



By: TA | AP Insight

Is US support Bolsonaro's only option for avoiding years in prison?



The trial of former Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro for allegedly preparing a coup has complicated relations with the US, as Donald Trump has **threatened** tariffs of 50% on exports to the US.

The internal consequences of this process are no less complicated, with a conservative Brazilian politician facing a long prison sentence.

Brazil's former President Jair Bolsonaro will **wear** an electronic ankle monitor on orders from the Supreme Court, where he is on trial for allegedly masterminding a coup plot to remain in office despite his defeat in the 2022 election.

The case received renewed attention after President Donald Trump directly tied a 50% tariff on Brazilian imported goods to Bolsonaro's judicial situation, which Trump **called** a "witch hunt."

The Supreme Court's order for Bolsonaro to wear an ankle monitor, among other restrictions, came after Federal Police and prosecutors said Bolsonaro is a flight risk.

Authorities, listing multiple social media posts, also accused Bolsonaro of working with his son Eduardo to **incite** the United States to interfere in the trial and impose sanctions against Brazilian officials.

On Friday, the U.S. State Department announced visa restrictions on Brazilian judicial officials, prompting President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva's to condemn what he called the unacceptable interference of one country in another's justice system.

Here's what you need to know about Bolsonaro's trial:

The charges against Bolsonaro

The prosecution accuses Bolsonaro of leading an armed criminal organization, attempting to stage a coup and attempting the violent abolition of the democratic rule of law,

aggravated damage, and deterioration of listed heritage sites.

A federal police investigation placed Bolsonaro at the top of a criminal organization that had been active since at least 2021. Police say that after Bolsonaro's loss to Lula, the organization conspired to overturn the election result.

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Part of that plot included a **plan** to kill Lula and a Supreme Court justice, the prosecution alleges. It also says that the Jan. 8 **riot** when Bolsonaro supporters ransacked top government buildings a week after Lula took office was an attempt to force military intervention and oust the new president.

Prosecutor-General Paulo Gonet says Bolsonaro's actions "were not limited to a passive stance of resistance to defeat, but were a conscious effort to create an environment conducive to violence and a coup."

In the court order unsealed Friday, Justice Alexandre de Moraes said Bolsonaro and his son may also have committed the crimes of coercion during a legal proceeding, obstruction of an investigation involving a criminal organization and attack on Brazil's sovereignty.

What Bolsonaro says

Bolsonaro has repeatedly denied the allegations and asserted that he's the target of political persecution. He has echoed Trump and called the trial a "witch hunt."

The far-right former leader has now been barred from using social media, but on Thursday, he said on X that "those who challenge the system are being punished, silenced, and isolated."

I never thought about leaving Brazil – Jair Bolsonaro

Regarding the restrictive measures carried out on Friday, Bolsonaro called them a “supreme humiliation.”

“I never thought about leaving Brazil, I never thought about going to an embassy, but the precautionary measures are because of that,” he told journalists in Brasilia.

Next steps

After the prosecution called for a guilty verdict in its final allegations issued Tuesday, the defense will soon present its case, likely in the coming weeks.

The panel of Supreme Court justices that **opened** the trial against Bolsonaro will vote on whether to convict or acquit him. Experts say a decision is expected before the end of the year.



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A guilty verdict on the coup plot charge carries a sentence of up to 12 years, which could, along with guilty verdicts on other charges, bring decades behind bars.

But Antonio José Teixeira Martins, a law professor at Rio de Janeiro State University, said Bolsonaro could be detained even before there's a verdict.

“Whether this happens or not depends on how events unfold from now on, that is if these new measures prove sufficient to guarantee public order, the application of criminal law and prevent the risk of escape,” Teixeira Martins said.

Brazil's top electoral court has already **banned** Bolsonaro from running in elections until 2030 over abuse of power while in office and casting unfounded doubts on the country's electronic voting system.