

Brazilian judge -- “Lula's Jailer” -- is new minister of justice



Brasilia, November 3 (RHC)-- Jair Bolsonaro, Brazil's far-right president-elect, has appointed Judge Sergio Moro to the Justice Ministry. Critics and opposition are enraged because Moro was responsible for jailing Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva of Workers' Party (PT), Bolsonaro's chief political rival and favorite candidate for the presidential elections.

Moro oversaw the so-called "Operation Car Wash" probe that convicted former progressive president Lula for bribery and money laundering, blocking him from running against Jair Bolsonaro earlier this year, when he led opinion polls.

According to a Reuters report, Moro flew to Bolsonaro's beachside Rio de Janeiro home on Thursday, where he met with Brazil's next president for about an hour before both announced the decision.

"Federal judge Sergio Moro accepted our invitation for the justice and public security ministry. His anti-corruption and anti-organized crime agenda, as well as his respect for the laws and the constitution, will be our guide," Bolsonaro tweeted.

Bolsonaro surged to victory on Sunday, promising to combat corruption and violent crime. However, his means are controversial. Bolsonaro has endorsed Brazil's dictatorship (1964-1985), publicly supported torture, and he promotes the militarization of internal security. A strategy applied by un-elected president

Michel Temer that led to more urban violence, affecting the country's impoverished favelas.

The appointment also gives ammunition to his opponents on the left, who have long argued that the "Car Wash" probe was a politicized purge aimed at sidelining Lula and the PT. "Moro will be Bolsonaro's minister after his decisive role in his election, by blocking Lula from running," wrote PT President Gleisi Hoffmann on Twitter. "Fraud of the century!"

In choosing to work with Bolsonaro, Moro appears to have cast aside criticisms about the political motivations behind his probe, attracted by the chance to rebuild Brazil's justice ministry under his own vision. He will now work with Bolsonaro, who has upset many with racist, misogynist, and homophobic comments.

Moro accepted the post as justice minister despite saying in 2016 that he would never enter politics. In a public statement, Moro said he would hand over the reins of the sprawling "Car Wash" investigation to other judges in his hometown of Curitiba to avoid controversy.

Bolsonaro is expected to announce a full cabinet later this month.

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