

Brazil's outgoing president Bolsonaro meets Lula's team to discuss power transition

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Workers' Party President Gleisi Hoffmann and Brazil's Vice President-elect Geraldo Alckmin, arrive for a press conference after meeting with Ciro Nogueira, outgoing President Jair Bolsonaro's chief of staff, at the Planalto Presidential Palace, in Brasilia, Brazil, Thursday, Nov. 3, 2022. (AP photo)

Brasilia, November 4 (RHC)-- The outgoing Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro met with advisors to his incoming successor Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva on Thursday, who described the visit as "positive" amid

fears that the far-right incumbent would try to contest his election defeat.

Vice President-elect Geraldo Alckmin, who heads Lula's transition team, said the meeting came at the end of a trip to the presidential palace where he and his advisers met with Bolsonaro's chief of staff, Ciro Nogueira, to begin preparing the ground for the handover of power on January 1st.

Alckmin told reporters that the results of the meeting were "positive" and the president told them that the federal government is ready to provide all the information and assistance needed for the smooth transfer of power and the protection of public interests.

Brazil's government has been silent for nearly two days since left-wing veteran Lula's narrow victory over Bolsonaro on Sunday sparked protests on highways across the country by angry supporters. Earlier, Alckmin told a news conference that he held a "very productive" meeting with Nogueira and other government officials along with Lula's Workers' Party (PT) head Gleisi Hoffmann and transition team technical coordinator Aloizio Mercadante.

"The transition has begun... As Lula said in his victory speech, our task is to unite Brazil. So here we go," Alckmin was quoted as saying. Alckmin, a pro-business center-right veteran tasked with reaching out to Lula's opponents, said the president was due a "well-deserved rest." He also said that they are going to start announcing the full membership of the transition team on Monday.

Alckmin is looking for ways to fit Lula's key campaign promises into the 2023 federal budget.

Conservatives in Congress have made major electoral gains, which means Lula faces a serious challenge to pass legislation and tackle problems such as a weak economy, a hunger crisis and the growing destruction of the Amazon rainforest.

The roadblocks Bolsonaro's supporters have created were a serious threat to Latin America's largest economy.

After Bolsonaro called for roadblocks to be lifted to prevent interference with people's right to free movement, officials said there were 32 hundred roadblocks as of Thursday afternoon, down from 250 on Tuesday.

But although the former army captain promised to respect the constitution, he has not yet confirmed Lula's victory and congratulated him. In a video posted online on Wednesday night, Bolsonaro encouraged people to "legitimate demonstrations" and raised concerns that Brazil could face tense times until Lula is sworn in and beyond.

Lula won Brazil's presidential runoff Sunday in one of the most significant and bruising elections in the country's history. According to the country's election authority, he secured 50.8 percent of the vote compared with 49.2 percent for his rival, marking a stunning comeback for the leftist leader and the end of the country's most right-wing government in decades.

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