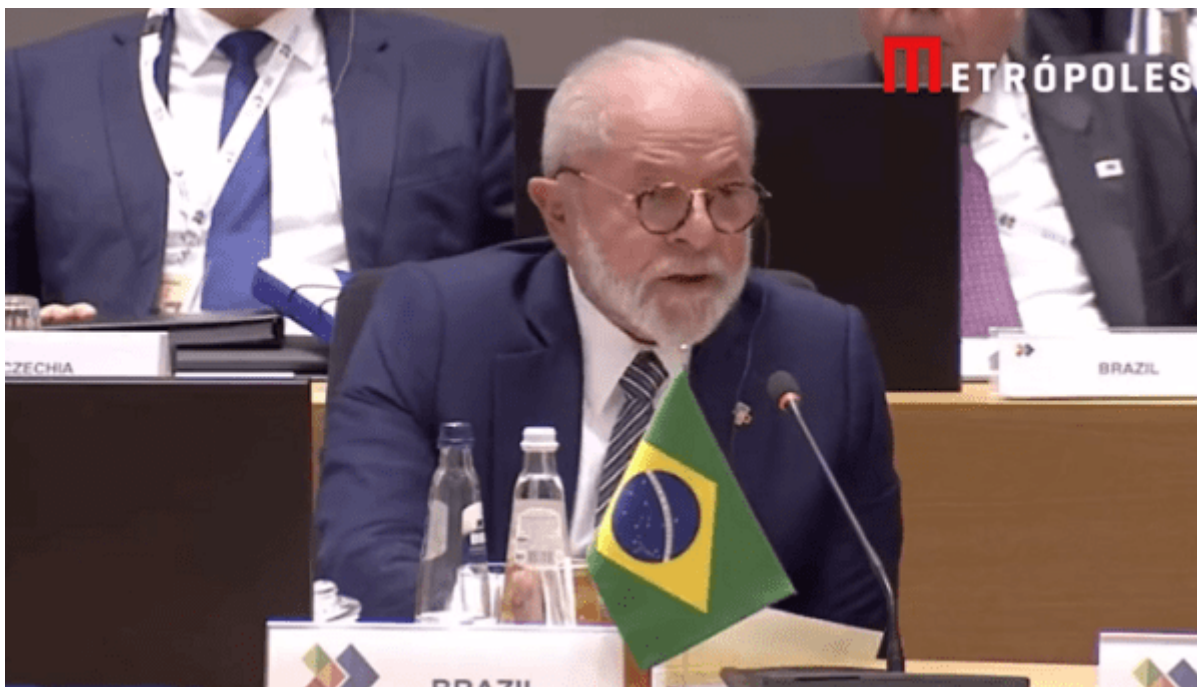


Lula da Silva affirms sanctions only serve to penalize the most vulnerable



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Brussels, July 18 (RHC)-- On Monday, Brazilian President Lula da Silva harshly criticized the sanctions and blockades that the United States and its allies impose on other countries in disregard of international law principles and norms.

"Using sanctions and blockades without the support of international law is something that only serves to penalize the most vulnerable parts of the population. We need peace to overcome the significant challenges we have to face," he said during the summit between the European Union (EU) and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), which takes place in Brussels.

"To divide the world into antagonistic blocs would be madness," Lula asserted, emphasizing that the war in Ukraine "is another confirmation that the United Nations Security Council is incapable of addressing the challenges we face today regarding peace and security."

"Often, its own members do not respect the United Nations Charter. According to the United Nations Charter, we do not accept the use of force as a means to resolve disputes," the leftist leader stated, adding that Brazil "supports all initiatives promoted by different countries and regions calling for an immediate ceasefire, cessation of hostilities, and negotiated peace."

Lula emphasized that the Ukrainian conflict has led to an increase in global military spending, which does not contribute to reducing inequality and poverty. "Instead of eliminating hunger for so many millions of human beings, we are spending billions of dollars to feed the war machinery, which only causes more destruction and famines. This CELAC-EU Summit is the moment to say enough. Another world is possible, a world that we must build together."

Lula also said that his government considers the signing of the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between the European Union and MERCOSUR a priority. However, this FTA "has to be based on trust and not on threats."

"The defense of the environmental values we all share cannot be an excuse for protectionism," the Brazilian leader said, emphasizing that the protection of the Amazon rainforest is "a duty for all."

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