

Brazil marks second anniversary of the January 8th attack on its capital



Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva and his wife Rosangela da Silva attend a ceremony in Brasilia, Brazil, on January 8, 2025 [Luis Nova/AP Photo]

President Lula attended the event to denounce the coup against him, led by supporters of his predecessor Jair Bolsonaro.

Brasilia, January 9 (RHC)-- Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva has marked the second anniversary of an attack on government buildings with a celebration in the plaza where the violence took place.

On Wednesday, Lula – who underwent surgery last month to treat bleeding in his brain – appeared in the Three Powers Plaza in the capital Brasilia to denounce the riots of January 8, 2023, which he has likened to a coup against his presidency.

He also used the occasion to project defiance in the wake of the attack, which saw thousands of protesters break into the presidential palace, Supreme Court building and Congress. “Today is the day to say loud and clear: We’re still here,” Lula told his supporters. “We’re here to say that we are alive and that democracy is alive, contrary to what the January 8, 2023, coup plotters had planned.”

The attack on January 8 came just seven days after Lula, a left-wing leader, had been inaugurated for a non-consecutive third term.

Lula was not in the presidential palace at the time, nor was Brazil’s Congress in session. But the attack caused millions of dollars in damage, and dozens of law enforcement officers and protesters were injured.

Many of the rioters had sought to spur a military uprising against Lula’s presidency.

Lula’s election had been narrow: He entered a run-off race against incumbent President Jair Bolsonaro in October 2022 and emerged victorious by one of the tightest margins in Brazilian history. Just over 2.1 million votes separated the two candidates.

But the far-right Bolsonaro had been spreading false claims well before the election that Brazil’s electronic voting system was vulnerable to fraud, and he refused to publicly acknowledge defeat in the wake of the vote.

That spurred widespread protest, with Bolsonaro supporters blocking highways and attacking police headquarters in Brasilia. A bomb threat in the capital was even reported in the lead-up to the inauguration.

Bolsonaro left the country for Florida before Lula took power. He has since returned to the country, where he faces numerous legal cases and investigations. Some pertain to his role in spreading misinformation about the election, as well as his connection to the attack on January 8, 2023.

In June 2023, Brazil’s electoral court ruled that Bolsonaro could not run for office again until 2030, as punishment for using government resources to sow distrust in the voting system.

And in November 2024, federal police officially accused Bolsonaro and 36 allies of plotting to overturn the 2022 election results. Prosecutor-general Paulo Gonet has yet to decide whether to formally charge the former president. Other probes have looked into whether Bolsonaro embezzled jewellery from Saudi Arabia while in office, or spread misinformation during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Still, on Wednesday, Bolsonaro asserted on social media that United States President-elect Donald Trump had invited him to Washington, DC, for his inauguration on January 20.

“My lawyer, Dr Paulo Bueno, has already forwarded a request to Minister Alexandre de Moraes for me to

get my passport back so that I can attend this honourable and important historical event,” Bolsonaro wrote. His passport was confiscated amid the ongoing investigations.

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