

Brazilian court ends early prison rule, decision could free Lula



Brasilia, November 7 (RHC)-- Brazil's Supreme Court decided on Thursday to end the mandatory imprisonment of convicted criminals after they lose their first appeal, restoring the previous rule that they should be allowed to exhaust all their appeal options before being locked up.

The politically charged re-interpretation of Brazil's penal code could lead to the release of dozens of high-profile convicts, including former president Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, who is now a political prisoner.

Through its Twitter account, the highest judicial body announced that the decision was taken with six votes in favor and five against. "The plenary of the Supreme Court considers that imprisonment based solely on a criminal conviction can only take place after all the possibilities of appeal (res judicata) have been finalized," the message said.

After hearing the news, Lula's defense reported that they plan to meet with him this Friday and then submit a request for immediate release, after being detained for 579 days, the result of a process that has been questioned for its irregularities.

"Lula has not committed any crime and is a victim of the law, which, in the case of the former president, is the strategic use of the law for the purpose of political persecution," emphasized his lawyers.

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