

Senators call for Brazilian president to be investigated for corruption

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Brasilia, June 29 (RHC)-- Several Brazilian senators requested to the Brazilian Supreme Court the opening of an investigation against President Jair Bolsonaro for alleged corruption offenses associated with the purchase of anti-COVID-19 vaccine with the Indian pharmaceutical Bharat Biotech.

Senator Randolfe Rodrigues, pointed out that the president would be facing "several cases of influence peddling, passive and active corruption, prevarication and other crimes" -- related to the contract of intent to purchase signed between the Government and the Indian company Bharat Biotech for 20 million doses of the vaccine Covaxin.

Backed by legislators Jorge Kajuru and Fabiano Contarato, Rodrigues also explained that "numerous irregularities" were committed in this deal, with a cost of 320 million dollars for "vaccines not yet certified

by the Brazilian regulatory agency, a price 11 times higher than that stipulated by the manufacturer".

Last Friday, Congressman Luis Miranda revealed to a Senate committee that in this negotiation with Bharat Biotech, it was agreed to deposit part of the payment for the vaccines to a company that did not appear in the contract, the firm Madison, based in Singapore.

The information described as "highly suspicious" by the parliamentary committee and which is added to other clauses of the contract, which had a Brazilian businessman as "intermediary".

Allegedly, the businessman, identified as Francisco Maximiano, has already incurred in frauds in the health area, he was the owner of another company investigated for corruption for having "sold" to the Ministry of Health some medical supplies that were never delivered.

The Government in turn has accused Miranda of "slandering" and "betraying" Bolsonaro, who claims not to know details of the negotiations for the purchase of Covaxin and stresses that "not a penny" has been paid, since the drug has not yet been approved by the health authorities.

It is now up to that justice entity to decide whether to ask the Attorney General's Office to open a formal investigation into the case, since prevarication consists of 'delaying or failing to perform, unduly, an official act, or doing so against the express provision of the law to satisfy a personal interest or feeling.'

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