Conselho Nacional de Saúde

Frente pela Vida

Your Excellencies
Dr. Harsh Vardhan
WHO Executive Board Chairman
Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus
WHO Director General

Since the beginning of the covid-19 pandemic, Brazil has recorded more than 10 million cases and more than 260,000 deaths. The situation worsened starting in January 2021, with more than 75,000 new cases and almost 2.000 deaths per day, reaching more significantly the vulnerable layers of the population. The country is currently experiencing the collapse of its health system, both in the public and private sectors.

Your Excellencies are certainly well informed about the current situation of the pandemic in Brazil and the insufficient implementation of the measures recommended by the WHO in relation to disease prevention and social protection to reduce exposure, such as avoiding social agglomerations and requiring the use of face masks.

Vaccination, an important instrument for controlling the situation, has faced enormous organizational challenges, making it difficult to control the pandemic. The world-renowned National Immunization Program is a success story that includes the eradication of smallpox and the elimination of polio, as well as the control of several other communicable diseases. The current dynamic, however, contradicts this history.

In addition, with the emergence and dissemination of new variants of the virus, the prospect of achieving the necessary vaccination coverage to produce collective immunity and allow pandemic control is remote.

If this situation continues, not only the Brazilians are subject to the indefinite progression of the pandemic, but also the world population may suffer the effects of an incontrollable source of new variants of the virus that may undermine the WHO and the countries' efforts to control the pandemic.

The alerts shared by the WHO and personally by Dr. Tedros during the March 05 press conference, regarding the gravity of the situation in the country and the risk that Brazil represents for all of Latin America, were very important. Unfortunately, alerts and recommendations have not been sufficient to compel the government to adopt the necessary prevention and mitigation measures.

Brazil is a signatory of the International Sanitary Regulations (ISR-2005), which considers the necessary balance between the sovereign rights of each country and the commitment shared by all states to act to prevent the international spread of diseases.

The World Health Organization does not have the tools to compel countries to adopt specific measures, but has the duty to make explicit the consequences of non-compliance with the provisions of the ISR (2005), including the increase in cases of disease and death, the compromising of the country's international image by disrespecting the decisions and recommendations made based on the ISR, the unilateral imposition of travel and commercial restrictions with significant economic and social impacts, along with public indignation.

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In this sense, the National Health Council, the body of social control of the SUS, and the Front for Life, a movement that brings together hundreds of civil society entities, including scientific associations and health professionals, appeals to the Executive Board Chairman and the Director General of the WHO to call the Brazilian government to responsibility, summoning them to engage in the joint work that aims to effectively control the sanitary event of greatest proportion in this century.

Finally, it is worth adding that this situation represents a violation of human rights, which is why the signatories of this letter are also calling on the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Dr. Michelle Bachelet, to alert the authorities to the consequences of this disrespect within the purview of multilateral organizations.

Brasilia, March 8, 2021

National Health Council

Front for Life

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