

ESJS-Mafra students interact with journalist Soraia Ramos's life experiences

Reporter for 14 years, was invited to talk with students from Escola Secundária José Saramago - Mafra (ESJS - Mafra), on November 12th, about Human Rights violation events she witnessed, along with other experiences in several countries.

This lecture, which is related to the Erasmus+ Partnership Project with European Schools - "Sustainability for Democracy, Democracy for Sustainability", ended up turning into a conversation, in which everyone "travelled" around the world, through the description of the reporter's experiences. It was very interesting and enriching, since Soraia herself gave contemporary examples of non-compliance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, even 69 years after its agreement (10/12/1948).

Jorge Rocha, current Philosophy teacher at ESJS-Mafra and Soraia Ramos's friend, contributed to the presentation, mentioning the journalist's work in Bangladesh. Soraia photographed a group of displaced people, without any proper life conditions, surrounding a muddy water pond - an indecent violation of various articles from the UDHR. With this example, we may conclude that goods considered essential in the Western World, such as personal hygiene items, are seen as almost superfluous in unstable populations.

Soraia Ramos also lived within war scenarios on Eastern Ukraine, Europe. She was surrounded not only by fully armed men, but also by lost people involved in the war that were there to help her in spite of all the dangers they had to face. She claimed it was the most shocking work trip she performed. According to Figure 1, this case made Soraia the first female reporter and Portuguese reporter, as well, to execute war coverage.

Next, Soraia Ramos "took" the students with her to Syria. She narrated the civic obligation of wearing a *burka*, of which she had to comply as a woman. The same happened in Morocco, where she always carried a scarf to prevent any prosecution. Soraia added that, while being in another country, regardless of the time they're spending there, everyone should act respectfully towards its laws and civic duties and responsibilities, if we don't want to take risks. In Syria, no one has the permission to talk directly with women and they are forbidden to express themselves in public: an affront to Article 19 of the UDHR.

By suggestion of a Venezuelan student, the journalist "transported" the audience to her experience in the Caracas airport. The security guards distrusted Soraia Ramos, only for the fact that she carried a single medium-sized backpack with everything she would need along a transatlantic journey. Thereafter,

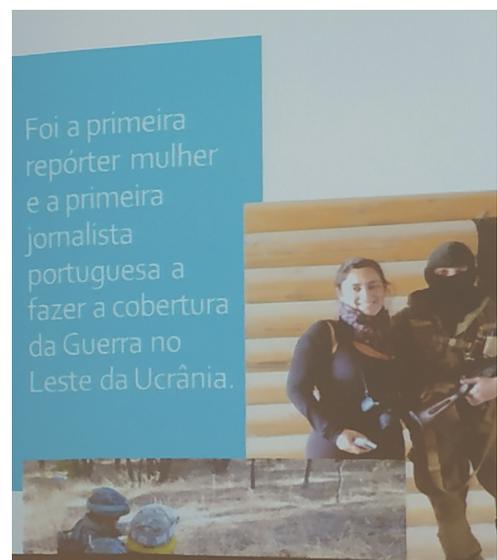


Fig.1

PowerPoint slide illustrating Soraia Ramos' mission in the Eastern Ukraine War.

she was forced to give her backpack to a full inspection. In addition to this impasse, the journalist also remembers seeing many people running to the supermarkets, early in the morning, in order to be the first to buy as many goods as they could, to sell them at a higher price. In Venezuela it's already considered a job (being a *bachaquero*), since that's the only revenue those people have. Venezuela was experiencing a serious humanitarian crisis, and the Portuguese community there was significant.

Within Latin America, we followed with Paraguay. The reporter landed at the airport, with all the official documents needed to identify a European and Portuguese citizen, but the security guards didn't trust her identity. This is because, in Paraguay, there is a well-known business of falsifying documents, as stated by the journalist.

Finally, Brazil, which is an example of the greatest asymmetries and social inequalities, as well as disrespect for Human Rights - which may be aggravated with the victory of Jair Bolsonaro for president.

In conclusion, the students and teachers who attended this lecture retained great benefits from this initiative and are genuinely grateful to the journalist Soraia Ramos for her great availability.

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