

Itamaraty instructs diplomats to stress that gender is only biological sex

Government's war against gender ideology comes to foreign policy; the ministry of foreign affairs mentions a resumption of the 'traditional definition'

By Patricia Campos Mello

The Bolsonaro government has opened a new front in the war against gender ideology: foreign policy. In recent weeks, according to *Folha*, diplomats have received official instructions from the Itamaraty to reiterate, during negotiations in multilateral forums, "the Brazilian government's understanding that the word gender means biological sex: female or male". Gender theory establishes that gender and sexual orientation are social constructions, and not just biological determinations. For right-wing segments, "gender ideology" is an attack on the traditional concept of family.

In at least two meetings, at the UN and the OAS Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, diplomats were instructed to highlight to diplomats from other countries the Brazilian government's view on gender. According to Itamaraty sources, the instruction was formalized because Brazil, by using this definition, wants to avoid ambiguities. Itamaraty said it was only a resumption of the traditional definition of gender. For Camila Asano, Coordinator of Conectas Human Rights, this measure could "compromise the international credibility of the country". "If this order is not immediately reversed, Brazil will join countries that propagate retrograde positions in international spaces, ignoring national and global advances in the fight against inequalities and prejudices," she said.

She recalls that Damares Alves, Minister for Women, Family and Human Rights, announced at the beginning of the year that Brazil is a candidate for a new mandate in the UN Human Rights Council. An orientation like this, says Asano, "can and should be judicially questioned".

Itamaraty's new instruction is in line with numerous statements made by Brazilian Chancellor Ernesto Araújo and President Jair Bolsonaro. In a speech at a seminar promoted by Itamaraty and the Alexandre de Gusmão Foundation (Funag) on June 10, Araújo criticized globalism, stating that the concept promotes ideas such as gender ideology, alongside "racism" - which is, according to him, the concept of society divided into races - and ecologism, defined by the Minister of Foreign Relations as ecology transformed into ideology. According to right-wing movements, globalism would direct international institutions to interfere with the sovereignty

of countries and erase national traditions. In this speech, Ernesto criticized globalism for creating a world where "you no longer have a nation, where you no longer have a family, where you no longer have a man and a woman". Earlier, in an article published in January in the American conservative magazine *The New Criterion*, the chancellor attacked the "left-wing agenda that quickly took over Brazilian society".

For him, this agenda would include "the promotion of gender ideology, the artificial stimulation of racial tensions, the prevalence of the government over the parents as a provider of values for children, the humiliation of Christians".

Bolsonaro often mentions the fight against gender ideology. In an interview alongside U.S. President Donald Trump at the White House during a visit to Washington, the president said: "The U.S. and Brazil are united in their faith in God, in the fight against gender ideology, political correctness and fake news".

Asano stated that the new Itamaraty instruction could have an impact on Brazil's granting of refugees. "One of the reasons for granting refuge is persecution, including for reasons of sexual orientation and gender identity."

"If Itamaraty guides its diplomats in this sense, Brazil can distance itself from countries that receive refugees that are persecuted for these reasons. This tarnishes the country's reputation as a reference in the refugee protection agenda" she affirms.

Itamaraty states that Brazil maintains its policies for the protection of minorities, including LGBTI+, and that it also acts in several initiatives for the defense of LGBTI+ people in international forums.

Source: [Folha de São Paulo](#)