

Report reveals coup documents found on Bolsonaro aide's phone

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Brazil's President Jair Bolsonaro, right, talks with Mauro Cid in Brasilia, Brazil, [File: Adriano Machado/Reuters]

Brasilia, June 17 (RHC)-- Brazil's Federal Police has released a report detailing evidence that an aide to former President Jair Bolsonaro was involved in a plan to stage a military coup, following the far-right leader's defeat in the 2022 elections.

The report alleges that the aide, Lieutenant Colonel Mauro Cid, “gathered documents with the objective of obtaining ‘legal and juridical’ support for the execution of a coup d’état.”

Those documents were recovered from Cid’s cellphone, according to the report, and they outlined potential steps to prevent the transfer of power to Bolsonaro’s successor, current President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva.

Bolsonaro’s defeat had proven divisive, fuelling far-right protests and threats of violence in the weeks leading up to Lula’s inauguration. A week after Lula was sworn into office, Bolsonaro supporters converged on the Three Powers Plaza in the capital Brasilia on January 8th, attacking government buildings in an apparent attempt to spark a military coup.

Friday’s report is the latest revelation to suggest that some of Bolsonaro’s inner circle were involved in opposing or disrupting the peaceful transfer of power.

Bolsonaro himself has never publicly conceded defeat, and well before the first ballot was cast, he suggested — without evidence — that the vote would be marred by fraud.

In the month after Bolsonaro’s loss, his far-right coalition sought to have electronic voting machine ballots “invalidated,” alleging “malfunctions” that ultimately were never proven. The head of Brazil’s Superior Electoral Court, Alexandre de Moraes, ultimately threw out the coalition’s challenge, describing the effort as being in “bad faith.” The coalition was also fined \$4.3 million for a “total absence of any evidence.”

Nevertheless, groups on the far right have continued to reject the election results, which marked Lula’s third successful presidential run, following victories in 2002 and 2006. Lula has openly accused Bolsonaro of participating in coup attempts, saying in February: “I am certain that Bolsonaro actively participated in that and is still trying to participate.”

But Bolsonaro and his lawyers have maintained the former president’s innocence. Bolsonaro currently faces several investigations, including into his possible “instigation” of the January 8th attack.

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