

Bolsonaro must pay compensation for harassment of journalists



Brasilia, May 29 (RHC)-- In Brazil, the Sao Paulo Justice Court confirmed a conviction against former Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro, who must pay compensation for moral damages to journalists.

The Second Instance Court's 4th Chamber of Private Law confirmed the sentence handed down by a civil judge in June 2022. However, the Chamber reduced the compensation from \$20,000 USD to \$10,000 USD.

Bolsonaro must deposit this amount in the accounts of the Regional Fund for the Defense of Diffuse Rights, which will use the money to protect press freedom. Previously, the Sao Paulo Union Professional Journalists argued that Bolsonaro committed the crime of moral harassment for his constant attacks on the press.

During the trial, Bolsonaro's defense team alleged that he never censored the press and that his attacks were directed at some journalists and not at the entire professional group.

Despite these arguments, the Second Instance Court considered that the right-wing politician abused his right to freedom of expression to offend the press. "Besides acting against democracy, Bolsonaro attacked the freedom of the press itself. In a hostile, disrespectful and humiliating way, with the use of verbal violence, profanity and pejorative, homophobic, xenophobic, and misogynistic expressions, he extrapolated his right to free speech and morally harassed the group," said the journalists who filed the complaint.

The Brazilian Association of Investigative Journalism holds that Bolsonaro's number of verbal attacks against journalists went from 130 to 453 between 2019 and 2021.

In 2022, Bolsonaro attacked the press 557 times. His harassment intensified at the October presidential campaign, in which he was defeated by Workers' Party leader Lula da Silva.

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