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By María Josefina Arce

The year has barely begun and already the Brazilian president, Jair Bolsonaro, is once again drawing criticism for his irresponsible statements on vaccination against COVID-19, when in the South American nation the new variant Ómicron is already present, which, although apparently less lethal, is a threat to all, especially those not immunized.

Now he described as propaganda the vaccination campaign for children from 5 to 11 years old, authorized by Anvisa, the National Health Surveillance Agency, and regulated by the Ministry of Health.

The tenant of the Planalto Palace ignores the health authorities, scientists and medical personnel of his country. But he also ignores an important and regrettable statistic: 308 infants of this age group have died from the disease caused by the new coronavirus, according to official figures.

The Brazilian Pediatric Society questioned his statements and pointed out that the virus has victimized many minors.

Bolsonaro also overlooks the fact that 71% of Brazilians agree with vaccinating children against the disease, revealed a survey by Poder Data.

The survey was conducted among residents in 501 municipalities of the Brazilian territory, and included people who do not have children, since the idea was to answer what they would do in case of having a minor with respect to immunization against COVID-19.

The controversy has been escalating. Antonio Barra Torres, director of Anvisa, asked the president to refrain from attacking the health agency, which he has accused of corruption.

In fact, Bolsonaro had threatened to disclose the names of the Anvisa directors who released the child vaccination, which has motivated death threats against the professionals of that entity by people close to the ultra-right-wing president.

In his letter Barra Torres indicated to the head of state that he can order an immediate police investigation on him or any person working in Anvisa.

These are not Bolsonaro's first statements about the COVID-19 vaccines, even the Supreme Court has opened an investigation against him for linking them to AIDS.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, the president has questioned the health and isolation recommendations recommended by health agencies of the South American giant and the World Health Organization to deal with the virus.

He has maintained at all times an irresponsible attitude, by encouraging events with crowds of people, not using masks and downplaying the importance of the disease, which he has described as a simple flu.

Bolsonaro spreads false news about the pandemic and sows doubts about the effectiveness and convenience of immunosuppressants. The president disrespects the lives of all the citizens of Brazil, which in the last week registered in one day more than 63 thousand cases, the highest number of infected people since July 23 of last year, which set a record with one hundred and eight thousand 730 sick people.

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