



By: TA | AP Insight

The division among Brazilians over the Bolsonaro case will influence next year's elections



Brazilians are polarized over the trial and house arrest of former president Jair Bolsonaro for the 2022 coup attempt.

The division is so strong that it already looks like it will determine the outcome of next October's elections, in which President Lula is seeking a new mandate and Bolsonaro cannot run.

Brazil's Supreme Court on Monday issued the **order** in a case that has gripped the South American country even as it faces a trade war with the Trump administration.

Supporters of the far-right leader and some moderates see the ruling as harsh, while allies of incumbent President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and other moderates want to move on and leave the issue for the judiciary.

Creomar de Souza, a political analyst with Dharma Political Risk and Strategy, a political consultancy firm based in Brasilia, said that could be the dynamic of next year's election.

"One is the effort of Bolsonaro supporters to keep strong on the right, no matter if it is pushing for amnesty in congress or putting themselves physically out there," the analyst said. "The second is how the Lula administration will try to show that the country has a government."

Supreme Court Justice Alexandre de Moraes, who put Bolsonaro on trial for his **alleged** role in the coup plot to keep him in office despite his defeat in the 2022 election, ordered the 70-year-old former president's arrest for violating precautionary measures imposed on him by spreading content through his three lawmaker sons.

That decision followed one from the court last month ordering Bolsonaro to wear an electronic ankle monitor and to obey a curfew while the proceedings are underway.

The polarization between supporters and critics of the former president took Brazil's congress by storm Tuesday and was also reflected in figures from pollster Quaest,

which say 53% are favorable to the order against the far-right leader and 47% against it.

Analysts expect another narrow election next year, with Lula running for reelection and Bolsonaro barred.

The political repercussions in Brazil are getting attention from the U.S. government as President Donald Trump directly tied a 50% **tariff** on imported Brazilian goods to his ally's judicial situation.

Late on Monday, the U.S. State Department's Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs condemned the far-right leader's order for house arrest and **attacked** de Moraes.

Bolsonaro blockade

Since de Moraes' order, Bolsonaro allies are pledging to stop congress unless an amnesty bill is passed in favor of the far-right leader and his supporters involved in the coup plot probe.

Early on Tuesday, a group of 40 pro-Bolsonaro lawmakers told journalists in the capital Brasilia they will push hard for the former president's release. Altineu Cortes, the conservative deputy speaker of the lower house, said he will put the amnesty bill to a vote if he gets the chance.

Members of Brazil's opposition say such a move would allow Bolsonaro to run in next year's election, from which he was barred by the country's top electoral court

"I've already told speaker Hugo Motta that I will do that in the first moment I am working as the speaker of the house during one of his trips abroad," Cortes said.

Later, many of the same lawmakers protested in the lower house and the senate by blocking access to the presiding tables.

"This is an arbitrary action," said Sen. Davi Alcolumbre, the president of Brazil's senate. "I call for serenity and spirit of cooperation. We need to start working with respect, civility and dialogue so congress can fulfill its mission in favor of Brazil and our population."

Members of Brazil's opposition say such a move would also allow Bolsonaro to run in next year's election, from which he was barred by the country's top electoral court for abuse of power in 2022. That claim is denied by many legal experts and also by Supreme Court justices.

Moving on

Meanwhile, Lula and his allies initially showed they wanted to move past the issue of Bolsonaro's house arrest and focus on trade negotiations with Trump, who **imposed** 50% tariffs on Brazilian import goods starting Wednesday.

Trump's **justification** for the measure was what he called unfair treatment of the far-right leader.



I don't want to speak about what happened to that other Brazilian citizen who tried to stage a coup - Lula da Silva

"I don't want to speak about what happened to that other Brazilian citizen who tried to stage a coup," Lula said during a long speech in Brasilia on Tuesday.

The leftist leader added he will not call Trump to talk about trade "because he doesn't want to" speak about it. Lula said he might instead

"invite him to attend (November's climate summit) COP in Belem."

"I came here with the compromise of not wasting much time speaking about tariffs. I will just say the least I can. If I didn't (say anything) you would go: 'Why didn't Lula speak about it? Is he afraid of Trump?' And I don't want you to leave with that impression," he said.

Members of Lula's Cabinet have also avoided discussing Bolsonaro's future. A Brazilian government staffer told The Associated Press that Lula told his ministers that his reelection depends on governing, not on his predecessor's future.

The source spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak about the matter publicly.

Moderates speak

If the next Brazilian election has the same standard of the previous face off between Lula and Bolsonaro, the winner will be decided by turnout and a very slim number of moderates.

Gov. Eduardo Leite, a moderate from the Rio Grande do Sul state, embodied the split among many Brazilian voters who will likely have to choose one of the two camps in 2026.

A critic of de Moraes' actions against Bolsonaro, Leite does not condone the former president's actions either.

Exaggeration on both sides are contaminating Brazil - Gilberto Kassab

"I don't like the idea of a former president not being able to speak, and even less see him get arrested for that before he is put on trial at the Supreme Court," Leite said. "Our country does not deserve to remain hostage to this legal-political tug of war that only hinders us all."

Gilberto Kassab, the chairman of the centrist

Social Democratic Party, has both Bolsonaro and Lula supporters in his party's ranks and said "exaggeration on both sides are contaminating Brazil."

"I express my solidarity to the former president, I regret his arrest without discussing the merits of the issue. This is all that the country did not need," Kassab said in a statement.