

Elon Musk loses fight with Brazilian judiciary over X ban



Brasilia, September 22 (RHC)-- Elon Musk, the owner of X social media platform, formerly known as Twitter, was forced to bow before Brazilian court rulings after a lengthy and contentious legal battle with Brazil's Supreme Court, media reports said on Saturday.

The U.S.-South African billionaire tech mogul, for months, has defied court orders to appoint a local representative in Brazil. He has also refused court orders to take down user accounts that the court deemed to spread misinformation and pose a threat to the nation.

Brazil's population of 200 million people makes it a lucrative market for the social media company.

However, Musk's defiance of the Brazilian legal system led to hefty fines for the company and a nationwide ban on X in Brazil, one of the company's largest markets, resulting in a serious threat to X's income by affecting its essential ad revenue. Also, due to the ban, X users started migrating en masse to some of X's competitors, like Meta.

A Brazilian Supreme Court justice on Friday ordered the suspension of Elon Musk's social media giant X in Brazil after the tech billionaire refused to name a legal representative in the country, according to a copy of his decision.

Musk's satellite internet service provider, Starlink, got also involved in the fight with Brazil, and its judiciary had frozen the company's assets because it refused to enforce the block on X.

On September 4, Starlink said it would obey the Brazilian court's orders. And finally, X's lawyers said the globally-recognized social media company had decided to comply with the court's orders in filings it submitted on Friday.

In response, Brazil's court on Saturday gave the company five days to submit the necessary documentation to confirm that X would comply with the country's legal demands, and by filing the proper papers validating it had appointed Rachel de Oliveira Conceicao as its Brazilian representative.

The feud between Elon Musk and the Brazilian government is due to Musk's close links with the U.S. Republican Party that is opposed to President Lula, says a Brazilian journalist.

Right-wing Musk, who claims "principles matter more than profit" had portrayed his battle with the Brazilian judiciary as an ideological one over free speech, also agreed to end his expensive fight with Brazil's Supreme Court by removing accounts associated with extremist groups engaging in disinformation campaigns favoring Jair Bolsonaro, Brazil's ousted far-right president.

More than 100 social media accounts have been questioning whether Bolsonaro lost the election in 2022.

The X owner has fashioned himself as a defender of free speech and since purchasing Twitter in 2022 he has fired most of Twitter's trust and safety team and has fought authorities in several countries over efforts to enforce content moderation standards.

He has also objected to legal orders to remove some posts and accounts in Australia, although he has been less vocal about removing content in countries such as India and Turkey where right-wing governments remain in power.

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