

Brazil's Bolsonaro seeks to challenge election loss

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Brasilia, November 22 (RHC)-- Brazil's far-right President Jair Bolsonaro has challenged his loss in last month's election to leftist rival Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva. Bolsonaro's allies have filed a complaint with the country's Superior Electoral Court (TSE) seeking "extraordinary verification" of the election results, according to a CNN Brasil report on Tuesday.

They cited the results of their own audit into the October 30 run-off election, in which Lula eked a narrow victory over the incumbent president. Bolsonaro's allies claim the audit shows evidence of "malfunction" in older electronic voting machines.

"There were signs of serious failures that generate uncertainties and make it impossible to validate the results generated," the complaint alleged, calling for ballots processed in those machines to be "invalidated."

With Lula's victory verified by TSE and acknowledged by political figures in Brazil and around the world, the complaint is unlikely to change the final results. However, the move could galvanise supporters of the president whose anti-democratic rhetoric has sparked fears he could disrupt the peaceful transition of power.

In the months leading up to the election, Bolsonaro spread unsubstantiated claims that the country's election system was riddled with fraud. Critics worried that the former army captain — who has praised Brazil's former military dictatorship in the past — would seek to invalidate the results.

Those concerns eased as the election proceeded without notable issues. After nearly two days of silence following his loss, Bolsonaro reportedly told a Brazilian Supreme Court judge: "It is over." However, while Bolsonaro authorised his government to begin the transition process, he never conceded defeat. Bolsonaro's supporters took to the streets, calling on the military to intervene to stop Lula's victory.

Brazilian police said truckers, a key Bolsonaro constituency, had either partially or fully blocked highways at 271 points as part of the protests. The Supreme Court ordered for the roadblocks to be removed but some Bolsonaro supporters have continued to call on the president to reject the will of the voters. The complaint filed on Tuesday is likely to drive further protests.

Alexandre de Moraes, the Supreme Court justice who leads the TSE, said in a ruling that Bolsonaro's right-wing electoral coalition must present its full audit for both rounds of last month's presidential election within 24 hours, or he would reject the complaint.

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