



August 31, 2016

Dear Brazilian Supreme Court Justices / Exceletíssimos Juízes:

Global Doctors for Choice (GDC) strongly supports the recent petition to the Brazilian Supreme Court which proposes to expand government health services and social supports for women, children, and families affected by the growing Zika health emergency.

This petition was submitted by the Brazilian National Association of Public Defenders (ANADep) and the the Anis-Institute of Bioethics (Anis), a Brazilian feminist non-government organization, and supported by the Global Health Justice Partnership, a partnership of the Yale Law School and the Yale School of Public Health.

The Zika epidemic represents a public health emergency and provides a critical opportunity for the Brazilian government to affirm its commitment to women's health and rights and to fulfill its national and international obligations to protect the most vulnerable Brazilians by ensuring adequate infrastructure, cash benefits, mosquito control programs, and public health resources, including access to comprehensive reproductive health information and options.

GDC supports all initiatives to ensure that women throughout Brazil have the information, access to healthcare services, access to family planning methods, and access to safe, legal abortion, they require to respond to the Zika virus epidemic. We fully support this petition in order to comprehensively address this public health crisis in your country.

As doctors, our first duty is always to our patients. There is consensus among medical, public health, and human rights groups that access to comprehensive family planning services and access to safe abortion is essential to ensure the best possible conditions for women's health. Further, there is strong evidence that the prohibition of abortion does not significantly deter the practice, but rather results in women seeking clandestine and often unsafe procedures. As Brazil faces a public health emergency, the need for access to comprehensive medical services, including contraception and abortion, and social supports for women, children, and families, is essential to the country's ability to confront and recover from this crisis.

As a global network of physicians, we support this petition and urge its approval, and as such we support the prevention of unnecessary medical and psychological harms for women in Brazil.

Sincerely,

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