

Brazilian military's report on elections lends ammunition to coup plots

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This Wednesday saw the publication of the Brazilian military's report on its "parallel audit" of the recent election in which Workers Party (PT) candidate and former President Luís Inácio Lula da Silva defeated the country's fascistic incumbent president, Jair Bolsonaro.

The Armed Forces had previously stated that their results would be made available only in early January at the time of the inauguration. Far from representing a conclusion to the military's conspiracy against democracy in Brazil, the accelerated release of the report only opens up new avenues for the deepening of ongoing coup plots.

The report, signed by a representative of each of the country's three Armed Forces, was sent to the Superior Electoral Court (TSE) accompanied by a letter from Minister of Defense Gen. Paulo Sérgio Oliveira. Its main conclusion is that the "military technicians" identified electoral procedures that imply "relevant risk to the security of the process," adding that "it is not possible to affirm that the electronic voting system is free from the influence of a possible malicious code that could alter its operation."

The report contains repeated statements that "the tools and procedures made available by the TSE technical team for the work of the inspection entities were not sufficient for a more complete technical analysis" and "hindered the search for possible vulnerabilities of the SEV [Electronic Voting System]."

In light of these allegations, General Oliveira demanded that the High Court urgently organize an external commission to "conduct a technical investigation of what happened in the compiling of the source code and its possible effects" and to "promote a thorough analysis of the binary codes *that were actually executed* in the electronic ballot boxes" [our emphasis]. According to him, this is a condition for the maintenance of "political and social harmony in Brazil."

In the defense minister's letter and in two instances in the report itself, the military made sure to declare that their "work was restricted to the inspection of the electronic voting system, not including other activities, such as, for example, the manifestation about eventual indications of electoral crimes."

In the hands of the Bolsonaro and his fascistic supporters, these documents provide endless ammunition for their coup plots against the election results.

Since the victory of the PT candidate Lula 10 days ago, Bolsonaro has refrained from public appearances as much as possible. In his brief public statements, he has refused to acknowledge his rival's victory and expressed his support for the fascist protesters challenging the "injustice of how the electoral process took place" and calling for a military coup.

On Tuesday, Valdemar da Costa Neto, the president of the Liberal Party (PL), Bolsonaro's party, which has the largest number of seats in Congress, for the first time declared that the PL has yet to accept the results at the ballot box. He stated: "We will have to wait for the Army's report tomorrow. We have several question that we have directed to the TSE, and we will wait for the answers. Tomorrow [the military] will reveal something, I have no doubt about that, otherwise they would have already settled the matter."

Neither Costa Neto nor Bolsonaro have made any declarations since the report's publication.

The overwhelming response of the Brazilian and international media to the military's report and its obvious explosive implications for the current political situation, was to present reality as its exact opposite.

Instead of exposing the military's intervention as as one of the gravest attacks on democracy in the history of Brazil's current civilian regime, some of the main headlines declared: "Military report does not point to ballot box fraud and arrives at the same vote count as

TSE” (*Estado de São Paulo*); “Defense report does not point to election fraud, and TSE is grateful” (*Folha de São Paulo*); “Brazil military finds no evidence of election fraud, dashing hopes of Bolsonaro supporters” (*Guardian*).

The same forced positive tone marked the official response by the TSE. A message from its president, Minister Alexandre de Moraes, said: “The Superior Electoral Court received with satisfaction the final report of the Ministry of Defense, which, like all other inspection entities, did not point to the existence of any fraud or inconsistency in the electronic ballot boxes and the 2022 electoral process.”

A sharp rebuke from the fascistic defense minister came the next morning, with a new official statement titled “Report of the Armed Forces did not exclude the possibility of fraud or inconsistency in the electronic ballot boxes.” With the expressed aim of “avoiding distortions of the content of the report sent yesterday to the TSE,” the minister’s statement only reiterated the attacks that were already sufficiently spelled out the day before.

Perhaps even more unbelievable was the response from the most direct target of the conspiracy fomented by the military: President-elect Lula. In a speech Thursday at the government transition headquarters, the PT leader, in addition to remaining silent on the threats contained in the military’s report, sought to bestow a blanket amnesty on the Armed Forces for their crimes against democracy committed alongside Bolsonaro.

Condemning Bolsonaro for “involving the Armed Forces” in “a commission to investigate electronic ballot boxes, something that belongs to civil society,” Lula declared in relation to the report:

“The result was humiliating, humiliating. I don’t know if the president is sick, but he has an obligation to go on television and apologize to Brazilian society and apologize to the Armed Forces, for having used the Armed Forces, which is a serious institution, which is a guarantor for the Brazilian people against possible external enemies, [and] was humiliated, presenting a report that says nothing, nothing, absolutely nothing about what he had so long charged.”

Lula’s insinuation that Bolsonaro dragged the military by force into intervening in Brazilian politics is absurd. This process, which only deepened under the current government, has been growing in Brazil since the years of PT administrations, including through the military operations promoted by Lula himself overseas, with

Brazil leading the UN “pacification” operations in Haiti, and domestically, with the occupation of Rio de Janeiro’s *favelas*.

Under the Bolsonaro government but independently of him, the military has legitimized itself as the ultimate arbiter of politics in Brazil. The generals have occupied ministries, publicly threatened civilian powers that questioned them, granted themselves the right to pronounce over the electoral process and to dictate strategic plans that supersede the decisions of elected governments.

The return to political decision-making by the military—which ruled Brazil under a brutal dictatorship for more than two decades following a US-backed 1964 coup—reflects the growing crisis of a Brazilian bourgeoisie that is unable to manage intolerable levels of social inequality at home and to sustain its economic interests in an increasingly explosive global arena.

The fact that Lula and the PT are deliberately covering up the military-driven coup threats is an expression of their complete submission to the interests of rotting Brazilian capitalism. Lula’s silence on the military’s authoritarian attacks, his embrace of Bolsonaro’s allied parties, and his promises of “institutional normalcy” are being widely praised by the ruling class.

Whether this policy will hand Lula an effective transition of government by early January remains to be seen. But the history of the 20th century proves that such maneuvers are absolutely incapable of guaranteeing the social rights of the working class and of preventing the growth of fascism, which will use this period to better prepare its forces for a coup.

These threats can only be countered by an independent political movement of the working class, which definitively breaks with the PT and its pseudo-leftist satellites and wages a decisive struggle for the abolition of capitalism.



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