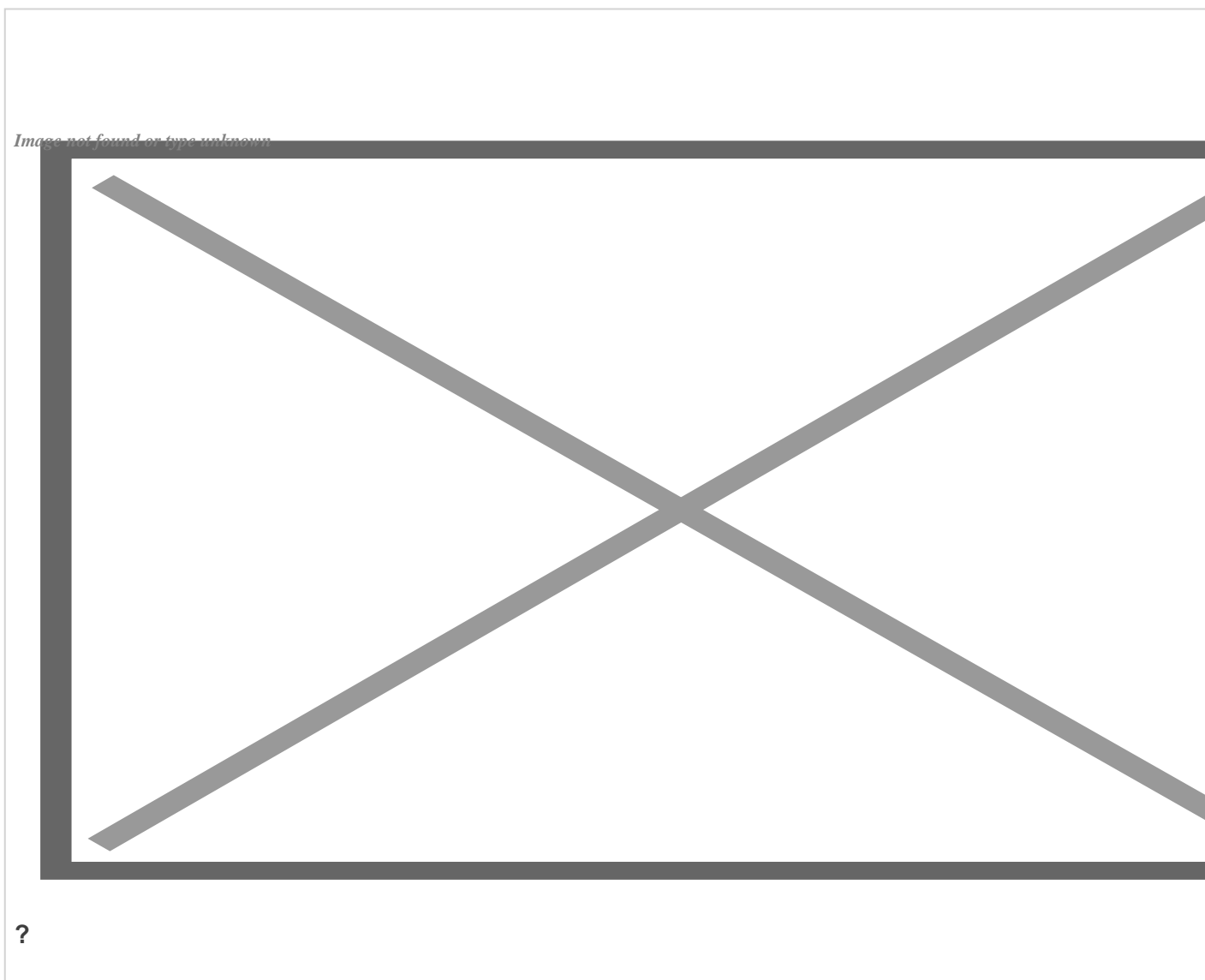


Lula highlights the importance of Rio Carnival in the world



Brasilia, July 7 (RHC)-- Lula da Silva -- the former trade unionist and leader of the Workers' Party (PT) -- arrived this Wednesday in Rio to launch his candidacy in Brazil's most iconic state, as he has been doing in other regions of the country.

Before the event, which will take place on Thursday, Lula met with representatives of the samba schools in Rio de Janeiro and, to the rhythm of the "batucada" of the percussions that give life to this genre, announced his "full support" if he comes to power again.

During the meeting, the former president pointed out that samba and the Rio Carnival are industries that "generate opportunities" and give profits, but said that this had not been recognized in recent years when

the samba schools have had to "beg" for support to be able to carry out the parades.

"If anyone had doubts about the importance of carnival for the construction of the culture of this country, you have to look at how sad this country was in 2021," Lula assured hundreds of attendees who kept cheering him on.

"The state's role is to make people know Brazil to the fullest. And a country that does not develop culture is a country destined to be the poorest spiritually," he stressed.

Lula said that the festival is recognized from "Patagonia to Greenland" He recalled that the Rio Carnival generates some 4 billion reais (about 740 million dollars) and is a source of employment for thousands of people who year after year live from the majestic festival.

With the "sambistas" as witnesses, the former president announced that if he became president, he would re-create the Ministry of Culture, eliminated during the government of Jair Bolsonaro, whom he blamed for not providing support for people who make a living from art.

Culture has been subject to constant budget cuts since the far-right leader took power, in 2019, with a speech aimed at recovering "traditional values," among which he places "God, the Homeland and the family."

This year alone, he has vetoed two laws that granted resources to the cultural sector, which is just beginning to recover from the losses it suffered due to the covid-19 pandemic.

Bolsonaro maintains that this sector, as well as education and especially universities, have been "captured" during the last decades by "cultural Marxism" and has made it one of the targets of his ideological offensive against "communism."

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