

Brazil lifts ban on Elon Musk's X platform



X has now paid millions of dollars of court fines in Brazil [Mauro Pimentel/ AFP]

Brasilia, October 9 (RHC)-- Brazil's Supreme Court has lifted a ban on Elon Musk's X after the platform was blocked amid a dispute over disinformation. "I authorise the immediate return of the activities" of X, Judge Alexandre de Moraes said in his ruling, after the company paid millions of dollars in fines for failing to comply with a series of court orders.

The judge gave Brazil's communications regulator 24 hours to make the platform accessible again. Musk, the world's richest man and a self-declared "free speech absolutist", has yet to react to the decision.

Through its Global Affairs account, X said it was proud to return to Brazil, adding that it would "continue to defend freedom of speech, within the boundaries of the law" in the countries where it operates.

The platform formerly known as Twitter was suspended in Brazil, one of its largest and most-coveted markets, at the end of August in a standoff over online disinformation related to Brazil's 2022 election campaign. X had also failed to name a legal representative in the country, as required by law.

After Moraes blocked X, Musk lashed out at the judge, calling him an "evil dictator" and dubbing him "Voldemort" after the villain from the Harry Potter series.

Moraes, for his part, accused the platform of undermining democracy by allowing disinformation to flourish – a position backed by Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, who declared that the state would not "be intimidated by individuals, companies or digital platforms that believe themselves to be above the law."

X eventually complied with all of Moraes's demands in order to have the suspension lifted. Last week, the judge confirmed that the company had also settled fines amounting to about \$5.2 million.

The Brazil dispute was one of a series of recent face-offs between Musk, and governments including Australia and the United Kingdom seeking to prevent the spread of online misinformation. X had 22 million users in Brazil before it was blocked.

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