

Brazilian minister investigated for threat to 2022 elections

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Brasilia, September 30 (RHC)-- The Attorney General of the Republic of Brazil, Augusto Aras, reports that the Supreme Federal Court (STF) will open a preliminary investigation against Defense Minister Braga Netto for his alleged threat against the 2022 elections.

Aras' decision responds to a lawsuit filed with the STF by several legislators, after a report surfaced last July in which Netto sent a report to the president of the Chamber, Arthur Lira, threatening not to hold the elections if the proposal to implement printed voting on electronic voting machines was not approved -- a demand by right-wing President Jair Bolsonaro.

"The eventual appearance of reasonable indications of a possible political-administrative infraction committed by the denounced will result, therefore, in the adoption of the necessary measures for investigation," the Public Prosecutor's Office said in its communication.

For his part, Netto denied that he had exerted any kind of coercion in the election process, while alleging that such deliberations on the printed vote corresponded exclusively to the National Congress, while emphasizing the commitment of the Armed Forces to the nation's democracy. In that sense, Justice Gilmar Mendes, rapporteur of the investigation requests in the STF, presented to the prosecutor the four actions filed before the court against Netto.

For his part, President Jair Bolsonaro maintains his accusatory stance regarding the commission of electoral fraud in the first electoral round of 2018, to the point of questioning the functioning of the ballot boxes, and repeatedly expressing his intention to return to paper voting and renounce electronic voting.

In addition, Bolsonaro has attacked the president of the Superior Electoral Tribunal, Luis Roberto Barroso, and tried to boycott the electoral process. "With the participation of the Armed Forces, there is no reason to doubt the electronic vote. There is no reason to do so as long as this and the remaining institutions participate in all the stages of the process", he expressed to local media.

The former military officer has previously defended the theory that he was a victim of fraud and has insisted that "we need to approve in Brazil a secure vote counting system. Otherwise, it is susceptible to manipulation and fraud."

While he promulgates a discourse of transparency, his shady actions and governmental mismanagement make his popularity among Brazilians fall more and more every day, who this Saturday, October 2, will march again requesting his impeachment and exit from the Government; while analysts maintain that Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, candidate for the Workers' Party (PT), surpasses him in voting intentions.

According to the latest survey by pollster Datafolha published on September 17, voter support for Lula stood at 44 percent, while Bolsonaro had 26 percent, according to simulated elections at the time of the survey.

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