
Brazil President Temer faces impeachment calls as bribery accusations emerge

18/05/2017



Brazilian President Michel Temer is facing mounting impeachment calls from politicians and the public, who are outraged over alleged secret payoffs. It comes less than a year after the impeachment of ex-leader Dilma Rousseff, also over corruption claims.

Prosecutors have reportedly been provided with recordings in which Joesley Batista, one of the two brothers who run the country's biggest meat-packing company, JBS, tells President Temer he makes payments to the jailed politician Eduardo Cunha to keep him quiet over corruption allegations.

Temer is reportedly heard replying, "You have to keep it going, OK?" according to O Globo newspaper, which didn't disclose how it had received the information.

Temer's office released a statement on Wednesday denying the claims: "President Michel Temer never solicited payments to obtain the silence of former deputy Eduardo Cunha. He neither participated nor authorized any activity with the objective of preventing testimonies or cooperation with justice officials by the parliamentarian."

[Brazil: Thousands rally as Temer taped endorsing bribes to silence graft witness](#)

Cunha was a powerful member of the same ruling Brazilian Democratic Movement party as acting President Temer, and was believed to be the mastermind behind the impeachment of former Brazilian leader Rousseff.

Cunha has previously said he had compromising information about several senior politicians linked to a vast political bribery scandal at state oil firm Petrobras.

O Globo also reported that security forces allegedly have audio and video proof that Temer aide Rocha Loures received weekly \$160,000 payoffs for decades, supposedly for having helped JBS deal with a fair trade issue.

The tapes also implicate several other politicians, including former presidential candidate Aécio Neves and ex-Finance Minister Guido Mantega, the newspaper reported.

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While no audio or transcripts have been released, the reports have led to widespread outrage among the public. When the claims were shown on TV, shouts and pot-banging – a common form of protest in Brazil – could be heard among protesters, with crowds chanting, “*Temer out.*”

Several politicians also voiced their anger, with two congressmen submitting impeachment motions to the country’s lower house. It’s not the first time that Temer-linked figures have been entangled in a political scandal. Three of his ministers have resigned, while eight others have been linked to a massive corruption scandal branded the ‘Car Wash’ case.

Temer’s predecessor Rousseff was ousted last year over bribery accusations.

Following the removal of Rousseff, it has appeared difficult for Temer to win the public’s trust, with thousands of protesters regularly taking to the streets, especially over a controversial bill set to freeze government spending on healthcare, education, pensions, infrastructure, and defense until 2037, adopted back in November.

Rousseff repeatedly slammed Temer during an Al Jazeera interview in December, calling him “*a traitor*” and “*illegitimate.*”