

# *Brazil's Governing Party May Choose Lula as Candidate*

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Brasilia, June 12 (teleSUR-RHC)-- Brazil's Workers' Party (PT) began its fifth congress on Thursday night, where it is expected to formalize the candidacy of former President Lula da Silva in the 2018 presidential elections.

The party, which has governed Brazil for the last 12 years, is holding its congress in Salvador, capital of Bahia state. Members of the party will have until Saturday to define a strategy that could help the party to overcome current difficulties – mainly the corruption scandal affecting the state-owned oil company Petrobras and budget measures implemented under Rousseff.

Analysts have been speculating on a possible return of the former president to the national political scene, as Lula left office with record-high popularity and would improve the party's image.

"This is not a party in crisis," said PT National President Rui Falcão. Since January, he emphasized, the party has recruited 17,000 new members, raising the total to over 1.1 million. He added that "a conservative right and monopolized media is dedicating to attack and try to discredit the main political

force of this country.”

Speculation about Lula's political comeback started to grow last October, when Rousseff was re-elected president. Lula's central role in the recent Worker's Day celebration also contributed to the speculation. In addition, PT Secretary Florisvaldo de Souza said a few days before congress: “We have a candidate for 2018 that will leap over the electoral competition with little difficulty.”

Current President Dilma Rousseff will be back from Europe, where she was attending the CELAC-EU Summit, to attend the party's congress. The congress will also be attended by 30 international delegations.

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