

Adolfo Pérez Esquivel*: Letter in support of nomination of Lula for the Nobel Peace Prize:

The Reverend of the US Baptist Church and Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Martin Luther King was assassinated in 1968 at the Lorraine Motel, Memphis. On April 4, 50 years after that murder, which marked humanity, was commemorated. They wanted to silence the voice of those who defended the civil rights of their African-American brothers, in the face of the injustices and discrimination prevailing in the US, one of the most racist countries in the world. Today it is necessary to make a memory of their struggle, nonviolent, in defense of human dignity threatened by the racism and persecutory xenophobia of the Trump government.

As you read this note, the wall of infamy grows between the United States and Latin America. It is not the only border wall in the world nor will it be the last, as long as we do not learn that the most difficult walls to knock down are those that are in the mind and heart. That to knock them down is in the conscience and values of the human being, in the knowledge that we are all different, we come from different countries and cultures, languages, but we have the same rights, which must be respected.

A few years ago, I was at the Lorraine Motel to visit, meditate and pray in the room where Martin Luther King was murdered. I had his spirit and faith in front of the drama of humanity, when he said: "If the world ends tomorrow, I will still plant my apple tree."

Another April 4, this time in 1977, I returned from Ecuador and went to renew my passport to the Central Department of the Federal Police. There I was arrested and taken to a torture center because the non-violent activities of fighting against the Latin American dictatorships had placed me on a list of dangerous people for the Argentine dictatorship.

It was Holy Week, I was locked in a "tube", a small dark dungeon, smelly, with a mat on the floor. I did not know what could happen to me. A companion who accompanied me to the police was able to notify my family and national and international organizations.

Endless hours passed in the confinement. I knocked on the door of the dungeon to go to the bathroom, a guard opened it, the light came in and I could see on the wall many inscriptions, names of loved ones, insults, prayers. I was impressed by a large inscription of blood from a prisoner on the wall ... he said: "God does not kill."

This April 4, 41 years after my detention, which lasted two years and from which I lived the horror of the power of the military dictatorship that attacked my life on different occasions as well as against the life of our Argentine people, who said "Never More" and that continues fighting until today for there to be Memory, Truth and Justice.

This same April 4 also had as protagonist a non-violent fighter against injustice. A union worker who was imprisoned by the military dictatorship of his country, Brazil, then president twice and recently just suffered an attack on his life in the context of a political persecution that takes him back to prison for the action of neo-coupist castes.

There was no crime when President Dilma Rousseff was dismissed, removed for published decrees that had already been used by other presidents, there is no crime of Lula in the cause of triplex, however they invented it in order to block his presidential candidacy, because they know that he could win in the first round. They do not want to kill him, they do not want to let him free, they just have to criminalize

him and lock him up for the simple sin of having taken more than 30 million people out of poverty and putting at risk the privileges of power groups that believe they own Brazil.

The non-violent struggle to recover the rights of the people continues, they will not be able to silence the voices of resistance or the force of truth, which demolishes walls and calls us to continue planting seeds of hope.

[This is the letter that I will present to the Nobel Committee in September, postulating Lula for the Nobel Peace Prize.]

* Adolfo Pérez Esquivel is an Argentinian activist, writer, artist and winner of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1980.