



# LULA AND THE BATTLE FOR DEMOCRACY IN BRAZIL



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Giorgia Prates/Brasil de Fato

## *City of Curitiba, Paraná, Brazil*

In the Federal Police building, former President Luis Inácio Lula da Silva is in prison. His imprisonment is arbitrary and unjust. In October, the Brazilian people will vote for their next president. All polls show that Lula would win that race outright; he leads by twice the votes of his closest challenger. The arrest and imprisonment of Lula seems to be an attempt to prevent his candidacy for the presidency.

Outside the prison, a crowd has set up a settlement. They have named it the Marisa Leticia Encampment, in honour of Lula's wife Marisa Leticia who died last year. All the work of the encampment is shared by its residents. They distribute food, clean, organise cultural activities, hold political debates and maintain security. Each day, in the morning and in the evening, they chant in a clear and loud voice – 'Good Morning, President Lula' and 'Good Night, President Lula'. They are here as sentinels against the silencing of their democracy.

Between the Encampment and the Prison is a gulf. One represents democracy and the other represents a coup.



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## *History: What is Behind Brazil's Soft Coup?*

Brazil's democratic process, which opened up with the fall of the military dictatorship in 1985, feels defeated in our time. External interests – precisely the interests of the United States and its allies – have pushed a new offensive not only against Brazil, but against all of Latin America. Attempts to create a sovereign zone in Latin America have been damaged by this new offensive.

The most systematic attack on the Workers' Party (Partido de Trabalhadores or PT), the government of President Dilma Rousseff (President Lula's successor), began in mid-2013. In June, thousands of young people took to the streets to protest an increase in the bus fares. The state government of São Paulo was led by the right-wing Brazilian Social Democracy Party (PSDB). They sent the police to beat down the protests. Demonstrations increased; a million young people took to the streets across the country. Demands varied, but all of them centred around issues such as improvement of public services and rejection of the corruption of the dominant classes. What galvanised the protests, of course, was the rise in public transportation fares. The mainstream press, with the Globo Network in the lead, at first condemned these mobilisations. Then, they saw that these demonstrations provided them with an opportunity. They began to support the protests and indeed they called for people to take to the streets. What they wanted, more than anything else, was to allow these demonstrations to deny the legitimacy of the PT

government.

The dominant classes used any and every means to break the PT government – not because of any failure of the government itself, but because it has begun to whittle away at the power of the oligarchy. Despite these efforts, President Dilma Rousseff of the PT won a second term at the end of 2014. It was then that the opposition forces – with the Globo Network as their mouthpiece – intensified their process of destabilisation. They did not accept the results of the election. They put every impediment before the new government, not allowing it to function in parliament. Craftily, the right-wing opposition began proceedings against the president on the grounds of corruption. The accusations against Rousseff were false, as demonstrated by the Brazilian Senate and acknowledged later by right-wing leaders in interviews. Nonetheless, these proceedings culminated in the impeachment of Rousseff. This impeachment is widely seen as a parliamentary coup.

Professor Ermínia Maricato of the University of São Paulo says that the year 2013 marked the end of the PT's political hegemony. Two years later, the impeachment proceedings against Rousseff began in the Chamber of Deputies. Dilma Rousseff faced a barrage of criticism from the media and from the political opposition. By April 2016, Rousseff was impeached. The presidency was handed over to Michel Temer of the right-wing Brazilian Democratic Movement (PMDB), who has faced numerous corruption charges, including embezzlement from state institutions that totals US\$185 million. Professor Maricato says, 'the people's

movements that built the democratic cycle did not know how to renew themselves through the period'. They were outflanked by the right-wing assault on the Rousseff. 'Above all', she says, 'the people's movements were not able to convince their social base of what was actually happening in political circles. They were surprised by the mobilisations and were not able to put forward an alternative narrative and agenda.'

The new coup government put forward a plainly anti-people agenda. It pushed for an anti-worker set of labour laws that weakened trade unions and allowed for a deterioration of working conditions. It shifted away precious resources that had been allocated to social policies. It created a foreign policy that made the country dependent on foreign interests, notably in the delivery of natural resources to multi-national corporations. It changed the law so as to allow for the dismantling of the largest state-owned company – Petrobras. It criminalised popular struggles, including the political platforms of the left. In a word, they tried to undermine the social advances made by the PT governments of Rousseff and Lula since 2003.

