

Thank you, Cuban doctors. See you soon

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About 40 years ago, in 1977, I was doing a piece in Africa, on the Mauritanian border, on the way to the Sahrawi Republic, and during one of the stops in a village next to a small oasis, I heard a group of people talking. At a spring in the village comparable to a Brazilian favela, I heard people who spoke Spanish and approached with my Arab guide. I saw that they were dressed in white and I asked them if they were doctors and they responded: "Yes, we are doctors, Cuban doctors." I asked them: "How? What are you doing here?" And they answered: "We are working here in Africa, helping poor countries."

It was the first time I saw Cuban doctors working around the world. Countries that are able to, pay for their services, those that can't don't. This is what is called proletarian internationalism. Thus I viewed the Brazilian government forcing Cuba to make that decision, a dignified attitude, an attitude that makes us proud to be friends of the Cuban Revolution, at the same time as it leaves us deeply saddened, because we know that it is the poor, scattered across thousands of towns in rural Brazil, who will pay the price; and that the polished and perfumed physicians who undertake costly courses in expensive faculties here in the Southeast, will never accept to set foot there.

Most of these people had never seen a doctor before in their lives. There are documentaries, films, we ourselves have made a documentary.

Cuba's decision... Bolsonaro thought that it was enough to bare his teeth to the Cubans and they would bow their heads - he doesn't know who he is dealing with. Cuba has endured for 60 years against the

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greatest military power, the most aggressive that humanity has known. Cuba endured diplomatic, economic, and military attacks for 60 years, from the other side of the Straits of Florida, and resisted. It won't be a government like this in Brazil that will make Cuba bow down.

I bid farewell to my friends, Cuban doctors who are leaving, and I want to tell you that at this moment we are very ashamed to be Brazilian. A strong embrace, not only mine, but that of millions and millions and millions of Brazilians who owe you a debt money can't pay. Thank you so much.

(Fernando Morais is one of Brazil's most important writers. He expressed these words, for the Cuban blog "La pupila insomne," in a video to Cuban doctors returning from Brazil which he posted on his blog "Nocaute")

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