

**Feminist and Antiracist Alert
Against Violence
And for a Politics that Puts Life in the Center**

25.11.2021

We – women, lesbians, *Travestis*, trans, intersex, non-binary, Black and Indigenous women, women of color, working women, leftist women, mothers, caregivers – represent a vital and powerful political force on the streets and in organizations, and we are currently the most dynamic subject of change. The feminist movement is the most important movement for repoliticizing life, for incorporating young people, and to give continuity to the political project initiated by our ancestors. In Argentina, it is the spearhead and bastion of anti-neoliberal resistance. In Brazil and Europe, it is the opposition against the strengthening of ultra-right and conservative forces. In Chile it was central in pushing and organizing the uprising, and today it is one of the main forces directing and articulating the constituent process towards a transforming horizon.

Therefore, we feel the urgent need to also dispute political power. With one foot in the movements and the other in institutions, we have the chance to build a politics that puts life in the center, a feminist, anti-imperialist, anti-racist, anti-colonial politics, against anti-Gypsyism, and LGBTphobias. That horizon requires profoundly democratizing political and institutional structures, because the struggles for social rights and for democratic rights are inseparable.

We see, however, that the path is strewn with obstacles. First, because the rules by which institutions operate have historically excluded the popular sectors, those who have care responsibilities, those who have been systematically excluded by processes of impoverishment, racialization, and devalorization. For those who make it, after much individual and collective effort, there are multiple forms of violence before, during, and after the electoral period. Those forms of violence seek to both intimidate us and expel us from struggles, and to block any progressive initiatives. Thus, they concern the democratic quality of political debate.

In this international alert, we denounce and speak out against political and institutional violence, in all of the forms that it takes in each country and region. And we call for fighting for a life that is worth living.

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They attack what they fear. We denounce political violence as the most effective tool for preventing us from carrying out our mandates and stopping our demands from becoming institutional policies. Violence is the form that hegemonic power acquires to maintain the current state of affairs. With physical and symbolic threats, hate language on social media, they seek to discipline and silence disruptive feminist and human rights politics. **We also denounce the advance of necropolitics and attacks against our rights** around the world, as femicides, and hate crimes in general, proliferate.

In **Brazil**, Bolsonaroism installs a political project that is racist, genocidal, and white, which is also present in other parts of Latin America. It develops a politics designed to kill women and Black people, who are the majority in Brazil, annihilate our bodies, and exclude our political projects. They killed Marielle Franco because she was an activist and legislator, Black, LGBTQIA+, from the favela, involved in anti-repressive struggles, in Rio de Janeiro. Her femicide attempted to intimidate and create setbacks for Black women as a whole. However, following her murder, many of us women ran for office and were elected by popular

vote. Of them, the trans and Black parliamentarians in Brazil are the ones who have suffered the most hate crimes, because transphobia is part of the hegemonic project.

In **Chile**, political violence against women in democratically elected positions has been highly evident in the Constituent Convention, where women representatives of indigenous peoples, such as the president of the Convention Elisa Loncón and the machi Francisca Linconao, a Mapuche spiritual authority, have suffered repeated aggressions both within the Convention and on social networks. Similar attacks have been suffered by those involved in struggles for water and to defend the environment as well as feminist activists. In addition, a few days ago the fascist candidate obtained a majority in the first round of the presidential election, which represents a threat to the lives of women, girls, dissidents, migrant sisters and all indigenous peoples.

While those are extreme examples, political and institutional violence is also seen, and continues to increase, around the world. In the **Spanish state** as well as in **Germany**, sexist political violence particularly targets women who participate in leftist organizations, who are subjected to intimidation and threats. The digital sphere ceases to be a site of democratic expression and empowerment for them. This also occurs with other women in the public eye, such as grassroots activists, journalists, artists. We see it once again in the attack against the magazine *Pikara* in the Spanish state.

There is sexism and racism even within leftist organizations, reproducing right-wing forms in their modes of construction. Our rights often appear as segregated or discursive changes take place that are not carried over into practice. Instead, we say: we don't only want to participate, we want to decide on the distribution of budgets. We fight for our parties to be more feminist and anti-racist, with internal and external policies that are focused on *buen vivir*, that is, a commitment to a society in which the life of the majorities is placed in the center.

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Our proposals to democratize politics, to dismantle racist and sexist structures, emerge from what we are doing, from our collective experience:

- We must **strengthen the relation between social movements, the streets, our organizations, and institutional participation**. When we manage to get representatives of our organizations elected to state office, institutional logics often tend to individualize, breaking down the relationship between the representatives and collective constructions. It is important to continue protecting and accompanying the delegates who tend to be most exposed to violence and to strengthen the bodies of collective construction of mandates, policies, and proposals, as well as to guarantee the social pressure that would make it possible to establish transformations.
- We are testing out **strategies for direct democratic participation from the local to the most general level**. In the collective mandates in Brazil, we run for office as a team and work in parliament collectively, despite the fact that they only allow one person to be the representative. On the other hand, the quotas for women, or Black and Indigenous people, in elections promote a comprehensive change of power relations in mixed institutional spaces and operate as democratizing mechanisms. Another strategy – which we practice in different regions – is to invite representatives from movements and social sectors (workers, Roma people, migrants, women, trans people, Afrodescendants, or people with disabilities) to hearings in Parliament, so that they can make their own demands and present them in front of all the delegates. Similarly, this

articulation requires political-pedagogical spaces, in which we collectively discuss issues of institutional politics and legislative power alongside popular collectives.

- We find it necessary to develop **safety, care, and self-defense strategies**, against oligarchic and right-wing sectors, as well as **protocols against sexist violence** in our own spaces. Furthermore, we believe that digital gender-based political violence must be analyzed in our leftist organizations and in the feminist movement, and that instruments (international protocols for protecting data, for digital security, criteria of care, etc.) and a more transversal campaign must be developed to put this issue in the center of public debate.
- We call for **international solidarity** to protect women and sexual dissidents that are victims of political violence across the world, so that they are not disciplined through threats or death. Furthermore, we call on ourselves to build our own safety mechanisms, designed with strategies of care to protect one another, bringing together experiences and knowledges from different latitudes.

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In this alert, we denounce and propose. It is one more tool for defending ourselves and collective caring for each other and to continue fighting on all terrains. Political spaces can, should and need to be occupied by us, women and queers, with an anti-capitalist, feminist, anti-racist, anti-colonialist, and anti-imperialist perspective, because no territory of transformation is foreign to us.

We don't want this world that violates and oppresses us anymore. We want to create new forms of living in society based on *buen vivir*. We defend *buen vivir* as part of our feminist politics, a world in which we can exist and build based on the right to happiness. Because, as Emma Goldman said, "If I can't dance, I don't want to be part of your revolution."

Against the right-wings' attempts to suffocate us, feminism allows us to breathe. We know that the struggle is worth it, as shown by the victory for legal abortion in Argentina and its decriminalization in practice in Mexico, the Constituent Convention in Chile, and other victories that we have won as part of our feminist revolution.

In this alert, we call for strengthening ourselves through joy and international unity, for continuing to occupy the streets, movements, and to lead political organizations and dispute institutions.

We are here to change everything.

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Initial signatories:

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Institute Marielle Franco – Brazil

Vilma Reis, activist in the movement of Black Women, PT – Brazil

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Camila Miranda, Fundación Nodo XXI – Chile

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Luciana Peker, author, journalist, feminist activist – Argentina

AKAFEM feminist-municipalist network – Spanish State

Nieves Salobral Martin, member of AKAFEM – Spanish State

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