

Brazil's former President Jair Bolsonaro indicted for fascist coup attempt

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On Tuesday, the office of Brazil's Attorney General (PGR) indicted former President Jair Bolsonaro and 33 others for the attempt to stage a coup d'état and violently abolish the democratic rule of law in a plot that led to the January 8, 2023 fascist uprising in Brasilia.

Once the indictment is accepted by the Federal Supreme Court (STF), which is expected to happen within the next few weeks, the accused will become defendants in a criminal case, facing sentences of up to 30 years in prison.

The indictment against Bolsonaro and his accomplices is based on the vast body of evidence gathered from the Federal Police's (PF) almost 900-page report, published in November of last year.

The evidence paints a sinister portrait of the military-fascist cabal that headed the Brazilian state under the Bolsonaro government, whose deep roots in the Armed Forces cannot be hidden. Among those accused by the PGR are 23 military personnel, including seven generals and former commanders of the Armed Forces.

The PGR concluded that this group is responsible for systematically leading a "conspiratorial plot armed and executed against the democratic institutions."

The conspiracy to establish a dictatorship in Brazil began well before the 2022 elections, as the report points out. Its initial focus was on abolishing the division of powers, establishing absolute powers for the Executive and attempting to discredit Brazil's electoral system.

A substantial part of the evidence uncovered by the PF came from the plea bargain of Col. Mauro Cid, Bolsonaro's aide-de-camp, who was responsible for coordinating the coup actions between the Planalto presidential palace and the military.

Cid clarified that, after Bolsonaro's defeat in the 2022 elections, the former president and his allies launched a systematic plan to overthrow the elections, establish a state of exception that would place power in the hands of the military and prepare the legal bases for the establishment of a dictatorship.

These plans—described in detail in documents seized from the accused—included the assassination of the president-elect, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva of the Workers Party (PT), his vice presidential running mate, Geraldo Alckmin, and Minister Alexandre de Moraes, then president of the Superior Electoral Court (TSE).

A document titled "Green and Yellow Dagger," written by Gen. Mario Fernandes, one of the coup's main conspirators, raised different possibilities for carrying out the assassinations, including through the use of firearms, explosives or poison. The document was presented and

approved by Bolsonaro's vice presidential candidate, Gen. Walter Braga Netto, on November 12, 2022.

On December 15, an attempt to carry out the plan to assassinate Moraes was launched and aborted. The operation was conducted by members of the army's special forces, the so-called "Black Kids," and directly financed by Braga Netto.

This and other violent episodes—including a wave of attacks on public buildings and vehicles in Brasilia on December 12, during the event to make Lula's victory official—and the demonstrations by Bolsonaro supporters in front of the barracks had the declared aim of serving as "trigger events" prompting the decree of a state of exception that would transfer power to the military.

While those actions did not provide the necessary "trigger events for the action of the Security Forces," mentioned by General Fernandes in a message to the commander of the Army, Gen. Marco Antônio Freire Gomes, the attack on the headquarters of the Three Branches of Government on January 8, 2023 fit perfectly within these objectives.

While organizing these violent actions, Bolsonaro and his co-conspirators acted systematically to pressure the vacillating elements in the Armed Forces command to join the coup, including by inciting an uprising among lower ranking officers.

In the period between Bolsonaro's electoral defeat in October and the end of December, the former president and his defense minister, Gen. Paulo Sergio Nogueira de Oliveira, held multiple meetings with the commanders of the Armed Forces in which they discussed their coup plans in detail. This was confirmed by the Army and Air Force commanders themselves to the Federal Police.

Bolsonaro also met privately with Gen. Theophilo de Oliveira, commander of the Army's most critical division, the Land Operations Command (COTER), who made its troops available to carry out the coup.

Between Bolsonaro's meetings with the commanders, the Armed Forces published a false report on their counting of the ballots, fabricating the conclusion that the electoral process was subject to fraud. Two days later, on November 11, the commanders issued a joint statement promoting the fascist demonstrations demanding a military coup as "popular demonstrations." Threatening authorities who interfered with those demonstrations, the note claimed the "unrestricted and unwavering commitment [of the Armed Forces] to the Brazilian people" and its historic role as a "moderating" power.

Although the PGR complaint identifies these two episodes, which involve

the entire military command, as central parts of the coup plan, responsibility for them is attributed exclusively to former President Bolsonaro. The only military commander accused is Navy Adm. Almir Garnier, who insisted until the last moment on carrying out the coup.

“It should be noted,” the prosecutor misleadingly concludes, “that the Army itself was a victim of the conspiracy.”

Bolsonaro’s trial and the political crisis in Brazil

According to the press, Justice Alexandre de Moraes and the First Panel of the STF are now working to ensure that the trial of Bolsonaro and his co-conspirators is conducted swiftly, so that it can be concluded before the start of the 2026 election year.

The Workers Party (PT), for its part, is acting with the express aim of preserving the “technical” character of the trial of the fascist conspirators and avoiding its “politicization.”

These hopes are both unrealistic and reactionary. The crimes before the court are of an absolutely political and historical nature. The attempt to conclude this process, which has been going on for two years in secrecy, bureaucratically and behind the backs of the population, is an expression of the immense fragility of Brazilian democracy.

The PT’s pusillanimous attitude towards the coup plot, which directly targeted its government and its main leaders, is consistent with its actions throughout the process.