What are the underlying motives for this blow against Brazilian democracy? What factors created a situation where presidential candidate Lula is in jail, despite his tremendous popularity among the Brazilian people and his overwhelming lead in the polls? Why are the popular movements and the trade unions committed to defending Lula and denouncing this assault on Brazil's young democracy? Our dossier, the fifth from **Tricontinental: Institute for Social Research**, attempts to answer these questions.



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# *The Pink Tide*

Beginning in 2000, progressive forces have advanced steadily across Latin America. They have taken a firm position against the Washington Consensus, a set of policies pushed by the United States of America and its allies that forced countries in Latin America to privatise their assets, deregulate their economic activities and sabotage their labour laws. The policies of the Washington Consensus led to the collapse of many economies in Latin America. That is why the 1980s is sometimes referred to as the 'lost decade' in the region. The 1990s was no better. Social inequality reigned, as military dictatorships collapsed.

A swathe of political victories opened up across Latin America from the end of the 1990s into the first decade of the 21st century. These electoral victories put in place governments that attempted to find alternatives to neoliberalism (the more general term for policies like the Washington Consensus). They wanted to put the needs of the people above those of the oligarchy and the multi-national firms. From Venezuela to Argentina, from Bolivia to Brazil, this 'pink tide' engulfed the continent.

The new governments recognised that it would not be possible to maintain their progressive direction if they limited themselves to egalitarian domestic policies that stopped at their borders.

They needed to develop a new kind of regionalism. That is why they drove an agenda for regional integration through platforms such as the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) in 2004 and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) in 2008. It is why Brazil became an important part of the India-Brazil-South Africa bloc (IBSA) and then the Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa bloc (BRICS) in the latter half of the 2000s. These platforms were designed to strengthen international relations on a regional and a South-South axis, with the express purpose of bringing the region outside of the control of the United States and its allies. Even though the BRICS alliance did not break completely with neoliberal policies, it nonetheless offered a barrier to the full-scale ambitions of the West.

Within Brazil, the PT pushed an agenda that used the opportunities afforded by the shifting class composition to make claims on behalf of the poor, though it did not fully reject neoliberalism. The PT government passed laws to formalise work and increase the minimum wage. It launched a fight against poverty, with special emphasis on ending hunger. It brought public goods such as electricity and water into the lives of millions of people. It enabled young people from working-class and precarious backgrounds to enter universities. All these policies contributed to the drop in inequality rates. What the PT did not do, however, was to tinker with the profits of the Brazilian elite and the Brazilian financial system. Nor did it confront the media monopoly. These were left intact.

Funds for the social democratic policies were to come from Petrobras, among other places. The government attempted to regain state control over Petrobras and to use its profits for internal development. Petrobras' profits would be invested for the public good in the public domain, such as research, development, and economic growth. The governments of Lula and Rousseff fought for oil exploration to be a monopoly of the state-run company Petrobras – as based on the Petroleum Law of 2012 – and not to surrender this fundamental right to foreign multi-national energy firms. Petrobras' innovative technologies allowed it to discover oil in the pre-salt layer in 2007. In reclaiming the exclusive right to oil exploration from the private sector, the PT government was able to use the higher royalties to make investments in the health and education of the Brazilian people.

At the international level, UNASUR and CELAC helped foster the growth of regional development in Latin American and collaboration across national borders by pursuing an agenda outside the interests of the United States and its allies. The BRICS bloc, despite its limitations, offered an alternative path for development and financing outside of the hegemony of the IMF and World Bank. This bank, and other BRICS-driven institutions, were designed to shift the geopolitical axis away from the West and its institutions (the IMF and the World Bank).



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# *Hybrid War*

After the 2008 Financial Crisis, the United States and its allies moved a new global offensive to regain control of a system that was rapidly moving in a multi-polar direction. Any government that acted autonomously and displayed a threat to the hegemony of the United States faced a challenge. The coup in Honduras in 2009 was the beginning of a new period for Latin America. It showed that the United States was going to use any and every means to resume control over Latin America. From Mexico to Argentina, the United States pushed to assert its power using economic and social policies as well as threats of intervention.

The United States developed a new strategy to restore its hold on Latin America – a policy of unconventional warfare. The US Special Forces' Unconventional Warfare Manual developed tactics designed 'to exploit the political, military, economic and psychological vulnerabilities of hostile powers, developing and supporting forces of resistance to achieve the strategic objectives of the United States'. The United States military has developed the concept of the 'hybrid war', one that will require a range of techniques, many of which are not limited to a conventional battlefield.

