

Lula says he hopes Bolsonaro will accept Brazil's elections result

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Brasilia, October 24 (RHC)-- Brazil's presidential frontrunner Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva has said he hopes his far-right rival, incumbent President Jair Bolsonaro, will accept an election loss, as Brazilian voters prepare to head to the polls next Sunday.

Lula said during a news conference in Sao Paulo on Monday that if he were to win the tightly fought contest, he hoped Bolsonaro "will have a moment of sanity and phone me to accept the election result." "If Bolsonaro loses and he wants to cry ... I lost three elections," said Lula, who served two terms as president from 2003 to 2010. "Each time I lost, I went home. I didn't keep cursing, being agitated."

Brazilians will go back to the polls on October 30th, after a first round of voting on October 2 saw Lula beat Bolsonaro but fall short of what he needed to avoid a second round. For months, experts have raised concerns that Bolsonaro will not accept the results of what has been one of the most divisive elections in Brazil's history.

The former army captain has repeatedly said without evidence that the country's electronic voting system is vulnerable to fraud — spurring fears that he plans to contest the outcome, similarly to former US President Donald Trump, whom he has emulated. Judicial experts have rejected Bolsonaro's fraud claims as baseless.

Recent polls show Lula with a lead over Bolsonaro ahead of Sunday's second-round vote, but polling ahead of the first round underestimated support for Bolsonaro, fuelling backlash and distrust. A poll by IPEC on Monday showed Lula with 50 percent support compared with 43 percent for Bolsonaro, while another poll by AtlasIntel showed the left-wing former leader with 52 percent to Bolsonaro's 46.2 percent.

That is up from 51.1 percent for Lula and 46.5 percent for Bolsonaro, according to a previous AtlasIntel poll two weeks ago. The most recent poll was completed before a shooting incident on Sunday involving Bolsonaro supporter and former Congressman Roberto Jefferson, which had the president's campaign worried about a negative effect on opinion polls, a senior aide said.

The changes for both candidates were less than the margin of error of one percentage point, but with the election on Sunday, even a stable race at this point favours frontrunner Lula. "The poll is good news for Lula," said AtlasIntel Chief Executive Andrei Roman.

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