

# *Bolsonaro's election fraud claims spark unprecedented crisis*



**Bolsonaro challenges voting system, much like his buddy Donald Trump??**

Brasilia, August 9 (RHC)-- Without proof and in contradiction of experts, Brazil's President Jair Bolsonaro has for many years decried the country's electronic voting system as vulnerable to fraud.

But in recent weeks, amid plummeting approval ratings, the far-right populist has aggressively talked up his claims in a series of interviews, broadcasts and meetings with supporters, thousands of whom demonstrated this month in support of Bolsonaro's call to change the system.

“We cannot have dubious elections in 2022. Public counting of votes is needed,” the president said in a recent radio interview. Analysts widely consider that Bolsonaro is preparing to contest next year’s elections, which recent opinion polls suggest he would lose by a large margin to former President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva of the left-wing Worker’s Party if he decides to run.

“Bolsonaro has been following the steps of [former U.S. President Donald] Trump since the beginning of his government,” said Daniela Campello, a professor of politics at Brazil’s Getulio Vargas Foundation. “The more he realizes he’s not going to win, the more he realizes he has nothing to lose.”

In a note released on Tuesday, the Eurasia Group consultancy wrote that the chances of the election results not being accepted were “less than 5 percent” but that a contested election would “likely follow the U.S. script” with “potential for violence” and “exacerbated polarization and distrust in state institutions.”

Bolsonaro, a former Brazilian army captain and outspoken admirer of the country’s 1964-85 military dictatorship, was visibly Trump’s most enamoured international ally during the U.S. president’s time in office, even though the relationship was not quite reciprocal.

He publicly parroted Trump’s accusations of election fraud in the former real estate mogul’s November 2020 defeat to Joe Biden, even repeating the claims to White House national security adviser, Jake Sullivan, who visited Brazil last week, according to a report published by O Globo.

Now, his repeated and unfounded allegations of fraud marring Brazil’s voting system, combined with continuing verbal attacks on Brazil’s Supreme Court justices, have sparked what many observers are calling an “unprecedented crisis” between the executive and the judiciary.

“It’s a very delicate situation,” said Rafael Cortez, a political scientist at the Tendencias Consultancy in Sao Paulo. “It’s a conflict that will be difficult to resolve in the short term.”

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