Journalist Pepe Escobar argues that the Hybrid War has been an effective strategy for US intervention in the countries that

make up the BRICS bloc. Russia, one of the bloc's strongest countries, faced an attack on its currency through an oil price war and then a 'colour revolution' in Russia itself. The encirclement of Russia and China by US military bases, as well as the movement of NATO eastwards, put pressure on these two states. However, the methods used against Brazil were much more subtle and complex. The political opposition in Brazil cannot win elections through the ballot box. Its agenda has been largely compromised. Therefore, it was beneficial to this opposition when the United States government joined its barrage to delegitimise the PT government. They used the media and the judiciary to go after the elected government.

The oligarchy used allegations of corruption to taint the government and to win the affection of the middle-class, even though it was saturated in its own corruption schemes. Social networks were utilised to sway the minds of disoriented young people into the belief that Rousseff and Lula were the most corrupt people in Brazil. Brazil was subjected to this kind of unconventional warfare by the oligarchy and their foreign backers. The coup of 2016 emerged out of this sort of hybrid war.

Professor Alexandre Aragão de Albuquerque, researcher at the Democracy and Globalization Group of the State University of Ceará (UECE), points to two simultaneous processes in the unconventional war waged against Brazil. First, the creation of legitimacy – namely, to portray the opponents of the oligarchy (in this case, Lula and Dilma) as corrupt in order to justify their

overthrow and support their adversary in the name of the ‘fight against corruption’. Second, to demonise the opponents of the oligarchy, to make them appear as the cause of all wrongs, as evil. If one’s cause is legitimate and if the opponent is evil, then the road is open to using any means against them – even a coup in parliament against a sitting president.

The onslaught against democracy is aided by the media giant Globo Network, as well as by the judiciary and the right-wing elected officials, and by mysteriously funded groups that create fake news and instigate an otherwise disengaged middle-class to help unseat a democratically elected government.

## *The Case Against Lula*

One of the methods of unconventional warfare used in Brazil has been lawfare. Lawfare is the use of the legal establishment to drive an agenda against an enemy. Major General Charles Dunlap of the US military called lawfare the ‘use of law as a weapon of war’.

Carlos Lodi, professor of law at the State University of Rio de Janeiro (UERJ) says that lawfare is the ‘process of using the law to produce political results. Opponents are removed by use of

the legal system rather than the constitutionally valid electoral process'. If you cannot get rid of a political opponent through the ballot box, then get rid of them through 'legal' means.

The instrument used for the purpose of getting rid of the PT and its leaders was Operation Car Wash, which began in 2014. It was led by Judge Sérgio Moro, who was tasked to investigate allegations of corruption in the way Petrobras gave out large contracts. It became clear, however, that Operation Car Wash would be used as a tool to carry out the political persecution of Presidents Dilma Rousseff and Lula. The political intentions of Operation Car Wash became evident when Judge Moro illegally leaked to the press the contents of a wiretap recording made of Dilma Rousseff. This leak was a violation of the laws that protect national security. The clear objective of the leak was to create a cloud of guilt surrounding Dilma Rousseff and others before the investigations had been completed. It delivered a pre-emptive moral verdict that would facilitate her impeachment and prevent her from appointing Lula as her chief of staff (in March 2016, Rousseff had appointed Lula to his post, but the Supreme Court overruled her).

The effect of Operation Car Wash on Petrobras was damaging. It weakened the company. With the assault on Petrobras, more than US \$38.5 billion was withdrawn from the Brazilian economy in 2015 alone. This impacted the entire production chain and resulted in the unemployment of four million Brazilians.



The main motive behind Operation Car Wash was to find evidence that could link Lula to corporate corruption. The investigation, which used illegal tactics such as the leaks, disfigured the judicial process. Lula had to be found guilty, regardless of the evidence. Due process and facts would not be allowed to side-track this objective. To get Lula out of the way was essential for the re-implementation of the neo-liberal agenda.

Several illegal instruments were used in this process. These include the illegal wiretapping of Lula's phone calls as well as those of his lawyers. It also included the attempt by the police to forcibly bring Lula to Curitiba to testify (this was prevented by a popular upsurge). Businessmen, who were undergoing their own trials for corruption, accused Lula of crimes without presenting evidence. They were given reduced penalties for their testimony. This quid-pro-quo of reduced sentences for their testimony should have disqualified them before the judge. But the process of Lawfare allowed their testimonies to be taken seriously. Their own motives were set aside.

