

Lula da Silva says "reduced sentence unfair for man who committed no crime"



Brasilia, April 25 (RHC)-- Former Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva sent a strong message from his cell in Curitiba through his lawyer Emidio de Souza after learning a supreme court ruling reduced his sentence from 12 years and 10 months to eight years and 10 months.

"A reduced sentence is not fair for a man who committed no crime," Lula said, adding that this is just another chapter in a politically motivated trial. The former president also stated that he does not expect anything positive to come out of the trial, as he considers it part of "the farce that was staged starting the investigation which continued in the accusation, first and second instance."

Earlier this week, a Supreme Court of Justice (STJ) judge rejected all the appeals presented for the release of Lula and the annulment of the sentence but agreed to reduce it to eight years and 10 months. Two other judges also ruled in a similar fashion allowing the ruling of the sentence to go through.

Transmitting Lula's message, his lawyer said that "it was not a coincidence that all the judges acted in the same way. They already had an arrangement, as they had in the TRF-4 (second instance)." Meanwhile, he added, Lula continues to wait for a just trial "that respects the laws, the Constitution and the facts."

This decision would mean that Lula could be moved from state prison to a "semi-open prison," like a house arrest situation within three months. But his lawyer warned that this reduction might not represent a real advance. "The decision will have no effect if a federal court rushes, as it did last year, to condemn Lula in another process," De Souza explained.

Last year, Lula was sentenced by a Porto Alegre's Federal Court to 12 years in prison for alleged corruption and money laundering by Judge Sergio Moro, who was a Federal judge and is now President Jair Bolsonaro's Justice Minister.

Prosecutors alleged that Lula owns a three-floor luxury apartment at the Guaruja beach that was renovated at a cost of \$1.1 million, money which allegedly came in return to help secure contracts with Petrobras, the Brazilian state-run oil company.

However, no substantial proof has ever been presented against Lula, for which many have denounced his imprisonment as part of a so-called "lawfare" strategy.

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