

INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY MANIFEST



Source: Mídia Ninja

On February 16, 2018, in Brazil, the government of Michel Temer decreed a Federal Intervention in the State of Rio de Janeiro, transferring the control of security forces to the Military.

Marielle Franco, one of the city councilors of Rio de Janeiro legislature since 2016, was nominated as a member of the local legislative Commission created to monitor the mentioned Federal Intervention. She was the 5th most voted out of 53 candidates in the 2016 municipal elections with 46 thousand votes, as a candidate from the Socialism and Liberty Party (PSOL). Marielle was a self-declared black lesbian woman, born in *Favela da Maré* (one of the largest favelas in Rio, with around 140 thousand inhabitants), a human rights defender and president of the city's Commission for the Defense of Women.

Last week, Marielle publicly voiced concerns by criticizing specific police actions that had resulted in the killing of several young black men and women. It was one of Marielle's actions in the Rio de Janeiro City Council, within a solid background of work in the Human Rights Commission of

the Rio de Janeiro State, besides her activism against black people's genocide, violence against women and favelas' militarization.

On March 14th, Marielle and her driver, Anderson Gomes, were shot dead, in what appears to have been a targeted assassination, in the city center shortly after leaving a meeting about black women empowerment.

Marielle's murder terrified the leftist and marginalized sectors of society but did not intimidate more than 100 thousand people from taking to the streets of Rio de Janeiro on the day after, and at least 19 Brazilian States and 13 cities around the world. Marielle represented a threat to the racist, patriarchal, homophobic and classist authoritarian power structures.

Marielle's symbolism highlights the whole context of ongoing political backlash, the criminalization of social movements and the rising number of political leaders being killed recently in the country. According to a report released on last February by Pastoral Land Commission and reinforced by International Amnesty, at least 62 activists identified as human right defenders and community leaders from different Brazilian regions have been executed in 2017 - most of them grassroots rural leaders in defense of their territories, the commons, and against land and labor exploitation. In 2016, 66 defenders were murdered.

From 2016 to the present, 58 activists identified as human right defenders and community leaders from different Brazilian regions have been executed - most of them grassroots rural leaders in defense of their territories, the commons, and against land and labor exploitation.

Since 2014, when Brazil hosted the World Cup and there was the announcement of Rio de Janeiro as the host of the Olympic Games, the historical police violence in favelas of Rio's metropolitan region has seriously increased, with the argument from the State of a "war against drugs and violence". In fact, the only evidence is that most of the people killed in this context are black, impoverished young men and women.

Black and favela's grassroots movements have been calling this a genocide of the black people of Brazil, in a country where more than 50% of the population is afro-descendent.

The situation got worse in 2016, when the first woman elected as President in Brazil was removed from office by an institutional and

political coup. After this attack on democracy, violence in the whole country dramatically increased and, since then, more than 2000 people have been killed as result of police actions in the city of Rio alone. In this sense, we call for international solidarity regarding the situation that the killing of Marielle Franco brings to the fore.

Solidarity Notice

We, the undersigned, manifest our SOLIDARITY to Marielle's and Anderson's family and political comrades, and condemn any attempts to discredit her political legacy. Marielle represents the change that neo-liberal/conservative forces do not want and that we defend and fight for.

We also highlight and manifest our SOLIDARITY with the Coordinator of the Interstate Movement of the "Quebradeiras de Coco Babaçu" (Babaçu Coconut Collectors/Workers) - MIQCB, Francisca Nascimento, after the assassination attempt that she suffered on the weekend of March 4th 2018, in São João do Arraial – PiauÍ, Brazil. It was an act of violence against a female political leader fighting for free territory in one of the most significant women's movements in Latin America, the movement of the "quebradeiras de coco", women who work as *babaçu* coconut breakers in Northern and Northeastern Brazil.

We – an international community of academics, social movement leaders, activists, institutions and organizations – claim that the Brazilian State protect Francisca and other prominent women in political struggles facing threats to their lives, especially black, indigenous and other marginalized women. We also call for the protection of Marielle's memory and strongly protest the defamation of her political legacy.

We claim for the end of the black people genocide, the violence against black women, traditional peoples and impoverished communities. We stand against the criminalization of anti-racist, *favelados* (inhabitants of favelas), feminist, LGBTI and peasant movements. We repudiate all the forces that try to silence these movements.

Our grief for Marielle Franco and our support to Francisca Nascimento represent our commitment to all the women who fight with courage against oppression.

Free Territory NOW!

MARIELLE, PRESENTE! FRANCISCA, VIVA!

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Organization/Institution/Movement:

Please, the interested entities should readily send an email to conexamariposas@protonmail.com with its complete designation.