

Brazil's Lula names environment and rights defenders to cabinet positions



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Brasilia, December 30 (RHC)-- Brazil's President-elect Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva finalized his Cabinet appointments Thursday ahead of his January 1st inauguration.

Amazon rainforest defender and Goldman Prize winner Marina Silva was chosen as Brazil's environmental minister. Silva held the post in Lula's previous two terms in office, during which Amazon deforestation slowed significantly.

Indigenous land and water defender Sônia Guajajara was named Brazil's first-ever minister for Indigenous peoples. Lula also nominated Black activist, journalist and educator Anielle Franco as Brazil's new Minister of Racial Equality. She's the sister of Marielle Franco, who was a human rights and racial justice activist and member of Rio de Janeiro's City Council, before she was assassinated in 2018.

Ahead of Lula's swearing-in Sunday, the Brazilian Supreme Court temporarily banned registered gun owners from carrying their firearms in the capital Brasília until after the inauguration ceremony. The move comes amid rising concerns of violence from the far right and supporters of defeated President Jair Bolsonaro. Brazilian police on Thursday arrested at least four people and carried out nationwide raids as they investigated an alleged coup attempt led by backers of Bolsonaro who've refused to accept Lula's victory. Bolsonaro has yet to concede.

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