Professor of Political Science Luis Felipe Miguel of the University of Brasília (UNB) describes the mechanisms used against Lula as a triangle. The first corner of the triangle is the leak of information against Lula by the Federal Police or the Ministry of Justice to the media, which was then broadcast on all the mainstream channels. The second corner came in the reverse direction. The media made accusations, which were then taken up by the judicial system to be investigated. This

legitimised the media's accusations. The third corner of the triangle emerges through the production of fake news, which grew out of various rumours and exaggerations of the leaks from the police and judicial system. This fake news circulated further on social media and whatsapp groups through caricatured images and overly simplified messages. These messages have fuelled right-wing militancy and created a toxic environment of lies and hatred. This fake news has become a substitute for the news itself.

Unable to find any evidence to incriminate former President Lula, the courts pointed their fingers at an apartment that they alleged had been given to Lula. This apartment – nicknamed Triplex – is in the city of Guarujá, on the coast of São Paulo. José Aldemário Pinheiro Filho, a former president of the Brazilian engineering conglomerate OAS, alleged that the apartment was given to Lula by the OAS in order to receive beneficial contracts from Petrobras. Pinheiro had been imprisoned for more than one year before he made this statement. During that time, he denied Lula's participation in any corruption scheme. Only after an agreement to reduce his sentence, Pinheiro accused the former president of the Triplex deal. However, there is no evidence of any such deal.

Judge Sérgio Moro sentenced Lula to prison for allegedly receiving favours in exchange for contracts and for money laundering. He used Pinheiro's accusation about the transfer of Triplex as the basis for his verdict. Moro's verdict went before a three-judge appeals court. The judges were in a hurry to find

Lula guilty. In record time, they read 250,000 pages over six days. The sociologist Emir Sader said that this is the equivalent of reading two thousand pages per hour without sleep. In this case, it is unlikely that the judges paid much attention to the details of the charge sheet.

The Superior Court of Justice denied the former President's request for habeas corpus, the right to remain free till the court makes its decision. Based on a decision of the Supreme Federal Court, Judge Sérgio Moro filed an arrest warrant for Lula. He would have to be in prison while the case made its way through the courts. Currently, Lula's case is in the Supreme Federal Court. Lula's imprisonment is an attempt to erode his image. It is also part of the attempt to prevent him from being the candidate of the PT in the October election. If Lula were to be re-elected as the president, he would certainly slow down the attempt by the oligarchy and the United States to realign Brazil to the requirements of US hegemony and international corporations.

On Saturday, April 7, Lula was at the headquarters of the Metalworkers' Union of ABC. This is the union that played a decisive role in Brazil's return to democracy from the worst days of military dictatorship. It was led, at that time, by Lula. It was from this office – a symbol of democracy – that Lula was handed over to be arrested by the courts, which has increasingly become the symbol of the oligarchy. Thousands of people gathered to prevent Lula's arrest. He was carried by them to the waiting authorities.



Giorgia Prates/Brasil de Fato

# *The Defence of Lula*

Lula is accused of owning an apartment donated to him by the contractor OAS. According to the Brazilian Front of Lawyers for Democracy (Frente Brasil de Juristas pela Democracia), a group of lawyers that formed to combat the coup and defend people's rights, there are no witnesses to prove that Lula owns this property. What is confirmed, however, is that Lula visited the apartment once. No more than that. The crime, however, is not that Lula has an apartment. The crime is that he is said to have received the apartment as payment for giving a favourable contract to a company. This is known as an act of passive corruption. To find Lula guilty, Judge Moro would have to identify the specific favour that Lula allegedly awarded in exchange for the apartment. However, as professor of law Carlos Lodi explained, Judge Moro was not able to prove that Lula participated in any collusion with OAS or that he negotiated on their behalf with Petrobras. There are no documents that show that the apartment belongs to Lula.

