

Brazilian president avoids being investigated in murder case



Brasilia, December 19 (RHC)-- Brazil's Federal Supreme Court (STF) judge Alexandre de Moraes has closed two legal actions requesting that President Jair Bolsonaro and his son Carlos Bolsonaro be investigated in the murder case of the Rio de Janeiro's councilwoman Marielle Franco.

Last month, these legal actions were submitted by the Workers' Party (PT) and the Brazilian Press Association (ABI), after a doorman from the Vivendas da Barra condominium, where Jair and Carlos live, quoted the Brazilian president's name in a statement to the Rio de Janeiro Police. Their petitions pointed to the suspicion of justice obstruction because the right-wing politician publicly stated that his son took the concierge's recordings.

In the case of Bolsonaro, the legal action raised by the PT also pointed to a possible crime of liability. The attorney general Augusto Aras has spoken out against opening a criminal investigation. "The plaintiffs did not bring minimal evidence of criminal offenses. This is because the audio files they are referring to have long been under the custody of competent authorities (police and prosecutors) and their contents' technical analysis took place even before the facts are reported," Aras said.

Based on the attorney general's statement, Judge Moraes decided to close the claims against Bolsonaro and his son. "Within the Brazilian legal system, the prosecution ownership principle only allows the prosecution of criminal proceedings if prosecutors fill the complaint," Moraes wrote.

"Therefore, once the Public Ministry did not acknowledge requests due to the absence of minimum evidence of the criminal offense, I have decided to close the petitions."

The Socialism and Freedom Party (PSOL) leader Marielle Franco was a human right defender who stood out in Brazilian politics for her struggle for women, blacks, LGTBI people, and the poor. She was murdered by hitmen on March 14, 2018. While the material perpetrators of the crime are in prison, the police have not determined who ordered her assassination.

During the investigations, the doorman indicated that one of the crime suspects arrived at the condominium hours before Franco's murder and requested to enter the Bolsonaro residence. Currently, however, the concierge is being investigated for false testimony and slanderous denunciation against the Brazilian far-right president.

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