

Marielle Franco, a symbol of hope

By Ms Alexandra de Sá Pereira Maciel Teixeira

March 14th, 2018, was a tragic day for all fighting to create more inclusive and diverse political spaces in Brazil. Rio de Janeiro's councilwomen Marielle Franco and her driver Anderson Gomes were executed in a crime that has not been solved yet. She was the only black woman at the city council, having received the fifth highest vote total in 2016's elections.

From the Maré favela, activist, LGBT, feminist and an important left leader, Marielle embodied the intersection of many types of marginalization. She was a symbol of hope to many excluded people because she represented the possibility of marginalized groups occupying the political space.

Soon before her death, she had been appointed rapporteur for the special commission to monitor the ongoing federal intervention in Rio the Janeiro, which she openly criticized. As a member of the Rio de Janeiro's State Human Rights Commission for more than a decade, she has been persistently denouncing police forces abuses such as extrajudicial executions.

In the aftermath of the tragedy, thousands of people gathered in solidarity in Rio, in most Brazilian capitals and throughout the world. The international grief has shown Marielle represented fights much bigger than her, she was only "a seed" as some people championed. The mobilizations materialized what she defended thoroughly: we need to build together a fairer and more peaceful society for everyone. The motto "I am because we are" express this disposition.

Unfortunately, the dialogues and bridges Marielle have supported are far from being a reality. Deep polarization characterizes the Brazilian society on an already troubled election year. For instance, Marielle's execution was reclaimed by different political actor and has even been used by the current president Michel Temer for justifying the ongoing militarization of Rio's public security.

Today, a month after Marielle was gone, pressuring for investigation is still a priority. Nevertheless, it is also a moment to remember the very strong political legacy Marielle left for us to follow. Her lessons of resistance must keep inspiring Brazilian citizens to engage actively in producing the necessary ruptures for building an equitable, peaceful and democratic country. #Mariellepresente (Marielle is here).

For more information access:

Mídia Nija. [De pretas para Marielle](#).

Flávia Biroli. [Favela, negritude e gênero: o corpo político de Marielle Franco](#).

OPEN DEMOCRACY. [Are we ready to face it? Marielle's execution and its perverse consequences](#).

THE GUARDIAN. [The Guardian view in the murder of Brazilian politicians](#): Marielle Franco's legacy.

NowThis World. [The life of Brazilian Activist Marielle Franco](#)