Judge Moro's sentence ignores the testimony of 73 defence witnesses who said Lula had not taken the apartment. He took only the views of two defendants who had already been convicted and who had changed their original testimony in order to receive lighter sentences. Lula's lawyers questioned the proceedings, pointing out the gaps in the evidence. Judge Moro responded that it was not necessary to prove that Lula was

the owner of Triplex or that the construction and remodelling of the property was paid for with resources diverted from Petrobras. It is worth pointing out that it was this last allegation – that funds had been diverted from Petrobras to remodel the apartment – that shifted the lawsuit from the São Paulo court and brought it to the chambers of Judge Sérgio Moro. Lula was condemned without evidence. It is sufficient evidence, it seems, that the judiciary and the mainstream media believed him to be guilty. Facts were not necessary.

The coup that began with the impeachment of President Dilma Rousseff in 2016 has now morphed into an attempt to prevent Lula from running in the 2018 presidential election. This is a clear attack on Brazil's democracy. As the journalist Ivana Jinkings said, 'the arrest of former President Lula has become a symbol for the dismantling of Brazilian democracy'.

# *The ‘Soft Coup’ in Perspective*

The attempt to prevent Lula from running for the presidency in 2018 has two main objectives.

First, it aims to deprive the Brazilian people of their right to decide who will govern them. Second, it aims to realign Brazil's politics away from a democratic and popular set of policies towards a political agenda that is friendly to the financial markets and to US hegemony.

The second point, the realignment of Brazil's relations to business and other countries, has three main vectors:

1. Unconditional alignment to the United States in all international forums, from the United Nations to the Organisation of American States.
2. Unrestricted adherence to neoliberal globalisation.
3. The instalment of a government that will acquiesce to US interests, including the international campaign to undermine the Bolivarian Revolution, first in Venezuela and then elsewhere in Latin America.

The ‘soft coup’ in Brazil is part of the US’ continued role as the main agent of destabilization in Latin America. It has, since

the coup in Honduras in 2009, felt emboldened to pressure governments to overturn the Bolivarian dynamic. The bulls-eye is on Venezuela (see **Tricontinental Dossier no.4**). Under US pressure, the militaries of Brazil, Colombia and Peru – as part of the AmazonLog 17 joint exercises – have amassed at the borders of Venezuela. As Ana Esther Ceceña of the Latin American Geopolitical Observatory notes, this siege on Venezuela is part of the attempt to end the wave of progressive governments across Latin America.

Since the ‘soft coup’ of 2016, the new agenda that has been put forward has dismantled social and economic rights that have been earned by the people through their struggles. It has, furthermore, broken the pact established when the dictatorship ended in Brazil in 1985. This pact was established in the Constitution of 1988. It is now in shreds.

The most visible examples of the broken pact are in the ‘reforms’ put forward by the Temer administration on labour law and social security. The outcome of these reforms promises to be horrendous. There will be even more unemployed people in Brazil – the number is now thirteen million unemployed. Hunger and poverty will increase. The infant mortality rate, which was at historic lows, is predicted to rise. Meanwhile, the government promises to freeze investment in areas such as health and education for the next twenty years.

The Temer administration has offered great benefits to the multi-national corporations and to the oligarchy. There is a



major shift underway with the Petroleum Exploration Law – particularly regarding the pre-salt oil discovery. Now Petrobras, the state-owned oil company, will cease to be the sole operator of these resources. The previous law had ensured that at least thirty per cent of the stake for a contract to prospect for oil would remain in the hands of Petrobras. The new proposals will reduce the minimum national ownership for development in this sector – a move that will benefit foreign oil companies as they bid for rights to oil and gas exploration.

The shift in the Law of Exploitation of Natural Resources to benefit foreign companies illustrates a shift in Brazil's foreign policy as it submits to the political and economic demands of the United States of America.



Giorgia Prates/Brasil de Fato

# *Lula as Symbol*

Lula is a living symbol that the working-class can attain power. That is what this metalworker has come to represent in Brazil. The struggles of the working-class are now wrapped up in the defence of Lula's right to be a candidate in the presidential elections. This battle is the culmination of the fight for free and democratic elections in 2018, the fight to defeat the forces behind the coup, and the fight to reverse the neoliberal reforms implemented by Temer's administration.

The workers know this. The Federation of Petroleum Workers is part of one of the largest trade union federations in the country - Central Única dos Trabalhadores. These workers have made it clear that they believe that Lula's arrest is directly related to the attempt by the coup government to surrender Brazilian oil to foreign capital. This surrender has a direct impact on their jobs and on national development. Assemblies of workers from the oil industries have ratified strikes against the destruction of Petrobras, set off by the privatisation of its refineries. They have also called for strikes to defend Lula. In addition to the Federation of Petroleum Workers, the Popular Front of Brazil – a coalition of various popular movements, trade unions and leftist political parties – has built popular committees in defence of Lula and to defend freedom and democracy. The Front has mobilised people to denounce the on-going coup.

