

Brazilian President Michel Temer Dodges Trial for Corruption



Brasilia, October 26 (RHC)-- Brazilian President Michel Temer has successfully avoided facing trial for corruption after the lower house of Congress voted against taking judicial action.

Temer survived charges of racketeering and obstructing justice, both of which he has denied repeatedly when the necessary two-thirds of the lower house failed to vote in favour of bringing him before the courts.

Only 233 deputies voted in favor of the judicial proceedings, far short of the 342 votes required, while 251 rejected the prosecution's plans outright, the BBC reported.

Following the vote, any formal investigation into Temer's conduct while in office can now only be opened after his term ends in 2018.

Reporting from Sao Paulo, the BBC's Katy Watson said shouts of "Out with Temer!" rang out as lawmakers were casting their votes. Some declared they were voting against impunity, but others favored stability.

Ultimately, Temer's recent efforts to woo the most influential lawmakers appear to have trumped his dismal approval ratings, currently the worst in the country's history.

Last week, the congressional justice committee also rejected the charges. For the second time in as many months, according to the BBC, "he's got away with it."

The charges originated from a corruption case involving the world's largest meat-packing firm, JBL. The president faced being toppled by testimony given by controlling shareholder J&F's owners under a plea bargain.

Joesley and Wesley Batista, who have resigned from their board positions, said they spent \$185.5 million bribing nearly 1,900 politicians in recent years. They agreed to pay a record \$3.2 billion fine for the firm's role in Brazil's ongoing corruption scandals.

Although Temer has escaped the immediate prospect of being hauled before the courts, critics argue he's now nothing more than a lame duck president, who will struggle to pass any key reforms ahead of next year's elections.

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