

Key witness in Brazilian corruption case forced to testify against Lula



Brasilia, July 3 (RHC)-- One of the key witnesses in the case of Brazil's former President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva was forced by prosecutors to testify against him, despite not implicating Lula in his earlier testimonies. He reportedly lied under oath in return for judicial leniency, according to a report published by The Intercept and local media Folha de Sao Paulo.

Businessman Leo Pinheiro, the main shareholder of the OAS construction company and key witness of the case against Lula, was blackmailed by the prosecutors of the Operation Lava Jato in exchange of reduced sentence.

In his first two testimonies, the witness had not implicated Lula. However, in the third, he was forced to change the discourse. After the revelation, Lula's team reinforced the illegitimacy of the case and demanded his release.

"The history of the case already showed how Leo Pinheiro did not incriminate Lula in his first statements during the process, and he did it the third time after being pressured, altering his testimony to receive the benefit of a reduced sentence, negotiated with the prosecutors of Curitiba," the team said in the

statement.

The discussion related to Pinheiro's statement was obtained from the exclusive Telegram group of prosecutors working on the case. They discussed the businessman's statement after his first testimony when he argued that he offered the three-story apartment in Guaruja as a gift "without asking for anything in return" but Lula did not accept the offer.

After that testimony, prosecutor Anna Carolina Garcia asked her colleagues in the group chat if Lula had a secret bank account to which the others answered that he did not. During his third testimony, Pinheiro said Lula was promised the apartment as a "gift" after it was properly repaired.

Days before that statement, the prosecutors of Lava Jato talked about how to present it to the press. Even Deltan Dallagnol, head of the team, said they should think "of the timing of this new agreement so that it does not look like it was a prize for the condemnation of Lula."

Judge Sergio Moro used that testimony as key evidence to establish that Lula became the owner of the apartment and that therefore he committed a crime of corruption.

On June 9, Glenn Greenwald's The Intercept Brazil published an extensive and hard-hitting expose on the alleged political motivations behind Operation Car Wash (Lava Jato) task force against former President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva and the Worker's Party (PT), as well as the unethical involvement of current Minister of Justice Sergio Moro.

The report revealed that Moro, who crusaded as an anti-corruption judge, coordinated with prosecutors in the far-reaching Operation Car Wash (Lava Jato) corruption case that led to the conviction of the leftist leader.

The documents were released in a three-part series by The Intercept showing leaked documents and telegram messages between prosecutors and Moro, providing proof to what lengths the prosecutors went to prevent Lula and his Workers' Party from returning to power.

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