In a letter to the Brazilian people, the Movement of Rural Landless Workers (MST or Movimento Sem Terra in Portuguese) declared its support for Lula's presidential candidacy. The MST understands that this defence is part of the struggle against the coup regime. It sees this struggle as part of the hopes of the Brazilian people to emerge from the current crisis of legitimacy in Brazil. The MST letter points out that there are identifiable culprits for this crisis:

1. Finance capital.
2. The media – especially Globo Network.
3. The Judiciary.

Social tensions are on the rise. The monsters of Hatred and Neo-Fascism are on the loose. They are the children of the Globo Network, the judiciary and the conservatives. The assassination of the popular militant and councillor of Rio de Janeiro Marielle Franco (from the Socialism and Liberty Party or PSOL) cannot be understood outside the framework of this tension. Marielle Franco denounced the outrages of the State and against the genocide against Afro-Brazilians. This cost Marielle Franco her life.

Before Lula was arrested, he campaigned across the country against the coup government. In March 2018, Lula's caravan was fired upon in Parana. The Encampment of Maria Letícia was also fired upon in April 2018. This is the climate in Brazil

today. In neither case have the culprits been identified. Nor has there been any movement in the investigation of the killing of Marielle Franco.

The number of people who participate in the Marisa Letícia Encampment continues to increase. Caravans arrive from all across the country. People from the areas surrounding the Encampment had at first been hostile to its presence. But slowly, they have come to see its merits. They now participate in it with various acts of solidarity – allowing the participants to use their bathrooms and to wash their clothes, giving them food and participating in the cultural events and the debates. Their hostility has now melted into solidarity. This is what the future looks like: not like a coup government, but like the Marisa Letícia Encampment.





Giorgia Prates/Brasil de Fato

## *MST Letter to the Brazilian People*

Brazil is experiencing a deep economic, political, social and environmental crisis as a result of the international crisis of capitalism and the inability of this system to solve the contradictions it generates. In this context, authoritarian solutions, such as coup d'états and attacks on democracy, have been the formula adopted to guarantee the implementation of a violent neoliberal offensive that removes the rights of the workers while at the same time hijacks and subordinates the State to the interests of large business groups.

In order to confront them, it is necessary to have clarity and to identify who is responsible for this crisis and the political instability in which we live:

1. International financial capital.
2. The media, especially Rede Globo, which fed and inflated the coup-mongers and fascist movements.
3. The Judiciary, which, on the one hand, places its own interests and privileges above the Constitution, and, on the other hand, rewards with impunity all repression and violence against the poor.

This moment demands the unity of the progressive forces in the action and effort to build a Popular Project for Brazil that is able to face the structural problems of our country:

1. The struggle against misery and unemployment.
2. The need to resume development.
3. The need to build housing and confront the issue of urban mobility.
4. The need to guarantee free access to quality healthcare and education.
5. The need to carry out agrarian reform in the countryside.
6. The need to protect natural resources as a common good and to prevent their privatization.
7. The need to regain national sovereignty.

That is why we call on Brazilian society as a whole to build upon and participate in the Congress of the Brazilian People. This Congress is organised by the Brazil Popular Front. It is intended to be the space for discussion about the country's problems and to create organisational forms to take the structural measures necessary to overcome them.

We also reaffirm our conviction of the innocence of President



Lula. We defend his right to run in the presidential elections. And we demand his freedom from his political imprisonment that resulted from an illegal and illegitimate process.

For all these reasons, the Landless Rural Workers' Movement publicly declares its support for Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva's candidacy for president, since we understand that his candidacy represents the struggle against the coup as well as the aspirations of the Brazilian people for change in this scenario of crisis that plagues us all.

We do not forget our comrade Marielle as well as so many young, poor victims of repression. May Marielle's example in life continue to inspire young people, women and workers in these times of repression and authoritarianism. In her memory, not one moment of silence, but the commitment and struggle of the workers and landless rural workers against the coup, against the withdrawal of rights and freedom, for a more just, equitable and sovereign country!

Free Lula!

Marielle Lives!

To Fight, To Build Popular Agrarian Reform!