In the critical period between the election results and the January 8 uprising in Brasilia, while Bolsonaro and his military-fascist gang were staging provocations and plotting to overturn election, the PT sought to appease and negotiate with the forces involved in the coup plot and to convince the Brazilian population that the political crisis was resolved.

The president of the PT, Gleisi Hoffmann, emphatically opposed confrontations that emerged spontaneously from workers against the fascists blocking roads. Hoffmann warned the working class that “the president of Brazil at this moment is Jair Messias Bolsonaro. ... He must resolve this.”

Over the last two years, Lula and the PT have sought to strengthen their relations with the military by channeling increasing resources to the Armed Forces, promoting a right-wing nationalist ideology and acting to rehabilitate the military’s public image. This has included a crucial effort by the Lula government to erase the memory of the 1964-85 military dictatorship and its historic crimes, which are continued in the recent coup plot.

The undeniable return of the military-fascist presence in Brazilian politics is a demonstration of how none of the fundamental issues that led to the CIA-sponsored coup in 1964 and the subsequent two decades of dictatorship have been resolved.

The civilian regime consolidated by the 1988 Constitution preserved the pillars of the bourgeoisie’s violent domination unshaken and ready for a new authoritarian turn. The murderous military commanders were never

punished and continued to educate new generations of officers based on their rabid anti-communist ideology and the cult of the “1964 Revolution.”

Jair Bolsonaro is the most authentic product of these conditions. A young officer in the transition period of the regime, he developed a parliamentary career as a strident defender of the dictatorship’s most brutal crimes and a public spokesman for the fascist ideology that for decades was restricted to the barracks.

Bolsonaro’s rise to the presidency of Brazil in 2018 was no accident. It marked a decisive return of the military to the center of the country’s politics, driven by the explosive sharpening of social contradictions, which could no longer be contained by the established instruments for suppressing the class struggle, the main one being the PT and its affiliated unions.

While the PT and the pseudo-left, who are completely detached from and hostile to the interests of the working class, are shaping their political strategy around the need to preserve the rotten institutions of the bourgeois capitalist state, the fascists are aggressively preparing for a new offensive to take power.

In response to the legal siege, the fascist forces linked to Bolsonaro are mobilizing their supporters to take to the streets and revive the banners that they raised in their first coup attempt. They have called national demonstrations for March 16, reaffirming that the 2022 elections were rigged and that they face political persecution from an authoritarian and illegitimate “leftist” regime.

The Brazilian fascists feel significantly emboldened by the return of Donald Trump to the White House. The coup plot in Brazil was in the most fundamental sense a political continuation of the coup attempt orchestrated by Trump on January 6, 2021. Bolsonaro and his allies closely coordinated their actions with Trump’s fascist political circle and modeled their actions on the political strategy of the US coup and its lessons.

The former president’s son, Eduardo Bolsonaro, who was in Washington in January 2021 to study the lessons of Trump’s fascist coup, is back in the United States, where the next steps of the Brazilian fascists are being decided. Last week, Eduardo posted on X the accusation that former US President Joe Biden financed a fraudulent Brazilian electoral process in 2022 with USAID money. This fabrication was immediately endorsed by Elon Musk.

An even more significant political statement was made by Trump himself. He responded to the charges against Bolsonaro and his fascist cabal by issuing a lawsuit against Judge Alexandre de Moraes through the Trump Media & Technology Group alongside the fascist social network Rumble. The lawsuit alleges that Moraes is violating the First Amendment by demanding the suspension of accounts of Bolsonaro supporters residing in the US.

The accusation by Bolsonaro’s supporters that the Biden administration financed Lula’s victory by means of electoral fraud is a complete lie. On the other hand, there are multiple reports that US state officials held a series of discussions with Brazilian military leaders to dissuade them from participating in a Bolsonaro coup. Those talks were not motivated by any kind of international “left-wing” agenda of the Biden administration but on the understanding that a coup d’état in the largest country in South America would provoke a destabilization detrimental to the interests of

US imperialism in the region.

The return of a second Trump administration marks a sharp turn in US foreign policy, with the prioritization of confrontation with China as a main axis. This includes the aggressive pursuit of US imperialist domination of Latin America and repelling the ever greater dominance of Chinese economic influence in the region.

The political relations of Trump-Musk and Bolsonaro are directly linked to the pursuit of these goals. Bolsonaro recently told the Brazilian newspaper *Folha de São Paulo* that, if he were to win the 2026 election—in which he is legally barred from running—he would withdraw Brazil from the BRICS and allow the installation of an American military base on the country's triple border as part of a “bold military agreement” with the US.

In a revealing speech at the CPAC conference on Thursday, Eduardo Bolsonaro argued that his father is being judicially persecuted because he is “the only candidate capable of defeating the left in the 2026 election” and “if he is kept out of the race, Brazil will fall completely under China's influence.” He added: “With over 200 million people, the largest economy in Latin America and the land mass nearly the size of the United States, its geopolitical and economic importance is undeniable.”

Even more than the war between US imperialism and its strategic rival China, what is behind the rising threat of a US-sponsored fascist coup in Brazil is a war of capitalism against the global working class. Brazil, with a massive and globally connected working class, represents a decisive bastion of the world socialist revolution.

The capitalist oligarchy recognizes that maintaining its grip on power can be achieved only through ever escalating attacks on the basic rights and conditions of the working class. This places revolutionary struggles on the agenda in Brazil, throughout Latin America and in the US itself.



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