirus about the importance of "being open and transparent" to empower and encourage people "to participate in measures designed to protect their own health and that of the wider population, especially when trust in the authorities has been eroded".

In this sense, we also urge the WHO's DG and the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to health to publicly disapprove Mr. Bolsonaro's actions and statements, calling on him to act responsibly and in accordance to the guidance of his own Health Ministry and local authorities in Brazil, setting a positive example for the Brazilian people in regards to preventing the spread of the novel coronavirus and fulfilling its international obligations.

Yours sincerely,



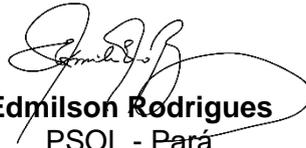
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