

Guatemalans stage funeral procession to protest



Guatemala City, April 29 (RHC)-- After staging a funeral procession through the streets of Guatemala City on Tuesday, social activists and workers came together in la Plaza de la Constitución to denounce the poor management of the health emergency by President Alejandro Giammattei administration.

"Basic services were cut off and state aid never came," protesters carrying white crosses shouted and denounced that the government discriminates against returned migrants. "Giammattei stigmatizes migrants. Our remittances have sustained the economy. The cursed person is the one who abandoned his people and blames us for the contagion," they added.

These statements occur after the Guatemalan president described a plane that brought coronavirus-infected migrants deported from the U.S. as a "cursed flight."

"We are dying not only from the virus but also from hunger, poverty, forgetfulness of the state, exploitation by businessmen, and corruption by politicians and the military," people said.

Congress approved \$2 million for social programs. Up to the moment, however, these resources have not been used to help the people or improve health workers' safety. Social activists in Guatemala highlighted that politicians and businessmen are taking advantage of the pandemic to continue doing illicit business with public resources.

Due to the lack of actions by the Giammattei administration, citizens of this Central American country, where poverty affects 60 percent of the population, are organizing their forms of solidarity through flags of different colors, which are placed outside of the houses.

A white flag alerts the need for food aid, a red flag means the presence of older adults without access to medicine or food, a black flag denounces violence against women, and a yellow flag reports abused children.

So far, Guatemala had registered 557 COVID-19 cases and 16 deaths. Most infections are concentrated in the departments of Guatemala, Chimaltenago and Sacatepequez.

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