

Brazilian army generals provide more information on Bolsonaro's coup attempt



Brasilia, March 16 (RHC)-- The Brazilian Supreme Court has released information showing that former commanders of the Brazilian Army and Air Force accused former President Jair Bolsonaro of attempting a coup.

Marco Freire Gomes and Carlos Baptista Junior, former heads of the Army and Air Force, placed the far-right leader at the center of the investigation into the plot aimed at annulling the 2022 presidential elections, in which Workers' Party leader Lula da Silva emerged victorious.

This emerges from the testimonies they gave to the police in recent weeks, which Judge Alexandre de Moraes, overseeing the case in the Supreme Court, made public after numerous leaks to the press.

Freire Gomes stated that Bolsonaro convened the military leadership several times before leaving office. He presented them with various legal instruments with the ultimate goal of preventing Lula da Silva's inauguration on January 1, 2023.

Seven days later, thousands of Bolsonaro supporters stormed the headquarters of the three branches of government in an attempt to persuade the military to overthrow Lula. So far, 131 people have already been convicted and sentenced to prison for this coup attempt.

The text reads: "Veja magazine, the one with anti-Lula covers that Bolsonaro supporters love to show, reported that former Army Commander Freire Gomes claimed that Bolsonaro urged commanders to support the coup. The flat earth falls on top of coup plotters."

Freire Gomes and Baptista Junior took a "strong stance" against Bolsonaro's plans. According to their statements, Freire Gomez threatened to arrest the far-right politician if he continued with his idea of attacking the democratic regime.

At that time, Bolsonaro only found support from the Navy Commander Almir Garnier Santos, who "made himself available to the President," according to Gomez's testimony. After the presidential elections in October 2022, Baptista Junior participated "in more than five or six" meetings at the Alvorada Palace, the Presidential residence in Brasilia.

In these meetings, Bolsonaro, his closest advisers, and Defense Minister Gen. Paulo Sergio Nogueir tried to convince the military leadership to take part in the coup. For this, the far-right politician proposed appealing to constitutional norms to activate a military intervention under the pretext of a supposed "serious disturbance of public order. Bolsonaro also proposed issuing a State of Siege decree to investigate the "legality" of the 2022 electoral process.

This last scenario contemplated the closure of the Superior Electoral Tribunal, which had been frequently attacked by Bolsonaro, who considered it an institution in service to Lula da Silva.

These coup plans were reflected in different drafts of decrees that authorities have found during the proceedings. One of them was found in the house of former Justice Minister Anderson Torres and another in Bolsonaro's office at the Liberal Party headquarters in Brasilia.

Freire Gomes also confessed that Bolsonaro said one of those drafts was "under review" and that he would keep them informed about the "evolution" of the plan.

The text reads: "The coup plot is confirmed! With the advice of jurist Ives Gandra, Bolsonaro attempted to overthrow the democratic rule of law by constructing a false and conspiratorial legal narrative. No amnesty." Former President Bolsonaro, who has always denied any involvement in coup attempts, is only listed as a suspect in the case.

On February 8th, however, the Supreme Court imposed some precautionary measures on him, including the confiscation of his passport, preventing him from leaving the country, and prohibiting contact with other individuals under investigation. If the Federal police find evidence of a crime, they would present charges against Bolsonaro to the Prosecutor's Office, which would then decide whether to file a formal complaint with the Supreme Court.

Subsequently, the Supreme Court would have to consider whether to open a criminal trial against the far-right politician, who could face up to 17 years in prison. So far, Bolsonaro has not commented on the latest episode of the coup-related investigations.

On Saturday, he is expected to participate in the launch of legislator Alexandre Ramagem's candidacy for mayor of Rio de Janeiro. This politician is also being investigated by the judges for a case of illegal espionage during the Bolsonaro administration.



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