

Brazil's Bolsonaro arrested for plot to escape sentence for coup attempt

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Brazil's former President Jair Bolsonaro was taken into custody on the morning of Saturday, November 22, and brought to the headquarters of the Federal Police in Brasília. His preventive detention was ordered by Supreme Federal Court (STF) Justice Alexandre de Moraes after the ex-president, who was already under house arrest, violated his electronic ankle monitor.

In a video appended to the case file that led to the arrest order, a federal agent questions the ex-president about burn marks around the monitoring device. "I put a hot iron to it. Curiosity," Bolsonaro replies.

In a subsequent custody hearing, the ex-president confessed to the act and attributed it to "a certain paranoia" and "hallucination" caused by his psychiatric medication. He claimed to have believed there was a "bug" installed in the ankle monitor.

The action was interpreted as an attempt by Bolsonaro to flee on the eve of the execution of his 27-year prison sentence for staging an attempted coup d'état.

On September 11, the First Panel of the STF convicted Bolsonaro along with members of the "crucial core" of the fascist conspiracy that culminated in the January 8, 2023 attack on government buildings in Brasília. Bolsonaro's first appeals were unanimously rejected by the Court and, on Monday, the deadline expired for filing new appeals.

On Tuesday, three members of the "crucial nucleus" were arrested to begin serving their sentences: Gen. Augusto Heleno Ribeiro, the former Minister of Institutional Security (GSI); Gen. Paulo Sérgio Nogueira de Oliveira, the former Defense Minister; and Adm. Almir Garnier Santos, the former Navy commander.

In addition to the violation of the electronic ankle monitor, the ex-president's preventive detention was also motivated by the call for a mobilization around his residence for Saturday night. The action was called by Senator Flávio Bolsonaro as a "religious vigil" for his

father's "health" and for "freedom in Brazil."

Moraes argued in his decision that, "considering the techniques employed by members of the criminal organization [that orchestrated the 2022–23 coup attempt], turmoil in the vicinity of the convicted man's residence could create a favorable environment for his escape."

The decision highlighted that Bolsonaro's residence is located about 13 km (8 miles) from Brasília's South Embassy Sector, where the United States Embassy is located. The risk of flight to an embassy was supported by previous evidence that the ex-president "planned, during the investigation that subsequently resulted in his conviction, to flee to the Argentine Embassy by requesting political asylum from that country."

The case of Alexandre Ramagem, a Liberal Party (PL) congressman and one of the members of the "crucial core" of the coup attempt, was also highlighted by the STF. Sentenced to 16 years in prison in the same case as the ex-president, Ramagem fled Brazil in September and is currently in the city of Miami in the United States.

The indication of the US Embassy as a potential political refuge for Bolsonaro is obviously associated with the aggressive intervention of the Trump administration in defense of its Brazilian fascist political ally.

In August, President Donald Trump imposed tariffs against Brazil on the grounds that Bolsonaro's trial was a "witch-hunt" that should "stop immediately." Moraes, the judge-rapporteur in the case, was directly attacked by the US government, accused of being a "dictator judge" and heavily sanctioned under the Magnitsky Act.

The US imperialist intervention in Brazilian politics has not been mitigated at all by Trump's recent negotiations with President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (Workers Party–PT) and the subsequent reduction of tariffs. This fact was once again demonstrated by the official reaction of the US government to Bolsonaro's preventive

detention.

On Saturday night, US Deputy Secretary of State Christopher Landau posted on X condemning Bolsonaro's arrest as "provocative and unnecessary." Attacking Moraes and the Brazilian judiciary, Landau issued a menacing declaration: "The United States is deeply concerned in the face of his latest attack on the rule of law and political stability in Brazil."

The United States Embassy in Brazil reposted Landau's statement translated into Portuguese.

As the *World Socialist Web Site* (WSWS) warned, the trial of Bolsonaro and the coup?plotting military did not mark the end of the dictatorial threat in Brazil.

After the trial of the "crucial core" on September 11, the STF tried two other cores in the coup case. Between November 17 and 18, "Core 3" was tried, involving special forces soldiers of the Army, nicknamed the "black kids." They were identified as the operational arm of the coup conspiracy, tasked with violent actions, such as plans to assassinate Lula, Vice President Geraldo Alckmin and Moraes.

While eight members of the special forces were unanimously convicted by the STF, with sentences of up to 24 years in prison, the same ruling acquitted Gen. Estevam Cals Theóphilo Gaspar de Oliveira of all charges. General Theóphilo commanded the Army's Land Forces until 2023 and was accused of having offered his troops to carry out the coup d'état.

Exposing the rottenness of the entire Brazilian bourgeois system, it was reported that the STF decision was taken after a private meeting between Moraes and the Army commander, Gen. Tomás Paiva, on November 17.

The actions taken by Bolsonaro and his allies this Saturday, regardless of their specific calculations and degree of success, follow the logic of a new fascist offensive already underway.

The video by Flávio Bolsonaro announcing the "religious vigil" for the ex-president makes this explicit. Using metaphors drawn from evangelical religious fundamentalism, he issued a fascist call to action:

Are you going to fight for your country or just watch everything on your cell phone, sitting there on your couch at home? I invite you to fight with us. At this first moment, we are going to seek the Lord of the Armies. I invite you to a vigil ... near my father's residence... to pray for his health and for the return of democracy in our country.

Flávio responded to his father's arrest with fraudulent accusations of persecution of "Christianity" and the "sacred constitutional right of assembly and the free exercise of faith."

His brother, Congressman Eduardo Bolsonaro, declared on X that the ex-president's imprisonment has the aim of "killing him, it is a torture plan." The post continues:

Our adversary wants us to be desperate. It intentionally hopes that the reaction to all this will be discouragement and that feeling of "it's already over." It's not over.

We are brave. So we are going to continue, now more than ever, working to bring about justice in Brazil, which begins, as you know, with the amnesty agenda. (...) The time has come to put in maximum effort and no longer allow Brazil to be the backyard of dictators.

Eduardo's outcry about not letting Brazil "be the backyard of dictators" is a cynical inversion of the facts. It is American imperialism that historically designated Latin America as its "backyard" and, under this doctrine, promoted coups and murderous military dictatorships throughout the region.

Announcing Washington's military and political turn against Latin America and its aim of confronting Chinese influence in the region, "Secretary of War" Pete Hegseth declared in April: "We are going to take back our backyard." Eduardo Bolsonaro, who moved to the United States to coordinate the activity of Brazilian fascists with the Trump administration, is directly involved in these imperialist plans.

In his post, Eduardo states that the "amnesty agenda" is only the beginning of the political reaction being prepared. Its development—as he declared after his father's conviction in September—depends on increasing political and even military intervention by Washington. Eduardo cited specifically the intervention in Venezuela, against which Trump is openly preparing a war for regime change, as the paradigm for Brazil's political future.



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