

Trump defends his buddy Jair Bolsonaro against coup trial



Former President Jair Bolsonaro speaks during a protest against his Supreme Court trial on June 29 [Ettore Chiereguini/AP Photo]

Both right-wing leaders have faced legal action for allegedly attempting to overturn their election losses.

Washington, July 8 (RHC)-- U.S. President Donald Trump has taken to social media to defend his fellow right-wing leader, Jair Bolsonaro, the former Brazilian president who faces criminal charges for allegedly plotting a coup d'état.

On Monday, Trump wrote on his social media platform, Truth Social, that Bolsonaro's indictment was an example of political persecution.

"Brazil is doing a terrible thing on their treatment of former President Jair Bolsonaro," Trump said.

"I have watched, as has the World, as they have done nothing but come after him, day after day, night after night, month after month, year after year! He is not guilty of anything, except having fought for THE PEOPLE."

Trump went on to compare his own legal troubles to Bolsonaro's. Both leaders have been accused of trying to undermine their country's elections, following losses. In Trump's case, the accusations concern his 2020 race against Democrat Joe Biden. Though Trump lost, prosecutors say he and his allies conspired to defraud voters by pressuring officials to say that he won. The lie culminated in an attack on the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021, as Trump's supporters sought to disrupt the certification of the 2020 election results.

Trump later faced a federal indictment in Washington, DC, and a state-level indictment in Georgia over his actions. The federal charges, however, were dropped once he took office for a second term in January.

Bolsonaro, meanwhile, is facing criminal trial for allegedly masterminding a scheme to retain power after his 2022 election loss to Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva.

In the lead-up to the election, Bolsonaro spread falsehoods about the accuracy of Brazil's voting machines, and afterwards refused to publicly concede defeat. Thousands of his supporters likewise stormed government buildings in Brazil's capital, Brasilia, to protest the outcome.

Prosecutors say police unearthed evidence of a scheme wherein Bolsonaro and his allies plotted to hold onto power by means of a coup, one that would have seen Lula and other officials assassinated.

Both Trump and Bolsonaro have denied wrongdoing. In Monday's posts, Trump said that both of their cases reflected a politically motivated "WITCH HUNT" designed to dim their popularity among voters.

"This is nothing more, or less, than an attack on a Political Opponent – Something I know much about! It happened to me, times 10," Trump wrote. "The Great People of Brazil will not stand for what they are doing to their former President."

He appeared to end his post with a call for Bolsonaro's re-election: "The only Trial that should be happening is a Trial by the Voters of Brazil – It's called an Election. LEAVE BOLSONARO ALONE!"

Bolsonaro, however, has been barred from running for office for eight years, a period which expires in 2030. Brazil's Superior Electoral Court issued the punishment in a separate case in 2023 after it found Bolsonaro had abused his power by using government offices to spread doubt about the country's voting machines.

Trump and Bolsonaro have long faced comparisons with one another. They both took office for a first term in 2017, and both lost their initial re-election attempt. Bolsonaro, a former army captain, has been referred to as the "Trump of the tropics."

Critics have long speculated that Trump may seek to intervene in Brazil's prosecution of the far-right leader through political pressure. Earlier this year, for example, the Trump Media and Technology Group joined a lawsuit in Florida against Brazilian Supreme Court Justice Alexandre de Moraes, arguing that a

recent decision from the judge amounted to the censorship of right-wing voices.

De Moraes has overseen the criminal case against Bolsonaro and is considered a target of ire for Brazil's right. In a social media response on Monday, President Lula indicated that Trump's social media missive could be viewed as an attempt to interfere with the Brazilian justice system.

Though he mentioned neither Trump nor Bolsonaro by name, Lula, a left-wing leader, rejected the advice of those who sought to influence the ongoing trial from abroad.

"The defense of democracy in Brazil is a matter for Brazilians to deal with. We are a sovereign country. We do not accept interference or tutelage from anyone," Lula wrote. "We have solid and independent institutions. No one is above the law. Especially those who threaten freedom and the rule of law."

Bolsonaro, on the other hand, took to social media to thank Trump explicitly for his words of support.

"I thank the illustrious President and friend. You went through something similar. You were relentlessly persecuted, but you won for the good of the United States and dozens of other truly democratic countries," Bolsonaro wrote, reflecting on how "happy" he was to see Trump's note.

Bolsonaro used the occasion to once again proclaim his innocence and blast his political opponents as puppeteering the trial. "This process to which I am responding is a legal aberration (Lawfare), clear political persecution," he said.

The former president could face up to 40 years in prison if convicted.

[SOURCE: teleSUR]

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