

Lawyer denounces Brazilian company's barbaric experiments with elderly during pandemic

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Testifying last week before the Brazilian Senate's Commission of Inquiry (CPI) into the government's mishandling of the coronavirus pandemic, the lawyer for doctors employed by the health care company Prevent Senior exposed a regime of coercion, intimidation and cover-up surrounding the prescription of so-called "COVID kits" that resulted in the deaths of hundreds of elderly patients.

In August, a complaint signed by 15 Prevent Senior doctors made public that the company, which is an insurance and health care provider for more than 600,000 elderly people, had been functioning as a center of operations for fascistic President Jair Bolsonaro in his campaign for "herd immunity" through mass infection.

Already in April 2020, a "pact" was made between Prevent Senior and the Bolsonaro administration to promote hydroxychloroquine and ivermectin, both widely endorsed by the president as "early treatments" against COVID-19 that would facilitate reopening the economy. Prevent Senior's COVID-19 medical protocols were created in consultation with close medical associates of the president.

Doctors revealed that company officials ordered the prescription of the scientifically discredited drugs as "COVID-19 kits" for symptomatic as well as hospitalized elderly patients without their relatives' or their own knowledge. The doctors' lawyer, Bruna Morato, said that this resulted in the deaths of hundreds. Meanwhile, for an unknown number of COVID-19 patients, the cause of death was changed after 10-14 days of hospitalization to falsely claim a higher rate of recovery by COVID-19 patients taking these medications.

Medical staff in hospitals were also ordered to prescribe the ineffective drugs for themselves in case they developed COVID-19 symptoms. During an interview with the whistleblowers on Saturday, the doctors recounted a routine in which they prescribed the "COVID-19 kits," while having to tell their patients in secret not to take the medications. "They watched who was giving the prescriptions and who wasn't. It was a situation in which they had control, so there was no autonomy," a doctor said.

Prevent Senior's CEO Eduardo Parrillo systematically

enforced his reign of terror with the selection of "guardians" loyal to the company, assigned to supervise on-duty doctors and make sure that they were following the company's orders.

Dr. Walter Correa de Souza, a former doctor at the company, stated, "As someone who worked as a military firefighter for many years, I've never seen a hierarchy so tightly enforced as the one inside the company. Not even in the Army."

Intimidation tactics included hospital coordinators threatening to fire dissenting medical staff who refused to prescribe the quack cures. The lawyer, Morato, said that the company frequently fired personnel who disagreed with their measures.

Prevent Senior's protocols were enforced as Bolsonaro pressured the health ministry to officially include chloroquine as a COVID-19 medication.

In May 2020, Bolsonaro appointed Army Gen. Eduardo Pazuello as his health minister. The general carried forward the president's herd immunity campaign, promoting chloroquine. He later transformed Manaus into a death trap, in January 2021, by refusing to send oxygen supplies to the capital of Amazonas, despite several warnings.

The CPI session with lawyer Morato also revealed that a hospital director recommended and supervised cutting off oxygen supplies for patients hospitalized for more than 10 to 14 days, stating that "death is also a form of discharging [the patients]."

In March-April 2020, Prevent Senior's directors coordinated a secret experiment on elderly patients, treating them like "human guinea pigs." After they were secretly medicated with hydroxychloroquine and azithromycin, their results were "rounded out to match Bolsonaro's speech," as ordered by Dr. Rodrigo Esper who was coordinating the macabre experiment.

Esper and his bosses published the "study" in a pre-print version after "rounding out" the data to falsely show that no one died as a result of taking the drugs. In reality, nine patients died who had taken the drugs, double the number of the group that had received a placebo.

Morato further made the connection between the company's barbaric actions and the campaign supported by the ruling elite to reopen the economy, despite the predicted surge in cases and

deaths. Referring to Bolsonaro's closest medical associates, "completely aligned with the economic interests of the Finance Ministry," Morato stated that "they referred to an 'ideological alignment.' in which the economy cannot stop, and so what they had to do is to give people hope. That hope had a name: hydroxychloroquine."

These macabre experiments could not have been carried out without the support of the company's CEOs, the Parrillo brothers, who implemented a company-wide system of coercion and intimidation to conduct the experiments on the elderly during the pandemic.

Morato and Prevent Senior doctors have also revealed that the "guardians" frequently sang a hymn with their hands on their chests during company events. The Parrillo brothers played their guitars as the guardians were ordered to sing.

The lyrics include the following passages: "We were born to live, Fighting until we die, ... And together we will win, With swords and cannons, We are the guardians." The ritual is inspired by the Nazi Waffen SS, a paramilitary group selected for their "pure blood" to protect Hitler.

Morato stated that the SS-inspired motto, "obedience and loyalty," was instituted in 2015, and is promoted to this day by company officials.

The Parrillo brothers are members of the rock band Doctor Pheabes, having opened for major rock bands such as Black Sabbath and The Rolling Stones during music festivals like Lollapalozza and Rock in Rio. The band released its latest album in 2019 called "Army of the Sun," a direct reference to the Waffen SS.

Such figures could only have felt free to carry out these abominable acts under conditions in which entire governments are ever more openly arguing for the deaths of millions to be treated as the new "normal" to which people will have to get accustomed during the pandemic.

If Bolsonaro and Boris Johnson in the UK could perform their mass experiments on millions to achieve herd immunity, it would appear only natural for such elements to do the same.

Since April 2020, when these barbaric acts were directly coordinated by Nazi sympathizers in the company's management, governments throughout the world have defended ever more openly the reopening of schools and the economy, resulting in the deaths of millions globally.

On Tuesday, the mayors of Brazil's two biggest cities, São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, announced the lifting of mask mandates in the coming weeks, justifying it on the grounds that vaccination rates would be high. The mayors' criminal measures were declared as the Delta variant is ripping through the US and the UK, showing that even with most of the population having taken double shots, thousands of people will continue to die each week.

Following in Bolsonaro's footsteps, since April of last year, state governors have given ever more open support to the government's campaign of herd immunity through mass

infection. The motto "the cure can't be worse than the disease" was fully endorsed by the Workers Party (PT), with Governor Camilo Santana of Ceará being one of the first to reopen his state's economy after the first wave, followed by his fellow PT governors in Bahia and Rio Grande do Norte.

That is the reason why, after the practices at Prevent Senior were made public, efforts were intensified to contain and cover up the episode. The São Paulo attorney general declared that "we must respond rapidly but judiciously to give a prompt response to the population but also not to harm the company." He concluded by saying that "we have to be surgical."

The investigations by the CPI in Brazil are an effort to shift the blame for the country's 600,000 deaths from the entire political establishment, which carried out wholly inadequate mitigation measures while forcing children back into schools and workers back into factories in order to make profits for the rich.

Meanwhile, instead of issuing a public apology, the company is doubling down against the doctor whistleblowers, showing how confident company officials are that they will go unpunished. Prevent Senior is currently blaming the doctors for giving the prescriptions themselves, trying to turn reality on its head, and declared in September that the whistleblowers were the criminals for accessing patients' records.

The fact that such individuals are given power on medical boards is an expression of a diseased social order, that puts profit above all else, including human life. That they are able to maintain political office is a sign that the ruling class is preparing to confront the mass struggles of the working class with openly anti-democratic and violent methods of repression.

The answer to these preparations of the ruling class is for workers to organize the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC) to prepare a counteroffensive of the working class to carry forward a program of eradication of the pandemic. Such an offensive must be waged as part of the fight to put an end to the capitalist system that puts profits above human life, and build a society based on human need, that is, the fight for socialism.



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