

MANIFESTO LETTER: A CALL FOR TRANSFORMATION

To the women, people of diverse expressions of womanhood, gender-diverse people, and family members who live, resist, and care within and beyond the walls: this letter is born of our voices and our memory.

But for the future to be different, it must become a commitment shared by all of us. We address society as a whole, leaders, governments, parliaments, the private sector, and justice systems throughout the Global South: this is an urgent invitation to build a new path.

NO JUSTICE WITHOUT US

Não há justiça sem nós

No hay justicia sin nosotras

This manifesto is rooted in the reality of those who know the justice system and prison firsthand. We know, in our hearts and on our skin, that the current model has failed. Punishment alone has not brought peace; it has created social fractures and deepened inequalities. Even before imprisonment, historically marginalized populations in our territories — poor women, Black women, migrants, Indigenous peoples, and residents of urban peripheries — already face a lack of protection and the criminalization of their very existence.

Within and beyond the walls, what we see is the fracturing of families, invisibility, and silence. Outside, the promise of reintegration runs up against stigma and closed doors.

We carry the marks of this system on our bodies, but we continue to build possibilities. That is why we demand, with conviction: **we do not want to be reintegrated into an unjust world. We want to transform it.**

True public and social safety grows out of justice. **Justice is not punishment, nor is it merely accountability. Justice is care. Justice is reparation. Justice is social protection and the sustaining of life. Justice is living with dignity. There is no peace without justice.**

Care can no longer be treated as a one-sided responsibility and invisible work imposed solely on women. Care is a fundamental pillar of cohesion in any healthy society. In the Global South, our grassroots communities are already developing social technologies for survival and mutual support. It is time to turn these local solutions into state policies.

Yet we will not do this alone. Building justice for the future requires a broad alliance. We propose the following:

- **Centering Care:** Gender perspectives and care must cease to be isolated issues and become cross-cutting pillars of justice, health, and public safety policies, bringing society together in defense of human dignity.
- **Civic Participation:** Those directly affected must have an active voice, a seat at the table, and decision-making power in shaping and evaluating these policies, because those who live with the problem hold the keys to its solution.
- **Protection Networks:** Networks of directly affected people and people with lived experience must be strengthened through public and private funding as the true front line of social protection, valuing the knowledge of those who sustain life in their communities.
- **Comprehensive Policies:** Responses to social conflicts and harms must bring together policies on employment, housing, health, education, and income generation, ensuring the conditions people need to live with dignity.

There can be no just policy without a gender perspective and care. And there is no justice without us.

The Global South is our starting point, but the transformation we demand knows no borders. We invite you to take this manifesto to your territory and bring it into dialogue with your culture, your language, and your values. Let it resonate in the streets, parliaments, businesses, educational spaces, communities, places of detention, and other institutions.

Together, in alliance, we will transgress the walls — including those that remain standing long after leaving prison.

As they say behind the walls, it is time to catch “the 7 AM air”¹: the very moment to rise. And this campaign is our collective uprising — there will be no justice without us.

Como dizem por trás dos muros, é hora do "ar das sete": o momento exato de levantar. E esta campanha é o nosso levante coletivo — não haverá justiça sem nós.

Como dicen tras los muros, es hora de tomar "el aire de las siete": el momento exacto de levantarse. Y esta campaña es nuestro levante - no habrá justicia sin nosotras.

¹ **"The 7 AM air"** is an expression used in Brazilian prisons meaning that it is time to get up — to wake up and begin the day.

"Ar das sete" é uma expressão utilizada nos presídios brasileiros, a qual significa que é a hora de se levantar, isto é, acordar e iniciar o dia.

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