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EUTHANASIA AND ASSISTED SUICIDE

The right to die in dignity



COOLTURA

Right to Die with Dignity

In the first days of July 2023, an article by Cuban writer and journalist Carlos Alberto Montaner was published, which began with the following sentence: “When you read this article, I will be dead”. Indeed, Montaner had died the previous week, at the age of 80, in Madrid. He had begun writing the farewell article at the beginning of 2022 and had finished dictating it shortly before traveling to Spain to fulfill his will: “exercise my right to end my life in a free and dignified way according to my beliefs”.

Parkinson’s had long since begun to consume his life, and the situation worsened when doctors confirmed that he suffered from an atypical and aggressive type of Parkinson’s. In the article he left for posthumous publication, Montaner explains that he had to travel to Spain to access assisted dying legally. He also provides an account of the bureaucratic processes he completed, with advice and support from the Asociación Derecho a Morir Dignamente (Right to Die with Dignity Association). His request was framed within the requirements of the Euthanasia Law, approved by the Spanish Congress in March 2021: the suffering of a serious, chronic and disabling illness.

Montaner’s article intended to invite readers to reflect on the right to life and the right to death. Euthanasia is the name by which assisted death in the face of a serious and irreversible illness is known. It has been the center of debates for decades. It is legal in some parts of the world, while in most countries there