



WIDF - Women International Democratic Federation
FDIM - Federação Democrática Internacional de Mulheres
FDIF - Fédération Démocratique Internationale des Femmes

WIDF's homage to VILMA ESPIN - President of Cuban Women Federation

With deep sadness for the friend's death VILMA ESPIN, the WIDF – Women International Democratic Federation offers its homage to this great heroine of the Cuban revolution and the women's worldwide struggle.

Her example on the revolutionary struggle in her country, building a sovereign Nation that has become a symbol not only in Latin America, but in hearts and minds of all those who want the freedom and the emancipation of their people, it will keep forever present and it will be the larger example of each one of us.

VILMA dedicated with love her life for the liberation of her people; she illuminated the women' struggle for equality and for the full emancipation. The unit of WIDF is the result of her deep commitment with each one of us, of her unbreakable faith in the force value and of the woman's spirit and of the capacity of revolutionary overcoming and transformation that exists in each one of us.

We, friends of WIDF, struggle's militant for a better, fairer, more equalitarian and more fraternal world, where the cooperation between people and nations is the larger reason of our existence, who lived so close to her, will never forget her and forever she will be remembered.

WIDF that has in front detached and brave women in its struggle for peace, against imperialism, poverty, violence and oppression, had, has and will have in VILMA ESPIN her permanent solidary presence; her clarity for indicating us the way in the most difficult moments, correcting the shortcuts; her militancy for doing us to resist always and her certainty that we will be victorious in the construction of a better world for the whole Humanity.

Heroine of the fight against Fulgêncio Batista's dictatorship, outstanding combatant on the Rebellious Army with Fidel, Raúl, Che and Camilo Cienfuegos and after the trump of the Revolution, founder president of the Cuban Women Federation in 1960, VILMA ESPIN GUILLOIS, wife of the President in exercise, Raul Castro, she was one of the most outstanding personalities of the Cuba Revolution and she died in Havana, this Monday.



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VILMA began her militancy very early. “The attack to the Moncada’s quarter happened, the youths’ murders on that afternoon of July 26, 1953 filled with indignation Santiago’s people [city where she was born]. All of us tried to know who were the brave that had accomplished the assault”, she related the revolutionary reminding the action of a youths’ group, conducted by Fidel Castro that reacted to the treacherous blow perpetrated by Batista in 1952, sustained by the North American imperialism, that it provoked a serious political crisis in the country and it established a sanguinary dictatorship.

These facts marked the beginning of the last stage of the people’s fight for its total liberation. “We have to detach, after Moncada, how it was important to us the tremendous impact that it caused Fidel’s pronouncement in face of tribunal, “the History will absolve me.” It was something that gave us the warranty that a new thing was appearing. I remind I was at laboratory [Vilma was chemical engineer] when they gave me a copy and I read it there, quickly. We all were fascinated, it spoke a new language in that it presented a program in turn of which we all were able to agglutinate for struggling and that it was an advanced and attractive program for youth. Fidel was still at the Island of Pins, but we identified ourselves completely with him and with his objectives”, she told us, the communist leader, on facts that motivated her changing into inseparable collaborator of the revolutionary young man Frank País, and taking part of the Revolutionary National Action, organization that was added after to the rows of the Movement of July 26.

When Frank País was murdered, VILMA was among the main organizers of the revolutionary hero’s funeral, including guiding her mother Dona Rasário to rescue his cadaver and to avoid the Batista’s policies disappeared with him. The funeral became a powerful protest strike against the dictatorship. Like her relate: “With Frank’s death there was a tremendous popular reaction in Santiago of Cuba and in the rest of the East province and including in other provinces. *There were many protests and it unbound a strike. Frank’s funeral was so gigantic that the tyranny forces stayed at quarters so great was their fear! It was a strike of which bosses and workers participated, giving a measure that the whole people were joint struggling against Batista and they supported the revolutionary forces and they was protagonist of this fight.*”



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After concluding a course in United States orientated by Movement's Direction she made scale in Mexico to find Fidel Castro and to discuss with him the steps to be given by revolutionaries. Under Frank's direct orders she participated in the armed rebellion of Santiago of Cuba on November, 30th 1956, in support to the Granma's expeditionary. After this action her house became the general quarter of the revolutionary movement in that region.

A little before Frank País is murdered, VILMA was already member of the National Direction of the Movement; she was named by him as Provincial Coordinator of the organization in the East region. Because of constant persecutions that limited her work and it put her life in danger, she left the urban fight and incorporated herself to the Rebellious Army in June 1958, turning into the fabled warlike fighter of the II Oriental Front Frank País (the detachment name was given in honor to the combatant), and coordinator of the clandestine movement from East Province with the front territory.

She integrated the Communist' Party's Central Committee since its foundation in 1965, position that it was confirmed in all its Congresses. In 1980, she was elected as substitute member of the Political Bureau and in the following Congress she was promoted as effective member. She was deputy of the National Assembly since her first legislature and member of State Council since her formation.

With the Revolution's victory in 1959, aware of decisive importance of the women's participation in the deep changes process that the country began, she headed the feminine organizations unification and the foundation of Federation of Cuban Women whose organization she consecrated. "Today the Federation congregates more than four million affiliated and it participates actively in the battle of ideas, in the construction and defense of our socialism, in the fight for eradicating until the last discrimination track and to conquer the equality in all extents and levels", stressed Vilma in yours "Letter to the Cuban federated", published in August 2005, increasing that "if we compare the feminine population's reality today with the existent one in January, 1st 1959, the jump is transcendental and historical. *The Cubans have begun the XXI century exalted as full citizens, resolved to defend our conquests at any price and to continue ahead.*"



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With her experience, dedication and example, VILMA gave a priceless contribution to the international feminine movement's organization. She occupied the vice-presidency of Women International Democratic Federation until the XIV Congress accomplished in this current year, in April, in Caracas. We will follow always to the light of her idealism and we will make every effort, more and more to proceed with our flags of peace, equality, justice and solidarity.

To our Federation of Cuban Women friends, to all VILMA's relatives, to the Commander, President and Hero Fidel Castro, to the President in exercise Raul Castro, to the leaders of Cuba's Communist Party, to every government of Cuba e to the Cuban people, we express on behalf of the friends and affiliated organizations of WIDF our more sincere homage for that who will be FOREVER OUR MORE OUTSTANDING INTERNATIONAL LEADER.

LIVE THE WARLIKE VILMA ESPIN!
LIVE THE FIGHT OF THE CUBAN PEOPLE!
LIVE THE FIGHT OF THE WOMEN!
LIVE THE FEDERATION OF CUBAN WOMEN!

Márcia Campos
President
WIDF
Women International Democratic Federation