

Federal judge bans Bolsonaro's Brazil Cannot Stop campaign



Brasilia, March 29 (RHC)-- Federal Judge Laura Bastos has ordered President Jair Bolsonaro's administration to suspend promos of "Brazil Cannot Stop" -- a campaign that promotes the return to work, which is contrary to measures imposed by regional governors to contain COVID-19.

Bastos complied with an appeal filed by the Prosecutor General's Office against ads that urge Brazilians to return to "normal life" without having "technical documents" as their basis. The controversy broke out when the far-right President's son, Senator Flavio Bolsonaro, shared a video on networks that encouraged entrepreneurs to reopen their businesses and street vendors to resume their activities.

Although the Presidency's Communication Secretary categorically denied that this video was part of the "Brazil Cannot Stop" campaign, the Executive's press office stated that the video was just "experimental" and not approved for dissemination.

"For the avoidance of doubt, there is no Federal Government's campaign with the video that is circulating. Therefore, there was no budget expenditure," the official statement said.

Nevertheless, Judge Bastos ordered the Bolsonaro administration to refrain from disclosing any advertisement suggesting to the population behaviors which are not "governed by guidelines issued by the Health Ministry."

Rio de Janeiro's Justice also vetoed the celebration of a caravan called by Bolsonaro's followers against the restrictive measures imposed in this Brazilian state, which is the second region hardest hit by the pandemic. Other Brazilian courts also banned similar activities.

This week, the former army captain Bolsonaro prompted enormous controversy after he called the imposition of quarantine and suspension of classes "a crime." "Brazil has to return to normal immediately," he reaffirmed in an interview with local media TV Bandeirantes on Friday.???????

Instead of following the epidemiologists' recommendations, Bolsonaro defends reopening of schools and advised to quarantine only the elderly and people with previous illnesses. "Some are going to die, they will die. Sorry... it's life. You can't stop a car factory just because you have traffic deaths," the Brazilian president said, as reported by Anthropophagist.

"For 90 percent of the population, this will be a little flu or nothing... the number of deaths under 40 is insignificant," he added.????????? The far-right politician also cast doubt on the numbers of COVID-19 deaths in countries such as Italy or in Sao Paulo, the Brazilian state that has been hit hardest by the pandemic with 68 deaths and 1,223 positives so far.

"They are trying to get Brazil into bankruptcy with that fear-mongering... the best remedy for the disease is work. If someone can work, they have to go back to work... You can't hide. It's not okay to be quarantined at home, who knows for how many days."

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