



ABIA's POSITION: repudiation of the Bolsonaro's statement

ABIA expresses its total rejection of the unfortunate declaration of the President of the Republic, Jair Bolsonaro, who in an attempt to justify the unjustifiable - the sexual abstinence policy recently announced by Minister Damarens Alves - stated that "a person with HIV is an expense for everyone here in Brazil ". First of all, ABIA emphasizes that abstinence policies do not reduce HIV infection rates. Furthermore, it drew our attention that on January 31, the National Confederation of Industry (CNI, acronym in Portuguese) - official representative of the interests of the most important Brazilian business enterprises - filed a lawsuit at the Supreme Federal Court (STF) to revoke the labor rule that prohibits the dismissal of people living with HIV.

For ABIA, the two actions are in line since both reinforce stigma, prejudice and discrimination against people living with HIV/AIDS in this country. It is likely that in two days or so the president will try to take the statement back. That will not change the frequent disservice he has done to this nation, by distilling hate and ignorance against the black, indigenous, feminist cause, among others vulnerable populations. Bolsonaro's administration ignores the fundamental human rights of all people on a daily basis and now attacks people living with HIV/AIDS without considering that the response to the epidemic has only succeeded while it has produced solidarity and social justice.

It will not be through division, prejudice and ignorance that we will build an effective response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. The main lesson after 40 years of fight against AIDS is that stigma and discrimination are the greatest barrier to controlling the epidemic. In saying that people living with HIV cause harm to society, the president tacitly authorizes stigma, discrimination and the violation of their human rights.

ABIA expects the STF and other legal institutions to remain vigilant and aligned with the Constitution in guaranteeing access to Brazilian Universal Health System (SUS) and protecting all fundamental rights, including those of the people living with HIV/AIDS. We will not allow this government to ignore the AIDS epidemic, one of the most serious public health problems in the world, and to destroy what we have struggled to guarantee so far.

Rio de Janeiro, February 5, 2020

Brazilian Interdisciplinary AIDS Association