

**OPEN LETTER TO SOCIETY**  
**Attack on Democracy at the Federal Institute of Rio Grande do Norte (IFRN) -**  
**Brazil**

Natal, April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2020

Dear students, parents and guardians,  
Dear fellow faculty and staff, third-party employees,  
technicians and professors,  
Dear fellow countrymen,  
Dear national and international partners,

The past few days have been filled with anguish for the entire IFRN community. In the election held on December 4, 2019, I was elected by the internal community with 48.25% of the votes to be chancellor of IFRN from 2020 to 2024. That result, however, was violated by the Ministry of Education through the appointment of another professor to fill the position in question.

In view of this fact, I affirm and will always reaffirm that there is no legal impediment to my appointment. The ongoing situation is merely the result of political persecution, notably orchestrated by a very small number of citizens who, unable to submit to the rules of democracy, seek by fraudulent means the appropriation of a public function - and, consequently, of the whole administrative apparatus of our century-old institution. To put it simply and directly, civil servants and students were the victims of an attack on the democratic process, against which we are already responding under the law.

The current context attacks democracy, jeopardizes our institutional stability and constitutes a terrible example for our students and the population in general. However, most of the servants within this institution, including myself, driven by an ethical, republican and democratic spirit, strongly oppose the vile maneuver responsible for this institutional situation. As the recent history of our country shows, this strategy is typical of the resentful lovers of authoritarianism, in their childhood fantasies and irresponsible adventures with power. IFRN is a serious educational institution with great social responsibility. It is not a toy!

In view of this context, we demand that the Ministry of Education respect the decision of the community in order to be able to resume, with civility, the direction of this century-old institution, whose contribution is recognized by the entire society of Rio Grande do Norte, especially by its most disadvantaged strata. We call on all former employees, alumni and other members of civil society to join us. We strive to recover, as soon as possible, the direction of the IFRN, fulfilling the will of the majority of the academic community expressed at the polls.

Finally, we ratify our commitment to public, free of charge and high quality

education, to continue to transform the lives of thousands of young *potiguares*.

José Arnóbio de Araújo Filho  
*Elected Chancellor of IFRN*