

Cuba calls for end to political persecution of Lula



Havana, February 7 (RHC)-- Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez has rejected a second sentence handed the former president of Brazil, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, and demanded his immediate release.

"Stop the political imprisonment of Lula. We reject his sentence. Let us all join the demand for his release. The fight will continue until justice is done," the island's top diplomat tweeted.

The day before, federal judge Gabriela Hardt sentenced the former Brazilian president, who is already serving time for alleged corruption charges, to 12 years and 11 months in prison, for money laundering.

Prosecutors argued that a house he was using in Atibaia near Sao Paulo was renovated by the corruption-tarnished construction giant Odebrecht and two other companies in exchange for contracts with the state oil giant Petrobras.

However, Brazilian Deputy Paulo Pimenta, called the sentence "illegal" and claimed that it "contradicts the jurisprudence of Brazilian law, because it is not based on evidence."

Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel, and the first secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba, Raul Castro, have reiterated the need to join forces to free Lula, and end political persecution against him.

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