—*National Directorate of the Landless Rural Workers' Movement*

São Paulo, May 12 2018.



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## *Popular Brazil Front's Declaration to the Brazilian People*

1. A man is being persecuted because he has proved – along with the Brazilian people – that it is possible to build a society that is more emancipated, more just and more decent. This man is Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, the first president of the people, the defender of the workers and the poor. The people suffer from unemployment, low wages, the revocation of their historical rights, from the dismantlement of policies that helped overcome hunger and reduce poverty. The persecutors want to deny the people the right to freely vote for the person who represents their interests.

2. Lula is being persecuted by sections of the Judicial System, notably the Federal Court, the Public Prosecutor's Office and the special unit associated with Operation Car Wash. He is being persecuted as well by TRF-4 and the Globo Group, the most powerful and oppressive media in the country. The purpose of this arbitrary and illegal persecution is to prevent people from voting for Lula.

3. They do not merely want to arrest Lula. They want to arrest the causes that he represents and defends: social inclusion and the promotion of the rights of the people, notably women, children, blacks, indigenous people, the LGBT population, people with special needs; the provision of living wages and the generation of jobs; support for small and medium-sized

enterprises, family farming and agrarian reform; the defense of national sovereignty and the construction of a more equal and fairer country.

4. To exclude Lula from the presidential elections, they spread lies and move an arbitrary process – accusing him of unproven crimes, despite the fact that Lula has always acted within the law. They want to condemn him, without evidence. They have no qualms about violating the most elementary constitutional guarantees and violating the most fundamental democratic principles.

5. Lula is innocent. He continues to challenge Operation Car Wash, to prove that he has never received any illicit money from anyone. They wiretap his phone calls, they violate the privacy of his bank accounts, they force him to illegally testify, they prevent his defense, they violate the privacy of his children, and they accept the negotiated statements of criminals. Yet, they have found no evidence of crime. Lula has already proved his innocence.

6. Lula fulfilled the illegal and arbitrary arrest warrant on April 7, 2018 because he had made a commitment to Brazil and to the Brazilian people. He received offers of asylum from other states, but chose to stay here and face his lying accusers. He believes that justice will be done. He awaits his judgment.

7. Even in jail, Lula is the candidate for the presidency of the Republic. He will not passively see his country being

administered with economic, political and social incompetence. He does not accept the delivery of national assets to private interests so that Brazilian sovereignty becomes compromised. The agents of the coup – including the Globo Group – want to keep Lula in prison and remove him from the elections. But the people, the law and the Constitutions are on Lula's side.

8. Electoral law guarantees that Lula can be the presidential candidate of his party and that his candidacy can be registered with his name on the ballot and with the campaign for votes. The Electoral Court will decide on his eligibility. Globo commentators do not interpret the law in the courts. They do not represent Brazil. They just repeat the voices of their owners.

9. Lula maintains his faith in Brazil, which can once again become one of the world's largest economies, which can grow and create jobs. He believes that the Brazilian people can regain their self-esteem, national sovereignty and take decisions in their own interests.

10. To do so, it is necessary to reclaim the national industry, rescue the strategic role of Petrobras, preserve Eletrobrás and preserve the public banks. It is necessary to invest more in education, science, technology and research, so that Brazil can be internationally competitive once more. It is necessary to reinstate social programmes that guarantee income transfer, support to family agriculture, agrarian reform, popular housing, as well as the policy of increasing wages, so that the people can participate and reap the fruits of economic growth.

11. Brazil will only come out of the deep crisis through free and democratic elections. All political forces and all candidates – including Lula – must be allowed to participate. Only when we have a government with legitimacy could Brazil become once more a just country. At that point, we need to have a debate about the creation of a new non-monopoly form of media, with democratic access to information and to a democratic means of expression.

12. Brazil wants to be a country where the rights of all are recognised, in which hatred and prejudice are set aside and in which the violence against the poor, blacks, women, peasants and the indigenous – people such as Marielle Franco and Anderson Pedro Gomes – is abolished.

13. Brazil wants to return to being a country of hope. It wants to be the country of fraternity, of respect for differences, of an international dialogue for peace – as it was when Lula was the president. It wants to have confidence in the present and hope for the future.

For free and democratic elections!

Free Lula!

Marielle Present!

For Lula's right to be a candidate!

For the right of the people to vote freely!

—*Popular Brazil Front*



Giorgia Prates/Brasil de Fato

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