

Brazilian carnival sends a protest message against Jair Bolsonaro



Brasilia, February 24 (RHC)-- Brazil's Carnival, the world's biggest party, has begun with a distinct tone of protest against the current government of right-wing President Jair Bolsonaro.

Men, women, and children from the samba schools of Rio de Janeiro and other cities of the country danced to the rhythm of samba while they paid homage to indigenous people, women who suffered slavery and victims of police violence in Brazil's favelas, multiplying before the world messages of resistance and tolerance.

Despite the "cultural war" unleashed by Jair Bolsonaro's administration, the Carnival managed to reaffirm the position of the Brazilian people in the face of the political climate of the nation. "It is a carnival with many protests so that the world can see what is happening in Brazil," said Camila Rocha, a 30-year-old woman who paraded in Rio de Janeiro, the city that marked the beginning of the great Brazilian celebration over the weekend.

Among the allegorical floats of the Carnival, one stood out representing the human rights activist and councilwoman Marielle Franco -- killed in a shoot-out on March 14, 2018 -- holding a gag, during the first night of the Carnival parade at the Sambódromo in São Paulo, Brazil.

The Mangueira samba school, the reigning champion of Rio de Janeiro, showed a Black Jesus dancing with his disciples in a favela as he passed through the Sambódromo in this city. During the presentation, they simulated an interruption of the dance by policemen, who dispersed the group by beating them with sticks. This was a metaphor for life in the favelas in Rio, where 1,800 people were killed in police interventions in 2019.

The violence in the favelas was also present in the "mess" of Uniao da Ilha, in Rio, which placed on top of a float an almost life-size helicopter flying over a community. But instead of bullets, it threw white T-shirts from the air, as a sign of peace.

The Portela samba school also displayed a tribute to the Tupinambá Indians, who lived in the Rio region before Portuguese colonization. "Our village has no party or faction, no bishop and does not surrender to any captain," sang the traditional school, in verses that can be interpreted as a message to Bolsonaro, a former captain of the army, whose environmental policy is denounced for its human and climate impact inside and outside Brazil.

Bolsonaro has shown little interest in the carnival and has gone so far as to denounce the "libertine behavior" of these festivities.

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