

Walls



Image taken from teleSUR

By Guillermo Alvarado

That powers, monarchies or governments that shame our species build walls to keep out migrants, refugees or people in need, is something that no longer surprises anyone and the United States, Spain, Morocco and Israel show their contempt for their fellow men on a daily basis.

But that a country classified as "developing", that is to say poor, even quite poor, should do this to separate those who have been its lifelong neighbors, with whom it shares the territory of an island in the Caribbean, is truly astonishing, to use a mild term.

Many will have guessed by now that I am talking about the indecent fence that the Dominican Republic authorities are building with unhealthy pride on the border with Haiti, with the purpose of preventing the citizens of the latter country from crossing in search of work or refuge.

Some media, among them the Argentinean newspaper Página 12, described the construction as an example of an anti-immigrant and discriminatory policy, and I would add that it is a clear example of why the world is the way it is.

When the poor despise and humiliate others for the simple reason that they are a little poorer or of a different skin color, what else can we say?

It is true that irregular migration is a problem, that it is something that must be controlled, but the solution is not to slam the door in the face of those who seek a little human solidarity.

It is also true that some of those who use this route are not always loaded with good intentions, but that is what the laws and the authorities are there for, and they are the ones who should bring order.

The history of relations between these two peoples has been plagued by regrettable events. In 1937, the dictator Rafael Leonidas Trujillo ordered thousands of Haitians to be hacked to death with machetes and beaten, in what is known as the "Parsley Massacre".

Not long ago, in 2013, the Dominican Constitutional Court withdrew citizenship from thousands of people who are daughters of undocumented Haitians, but who were born in that country, an absurd and xenophobic decision.

Now they are building a wall, whose first design, by the way, was made in Israel, an expert in these matters, but the construction was assigned to an obscure consortium called COFAH, of which nobody knows anything and whose work is a state secret, because that is how it was established in the contract.

The move could be costly for President Luis Abinader, because his country depends heavily on Haitian labor in sensitive sectors such as agriculture, construction and services.

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