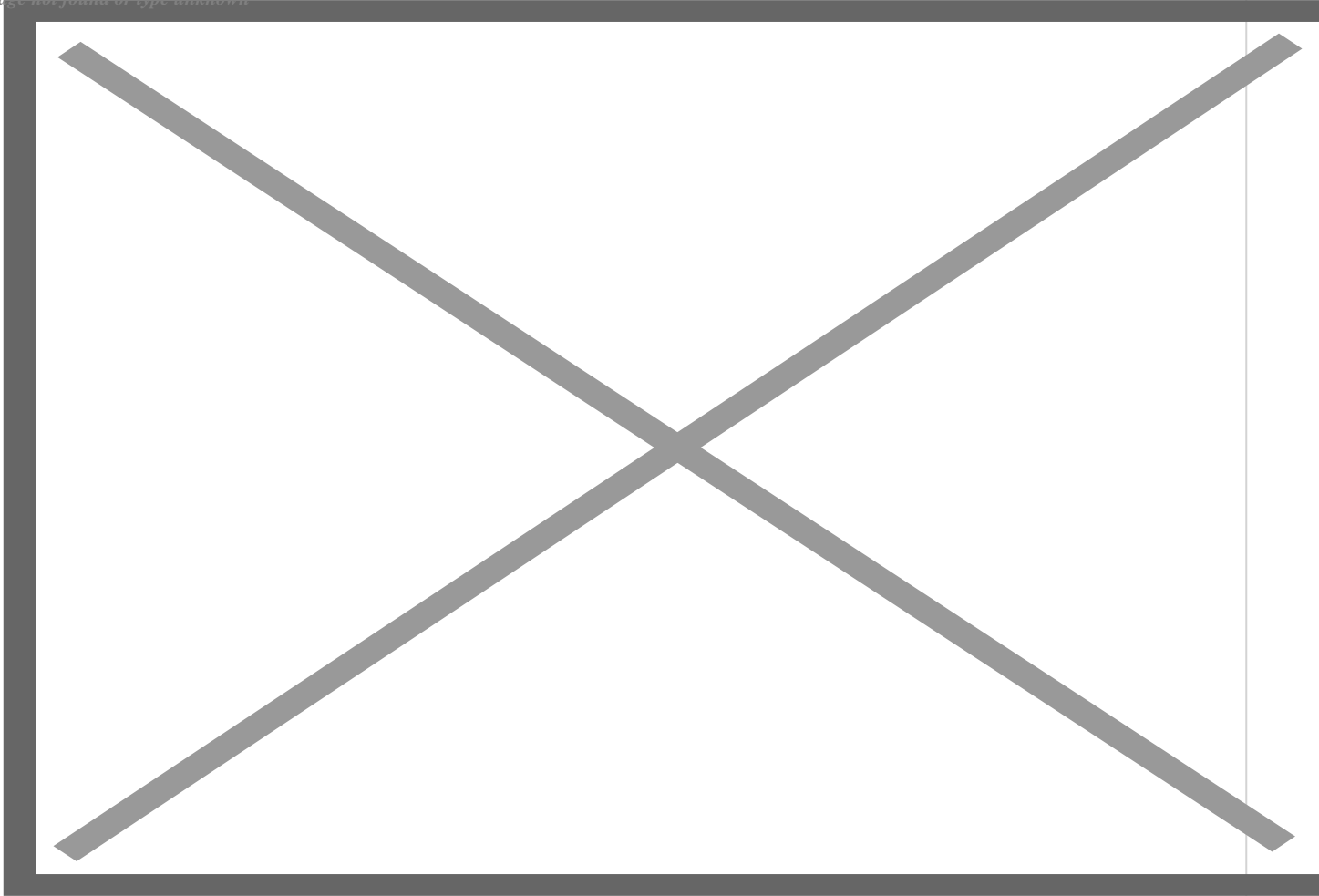


Brazil's Lula accuses Bolsonaro of planning January 8th coup

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Protesters, supporters of former President Jair Bolsonaro, clash with police during a protest outside the Planalto palace building in Brasilia, Brazil, on Sunday, January 8, 2023 [Eraldo Peres/AP Photo]

Brasilia, February 3 (RHC)-- Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva has affirmed that his predecessor Jair Bolsonaro actively participated in planning for his supporters to storm government offices on January 8th, as a senator revealed the former far-right president attended an anti-election plot meeting.

“Today I am well aware and will say it loud and clear: that citizen [former president Bolsonaro] prepared the coup,” Lula said in an interview with broadcaster RedeTV! on Thursday.

Refusing to accept Bolsonaro’s election loss, thousands of his backers broke into the presidential palace, Congress and Supreme Court buildings in Brasilia a week after Lula’s inauguration. The former president was not in the capital at the time and did not attend Lula’s inauguration. Bolsonaro has been in the US state of Florida since late December.

“I am certain that Bolsonaro actively participated in that and is still trying to participate,” Lula added, when questioned about his predecessor’s role in the assault. Lula’s allegations against Bolsonaro came the same day that Senator Marcos do Val accused the former president of attending a meeting on how to prevent the handover of power.

The plan, according to do Val, was to force Superior Electoral Court President Alexandre de Moraes to say something incriminating while secretly recording him. De Moraes is a favourite target of Bolsonaro supporters, who allege he interfered in the election to help Lula.

Do Val, a former Bolsonaro ally, initially told Veja magazine that it was Bolsonaro who presented the plan to him, but later changed his version of the story, saying the former president remained “silent” during the meeting. “I annul the election, Lula isn’t sworn in, I stay in the presidency and arrest Alexandre de Moraes because of his comments,” do Val quoted Bolsonaro as saying.

His accusations dominated local news on Thursday, and the senator was called to give statements to Federal Police. Bolsonaro did not comment on the matter on any of his social media channels.

The former president, who has requested a six-month visa to remain in the United States, is being investigated as part of a sprawling probe into the January 8th assault.

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