

Pope Francis's special envoy barred from visiting Lula da Silva and delivering letter



Vatican City, June 13 (RHC)-- Juan Grabois, Pope Francis' special envoy and Justice and Peace Affairs adviser, has been barred from delivering a handwritten letter from the Pontiff to former Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva. Grabois, who attempted to hand over the message and a rosary in a visit Monday, was blocked from doing so by officials at federal police headquarters in Curitiba in the southern Brazilian state of Paraná.

"It's a serious incident," wrote Mauro Lopes of Brasil 24/7. "Barring the Pope's messenger" will result in "ample repercussion, both nationally and internationally, against the coup," he said referring to Michel Temer, who became president of Brazil through what many describe as a parliamentary-coup.

Citing a recent homily by the Pope, which he, "condemned state coups sponsored by conservative media," a direct reference to Brazil, Lopes said the move was an insult.

"It's an apparent paradox: In the largest Catholic country, the highest Catholic political leader is despised by thousands upon thousands of Catholics, starting with the leader of the coup, Michel Temer. On social media, conservative Catholics insult Lula, as they offended his wife, Marisa Leticia, until her death in

2017, and even after. The persistent hate campaign of these Catholics against Lula doesn't occur because they are Catholics, but because they are ferociously right-wing."

Lula has been detained at the federal police headquarters in Curitiba since April 7 on corruption and money laundering charges. Despite his conviction and imprisonment, events that many legal experts and observers attribute to "lawfare" and a salacious mainstream media campaign, Lula has topped every 2018 electoral poll conducted by Vox Populi, Ibope, Datafolha, Data Poder 360, Instituto Parana, the National Confederation of Transportation/MDA and Ipsos.

Lula's two terms in office were marked by a slew of social programs, lifting millions of Brazilians out of poverty and removing the country from the U.N. World Hunger Map. One of his most ambitious and successful plans is his Family Allowance (Bolsa Familia) plan. Launched in 2003, it provided stipends to families living below the poverty line. In return, those families must prove that their children are attending school and have been vaccinated.

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