

Washington and Brazilian fascists escalate attacks after Bolsonaro's arrest

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Last Monday, Brazil's former President Jair Bolsonaro was placed under house arrest by the Supreme Court (STF) after repeatedly violating precautionary measures prohibiting him from using social media.

The restrictions against the former president were imposed two weeks ago amid tensions caused by US President Donald Trump's announcement of drastic tariffs against Brazil, justified as an intervention by Washington against what he called a "witch hunt" against Bolsonaro and his supporters.

On July 18, STF judge Alexandre de Moraes decreed several measures against Bolsonaro—including the use of an electronic ankle bracelet, a ban on social media and communication with foreign authorities—on the grounds that he was acting alongside his son, Eduardo Bolsonaro, to instigate US sanctions against Brazil and obstruct the investigation and trial of those responsible for the fascist coup attempt of January 8, 2023.

Bolsonaro provocatively defied the court's decision. After appearing in Congress on July 21, where he spoke in front of cameras to his allies denouncing the Supreme Court's measures as a "humiliation" and calling for "confrontation with everything and everyone," he was warned with a threat of arrest.

In defiance of the STF, Bolsonaro participated via video call broadcast to fascist demonstrations held last Sunday in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. The protests demanded "amnesty now" for all those involved in the January 8 fascist insurrection, as well as the impeachment of Moraes and the overthrow of President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (Workers Party – PT). Protesters held signs reading, in English, "THANK YOU TRUMP" and "HELP TRUMP."

Bolsonaro's imprisonment, to be served under house arrest, has ignited new flames in Brazil's explosive political environment.

The Trump administration responded immediately. On Monday night, the US State Department issued an official statement on X announcing:

Justice Moraes, now a US-sanctioned human rights abuser, continues to use Brazil's institutions to silence opposition and threaten democracy....

The United States condemns Moraes' order imposing house arrest on Bolsonaro and will hold accountable all those aiding and abetting sanctioned conduct.

Washington's provocations against the Brazilian government escalated throughout the week.

On Thursday, the US Embassy in Brazil issued a statement attacking Moraes as "the chief architect of censorship and persecution against Bolsonaro" and threatening the entire Brazilian judicial system. It concluded:

Moraes' allies in the judiciary and elsewhere are warned not to support or facilitate Moraes' conduct. We are monitoring the situation closely.

Brazil's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Itamaraty) summoned a representative of the Embassy the following, demanding clarification on its flagrant violation of international law and the principle of non-interference. Washington responded by doubling down on the affront.

On Saturday, Deputy Secretary of State Christopher Landau published a new attack against Brazil on X, which was translated into Portuguese and reposted by the US Embassy. It states:

... What is happening now in Brazil underscores this point: a single Justice of the Supreme Court has usurped dictatorial power by threatening leaders of the other branches, or their families, with arrest, imprisonment, or other penalties. This person has destroyed Brazil's historically close relationship

with the US... So we find ourselves in a dead end where the usurper cloaks himself in the rule of law and the other branches insist that they are powerless to act....

The unspecified claim that the “other branches” of government “insist that they are powerless to act” against the judiciary, in addition to being a grotesque fraud, has sinister implications. It recalls the entire history of coups sponsored by US imperialism in Latin America, including the overthrow of the democratically elected government in Brazil in 1964 and the installation of a murderous military dictatorship that remained in power for two decades.

The Lula government saw itself pressured to respond to these attacks. To *Poder360*, it declared its “absolute rejection of the repeated interference of the US government in Brazil’s internal affairs” and stated that Landau’s post “characterizes a new frontal attack on Brazilian sovereignty and on a democracy that recently defeated an attempted coup d’état.”

The new series of provocations and threats from Washington comes on the heels of Trump’s declaration that Brazil threatened the US with a “national emergency,” which accompanied the formalization of his 50 percent tariffs against the country.

As the *World Socialist Web Site* reported, Trump’s July 28 decree, in a grotesque inversion of the facts, accused the Brazilian government—and Moraes individually—of “politically persecuting a former president” and “contributing to the deliberate breakdown in the rule of law, ... politically motivated intimidation ... and to human rights abuses.”

Moraes was subsequently subjected to economic sanctions and banned from entering the US under the Magnitsky Act—in a move that Washington now threatens to extend to his “allies in the judiciary and other spheres.”

In the national political arena, Bolsonaro’s arrest was the signal for a renewed offensive by the fascist political forces associated with the former president.

On Tuesday, members of Bolsonaro’s Liberal Party (PL) and other far-right parties initiated an “obstruction” of Congress and the Senate. Physically preventing the sessions from proceeding, they demanded a vote on what they dubbed the “country’s pacification package,” centered on amnesty for those involved in the January 8 coup attempt and on the impeachment of Moraes.

After two days of blocking parliament, the fascists announced the suspension of the action, having extracted significant concessions, including a pledge by the “Centrão” parties (a loose bloc affiliated directly to neither the ruling

PT, nor to Bolsonaro) support the January 8 amnesty bill and measures against the judiciary. The parties that articulated this agreement—the Progressive Party (PP), União Brasil, and the Social Democratic Party (PSD)—constitute the base and occupy key ministries in Lula’s government.

The political continuity between this recent action and the coup conspiracy itself that culminated in the fascist insurrection in Brasília two years ago has been widely noted. Among others, the government’s leader in Congress, Randolfe Rodrigues of the PT, accused it of being not an “obstruction” but “a new January 8.”

The close coordination between the fascists’ action in Brazil’s parliament and Washington’s subsequent attacks through its embassy is evident.

The episode also evokes recent statements by Senator Flávio Bolsonaro, the former president’s eldest son, who led the “obstruction” movement. In an interview with *Folha de São Paulo* in June, Flávio threatened that a conviction of his father would provoke “popular” and “international reactions” that “are not under our control.” By a “country’s pacification,” the fascists mean that the only alternative to a violent coup is a “peaceful” surrender.

The recent events expose not only the development of the fascist conspiracy in Brazil and its deep ties to the US imperialist escalation. They also lay bare the complete bankruptcy of the perspectives nurtured by the PT and its pseudo-left supporters, who work systematically to disarm the Brazilian working class in the face of this deadly threat.

The PT and the pseudo-left promoted the farce that fascism could be contained by a “broad front” with the bankrupt bourgeois establishment, while they systematically promoted the military. Now they are committed to imprisoning workers and youth under a bourgeois nationalist trap in response to Trump’s attacks.

The working class can fight imperialist violence and fascism only by establishing its political independence from the bourgeoisie and its agents and by waging revolutionary struggle against capitalism and for socialism on an international basis.



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