

Right-wing Bolsonaro sworn in as Brazil's new president



Brasilia, January 2 (RHC)-- Far-right nationalist politician Jair Bolsonaro has taken office as Brazil's new president, promising to crack down on rampant political corruption and crime, and what he claimed was the economic mismanagement of previous leftist governments of Latin America's biggest nation.

In his inauguration speech before the Congress, the 63-year-old former paratrooper and veteran lawmaker vowed to adhere to democratic rules of Brazil's Constitution. He also called for "a true national pact between society and the executive, legislative and judicial powers" to restore the lackluster economy -- "without ideological bias."

Bolsonaro then called on Brazilians lawmakers to help him "free the nation definitively from the yoke of corruption, crime, economic irresponsibility and ideological submission."

The new Brazilian president later pledged to open foreign markets for his country, bring about reforms aimed at reduction of the budget deficit and put government accounts

on a sustainable path.

Security was tight for Bolsonaro's inauguration in the wake of a knife attack during his presidential campaign that left him hospitalized for weeks.

Some 10,000 police officers and soldiers were deployed on the streets of the capital Brasilia as Bolsonaro and his wife rode in an open-topped Rolls Royce to the Congress.

Bolsonaro received swift congratulations via Twitter from U.S. President Donald Trump, with whom he shares nationalist instincts and a disdain of multilateral organizations. "I truly appreciate your words of encouragement. Together, under God's protection, we shall bring prosperity and progress to our people!" Bolsonaro responded.

Bolsonaro plans to move Brazil away from ties with developing nations, and instead closer to the policies of Western leaders, particularly Trump.

He also aims to move the Brazilian embassy in the occupied Palestinian territories from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, breaking with Brazil's traditional support for the so-called two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Bolsonaro has vowed to pull his Latin American country out of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, and is mulling over withdrawal from the Paris climate accord.

Analysts describe pension reform as the biggest challenge for the new Brazilian leader amid dangerous rise of public debt and strong need for the overhaul of Brazil's costly social security pension system.

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