



By: TA | AP Insight

BRICS summit – without mentioning Trump and Ukraine



In the absence of the leaders of the two most influential members, China and Russia, the annual BRICS summit in Brazil attempted to address key global issues.

However, the organization's opposition to raising tariffs was expressed without mentioning the US and President Trump, and Russian aggression against Ukraine was not mentioned.

The BRICS bloc of developing nations condemned the increase of tariffs and attacks on Iran, but refrained from naming U.S. President Donald Trump.

The group's declaration, which also took aim at Israel's military actions in the Middle East, also spared its member Russia from criticism and mentioned war-torn Ukraine just once.

The two-day summit was marked by the absences of two of its most powerful members. China's President Xi Jinping did not attend a BRICS summit for the first time since he became his country's leader in 2012.

Russian President Vladimir Putin, who spoke via videoconference, continues to mostly **avoid** traveling abroad due to an international arrest warrant issued after Russia invaded Ukraine.

In an indirect swipe at the U.S., the group's declaration raised "serious concerns" about the rise of tariffs which it said were "inconsistent with WTO (World Trade Organization) rules."

The BRICS added that those restrictions "threaten reduce global trade, disrupt global supply chains, and introduce uncertainty."

Brazil's President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, who **hosted** the summit, criticized NATO's **decision** to hike military spending by 5% of GDP annually by 2035. That sentiment was later echoed in the group's declaration.

"It is always easier to invest in war than in peace," Lula said at the opening of the summit, which is scheduled to continue on Monday.

Iran in attendance

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, who was expected to attend the summit before the attacks on his country in June, sent his foreign minister Abbas Araghchi to the meeting in Rio.

The group's declaration criticized the attacks on Iran without mentioning the U.S. or Israel, the two nations that conducted them.

In his speech, Araghchi told leaders he had pushed for every member of the United Nations to condemn Israel strongly. He added Israel and the U.S. should be accountable for rights violations. The Iranian foreign minister said the aftermath of the war "will not be limited" to one country. "The entire region and beyond will be damaged," Araghchi said.

BRICS leaders expressed "grave concern" for the humanitarian situation in Gaza

BRICS leaders expressed "grave concern" for the humanitarian situation in Gaza, called for the release of all hostages, a return to the negotiating table and reaffirmed their commitment to the two-state solution.

Later, Iran's Araghchi said in a separate statement on messaging app Telegram that his government had expressed its reservation regarding a two-state solution in a note, saying it will not work "just as it has not worked in the past."

Also on Telegram, Russia's foreign ministry in another statement named the U.S. and Israel, and condemned the "unprovoked military strikes" against Iran.

Russia spared

The group's 31-page declaration mentions Ukraine just once, while condemning "in the strongest terms" recent Ukrainian attacks on Russia.

"We recall our national positions concerning the conflict in Ukraine as expressed in the appropriate fora, including the U.N. Security Council and the U.N. General Assembly," the group said.

The summit could have played a role in showing an alternative to an unstable world, but won't do so
- João Alfredo Nyegray

João Alfredo Nyegray, an international business and geopolitics professor at the Pontifical Catholic University in Parana, said the summit could have played a role in showing an alternative to an unstable world, but won't do so.

"The withdrawal of Egypt's President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi and the uncertainty about the level of representation for countries like Iran, Saudi Arabia and the UAE are confirming the difficulty for the BRICS to establish themselves as a cohesive pole of global leadership," Nyegray said. "This moment demands high level articulation, but we are actually seeing dispersion."

Avoid Trump's tariffs

While Lula advocated on Sunday for the reform of Western-led global institutions, Brazil aimed to avoid becoming the target of higher tariffs.

Trump has **threatened** to impose 100% tariffs against the bloc if they take any moves to undermine the dollar. Last year, at the summit **hosted** by Russia in Kazan, the Kremlin sought to develop alternatives to U.S.-dominated payment systems which would allow it to dodge Western sanctions imposed after Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022

Brazil decided to focus on less controversial issues in the summit

Brazil decided to focus on less controversial

issues in the summit, such as promoting trade relations between members and global health, after Trump returned to the White House, said Ana Garcia, a professor at the Rio de Janeiro Federal Rural University.

"Brazil wants the least amount of damage possible and to avoid drawing the attention of the Trump administration to prevent any type of risk to the Brazilian economy," Garcia said.

'Best opportunity for emerging countries'

BRICS was founded by Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, but the group last year expanded to include Indonesia, Iran, Egypt, Ethiopia, and the United Arab Emirates.

As well as new members, the bloc has 10 strategic partner countries, a category created at last year's summit that includes Belarus, Cuba and Vietnam.



For Lula, the summit is a welcome pause from a difficult domestic scenario, marked by a drop in popularity and conflict with Congress

That rapid expansion led Brazil to put housekeeping issues — officially termed institutional development — on the agenda to better integrate new members and boost internal cohesion.

Despite notable absences, the summit is important for attendees, especially in the context of instability provoked by Trump's tariff wars, said Bruce Scheidl, a researcher at the University of Sao Paulo's BRICS study

group.

“The summit offers the best opportunity for emerging countries to respond, in the sense of seeking alternatives and diversifying their economic partnerships,” Scheidl said.

Earlier on Sunday, a pro-Israel non-profit placed dozens of rainbow flags on Ipanema beach to protest Iran's policies regarding LGBT+ people. On Saturday, human rights group Amnesty International protested Brazil's **plans** for offshore oil drilling near the mouth of the Amazon River.

For Lula, the summit is a welcome pause from a difficult domestic scenario, marked by a drop in popularity and conflict with Congress.

The meeting was also an opportunity to advance climate negotiations and commitments on protecting the environment before November's COP 30 climate **talks** in the Amazonian city of Belem.