

Bolsonaro, military intensify antidemocratic conspiracies on eve of Brazil's elections

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The antidemocratic conspiracies promoted by Brazil's fascistic President Jair Bolsonaro and the military are advancing with the approach of the first round of presidential elections on October 2.

As the president loudly proceeds with his plan to contest an increasingly likely defeat at the polls, the military has been elevated to the position of final arbiter of the political process, with the installation of the next president dependent on its approval.

Just two weeks before the election, the president has publicly reiterated that he will not accept a result other than victory. In an interview last Sunday on the SBT TV network, Bolsonaro declared that if he receives less than 60 percent of the vote, that is, if he is not declared elected in the first round, "something abnormal happened at the TSE [Superior Electoral Court]."

The claim that an electoral fraud is underway to remove him from power is the central argument of the Hitler-style "big lie" being systematically promoted by Bolsonaro. This coup narrative dismisses as fraudulent the results of all recent polls, pointing to the Workers Party (PT) candidate, Lula da Silva, beating him by a wide margin. The latest Datafolha poll, published on Thursday, showed Lula with 47 percent of the vote and Bolsonaro with only 33 percent.

In the interview recorded in London, where he attended Queen Elizabeth II's funeral, Bolsonaro justified his certainty of victory on what he calls *Data Povo* ("Data People"), i.e., his subjective perception of the "popular will" based upon crowds attending his events, as opposed to data from institutes like Datafolha.

He said, "It's pretty divided, you know, much more favorable to me. I say, if I get less than 60 percent of the vote, something abnormal has happened at the TSE in view obviously of the *Data Povo* that you measure

by the amount of people who not only come to my events as well as welcome us along the way to get to the venue."

Bolsonaro's plan to contest the ballots widely mimics Donald Trump's actions in the last US presidential elections, which culminated in the January 6 Capitol coup attempt. But much more than Trump, Bolsonaro has reasons to trust that a significant section of the Armed Forces will legitimize his attempt to hold on to state power.

Last week, the military clubs in Rio de Janeiro released a joint note calling for the "Rescue of the Green and Yellow" (the colors of Brazil's flag) against what they claim to be "an explicit attempt to destroy the concepts of citizenship and patriotism." Concluding with a passage from the Tamoio Song, by the Brazilian Romantic poet Gonçalves Dias, which says that "Life is combat, that slaughters the weak," the document is an unequivocal call for a coup.

The demonstrations conducted by Bolsonaro on Independence Day, last September 7, had already confirmed these expectations. They were highly successful in merging, with the consent of the generals, a massive military parade with the demonstration of thousands of Bolsonaro's far-right supporters.

The corrupt bourgeois opposition to Bolsonaro responded to this pivotal event in Brazil's political history with new concessions to the military that put even more power into their hands.

On September 13, the TSE approved a reformulation of the "integrity test" of the electronic ballot boxes to meet demands from the military. The change, made on the eve of the electoral process, will introduce the use of biometrics in the inspection of the ballot boxes.

As admitted by the president of the TSE himself, Supreme Court (STF) Judge Alexandre de Moraes, this

supposed “safety measure” lacks any technical justification. Moraes said that “there is no proof that the test [with biometrics] will or will not improve oversight [of the ballots].” In other words, the TSE accepted a requirement that is known to have the sole purpose of fomenting the distrust of the electoral process that underlies Bolsonaro’s conspiracy.

Moraes, who assumed the presidency of the TSE on August 17, has taken as his main task the fine tuning of the Electoral Court’s relations with the military, deepening the concessions made by his predecessors. He promptly set up exclusive TSE meetings with the military, behind closed doors and without minutes. His predecessor, Edson Fachin, had resisted accepting this anti-democratic demand made insistently by Defense Minister and Bolsonaro’s conspiracy collaborator, Gen. Paulo Sergio Oliveira.

The intimate relationship established by the PT and its pseudo-left ally, the Socialism and Freedom Party (PSOL), with these reactionary forces in the bourgeois state is highly revealing of the political bankruptcy of these parties.

The same Alexandre de Moraes was praised by the Brazilian pseudo-left as the great savior of democracy in the country. It has entrusted the STF judge with taking “all measures deemed appropriate to ensure that the result of the 2022 election is fully respected and fulfilled,” as stated in a document written by PSOL parliamentarians.

The “measures” taken by Moraes, with the criminal consent of the PT and the PSOL, are proving to be key pieces in the advance of military tutelage over the political regime.

In addition to the concessions taken from the TSE, the military is preparing to carry out, for the first time since the establishment of the bourgeois democratic regime in Brazil, a parallel check of the ballot boxes. Soldiers will be sent to hundreds of polling places around the country to personally check the “fairness” of the democratic process.

Whether the findings of this verification will serve to legitimize a political coup by Bolsonaro, or even an independent intervention by the military in the name of “political stabilization” of the country, remains a question to be answered. The degeneration of bourgeois democracy in Brazil, on the other hand, is a deepening process in which there is no turning back.



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