

Trump administration grants visa to fascist Flávio Bolsonaro

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On Tuesday, October 27, an anonymous senior State Department official announced that the Trump administration plans to grant visas to fascist Brazilian politician Flávio Bolsonaro and his family. Bolsonaro, who fled Brazil after losing the October 25 presidential election run-off to Luis Inácio Lula da Silva, is under investigation for money laundering and was deeply implicated in his father Jair Bolsonaro's attempted coup of January 8, 2023.

On Monday, the Brazilian Supreme Court ordered that he surrender his Brazilian and Italian passports within 24 hours as part of the ongoing investigation. But instead of complying, the younger Bolsonaro fled to Argentina in the middle of the night where he was protected by the far-right government of Javier Milei. Sources report that as of Tuesday night he was en route for Dallas or Miami, had applied for political asylum in the US, and will meet his brother, the fascist fixer Eduardo Bolsonaro, in the US on Wednesday.

The decision to grant Bolsonaro a visa means Trump is providing Bolsonaro with a staging ground to continue his efforts to reverse the election results, which he baselessly contests. Trump has said the results are “another rigged election,” indicating that he plans to treat Bolsonaro as Brazil's true president-in-exile.

But in a broader sense, by granting a visa to an aspiring dictator presently under criminal investigation in his home country, the US government has exploded whatever “legal” pretense it has previously used to justify its repressive immigration policies.

Unlike Flavio Bolsonaro, who has never lived in the US or enjoyed the protection of the Constitution, lawfully present non-citizens like Momodou Taal, Mahmoud Khalil, Ya'akub Vijandre, Rümeysa Öztürk, Leqaa Kordia and more were jailed or threatened with detention because they exercised their First

Amendment right to criticize American foreign policy, despite their long-term residency in the country. While Trump rolls out the red carpet for the fascist millionaire Bolsonaro, Taal and Öztürk have been forced out of the country, Vijandre remains in ICE detention in Georgia, and Kordia and Khalil live under threat of re-detention and deportation.

While Bolsonaro's asylum application will be rushed through the adjudication process, hundreds of thousands of refugees from Central and South America have been barred the right to apply to have their asylum applications adjudicated at all. Hundreds of thousands more have had their asylum applications pretermitted for minor technical issues under a 2025 precedential decision from the pro-Trump Board of Immigration Appeals. And compare the welcome for Bolsonaro to the extradition and incarceration of former Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro, whose alleged crimes pale in comparison to those of Bolsonaro.

The decision to grant Bolsonaro lawful status exposes decades of State Department policy suppressing the rights of artists, politicians, musicians and their listeners in the United States.

The same State Department that has sanctioned Bolsonaro's entry refused or restricted visas for figures such as internationally-renowned authors Gabriel García Márquez, Carlos Fuentes and Graham Greene because of their leftist sympathies or past ties to socialism. In 1952, the Attorney General rescinded Charlie Chaplin's re-entry permit while he was at sea, effectively exiling him for 20 years because of his left-wing views. The State Department and its lawyers have developed a legal doctrine—called the doctrine of “consular nonreviewability”—to deny non-citizens the right to challenge visa denials in federal court on First Amendment grounds. The decision stems from the

Nixon administration's decision refusing to waive Pabloite Professor Ernest Mandel's ineligibility, leading to the Supreme Court's seminal 1972 decision in *Kleindienst v. Mandel*.

Even by the historical standards of American imperialism, though, the Trump administration's decision to grant Bolsonaro a visa is brazen and transparent.

When Fulgencio Batista fled Havana on New Year's Day 1959, the Eisenhower administration refused to admit him, and the deposed Cuban strongman spent the rest of his life in the Dominican Republic, Portugal and Franco's Spain.

Two decades later, Nicaragua's Anastasio Somoza reached Miami after his overthrow but was pressed for political reasons by the Carter administration to move on, eventually settling in Paraguay, where he was assassinated in 1980. Even the Shah of Iran, among Washington's most important Cold War allies, was admitted only in October 1979, on humanitarian grounds for cancer treatment, after months of lobbying by Henry Kissinger and David Rockefeller. He was gone within about eight weeks, and his admission helped trigger the seizure of the US embassy in Tehran. While Ferdinand Marcos was granted entry by the Reagan administration, he remained in Hawaii, apart from the US mainland.

The decision to grant a visa to Bolsonaro transforms the United States into a place of refuge for fascist politicians who will use their newfound freedom and American connections to stage assaults on the democratic rights of the international working class across the Southern Hemisphere and the world.

The Bolsonaro visa grant cannot be separated from the broader strategy the Trump administration has openly proclaimed for the Americas. In January, the Pentagon's National Defense Strategy introduced the concept of "Homeland and Hemisphere," building on the "Trump Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine" announced in the December National Security Strategy. The formulation effectively redefines the American "homeland" to encompass all of North and South America, recalling the Nazi slogan "*Heim ins Reich*," once used to justify the annexation of Austria and the Sudetenland. In April, War Secretary Pete Hegseth went further, unveiling a doctrine of "Greater North America" that defines the hemisphere from Greenland

to Ecuador as an exclusive US security perimeter. The plan aims to secure the region's lithium, oil, copper and agricultural exports for the American war machine.

The same forces that claim the right to dictate to Latin America is building the apparatus of dictatorship at home. The welcome given to Flávio Bolsonaro, coming as the administration deports and jails its own critics, demonstrates that both sides of this program are advancing together. The working class across the entire hemisphere confronts a common enemy which it can only confront in a common struggle.



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