

Beef with Temer: 'Brazilian President's supporters jumping ship, his days are numbered'

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The owner of one of the biggest beef exporting businesses in the world is testifying against Brazil's President Michel Temer, and this shows the scale of public dissatisfaction, Latin America expert James Petras, from Binghamton University, told RT.

The Brazilian capital has been in the grip of violent unrest with police deploying tear gas, rubber bullets and pepper spray against protesters.

The reason behind these mass demonstrations is the policy of current President Michel Temer, who came into power last summer as a result of the impeachment of elected President Dilma Rousseff.

One of his main promises was to fight corruption and improve Brazil's struggling economy. However, the economy continues to worsen while corruption is out of control.

Public discontent exploded last week when Temer found himself at the center of a bribery scandal.

[@RT.com](https://on.rt.com/8c9u) [Thousands rally across #Brazil as pressure builds on #Temer to step down \(VIDEO\) https://on.rt.com/8c9u pic.twitter.com/CkZhbQ2sBI](https://pic.twitter.com/CkZhbQ2sBI)



RT: *Many in Brazil are demanding President Temer's impeachment. How likely is that to happen?*

James Petras: I think it is very likely. It is a question of time, whether it is weeks or a few months, Temer is on his way out. He has taken power illegally by the opinion of most people. His seizure of power with the impeachment of the previous president. He is engaged in a large-scale privatization program, which alienates nationalists. Unemployment has doubled in the last four months. He has been involved deeply in corruption scandals involving his cabinet ministers, his closest supporters in Congress. I think the combination of corruption, social and economic problems with the labor force, employment situation and finally the fact that he is not an elected president, the fact that he was able to manipulate Congress to secure the impeachment. I think all these factors together, and his stubbornness in owning up to the corruption has finally turned the tide. I don't think he has more than 10 percent of the electorate at this time.

[@RT.com](https://on.rt.com/8cmu) BREAKING: Police uses tear gas, stun grenades in clashes with protesters in Brazil (WATCH LIVE)
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RT: *Last week a tape was released discussing payments to silence testimony by a potential witness in the country's biggest-ever corruption probe. Was that the last straw for those calling for Temer's ouster?*

JP: The corruption investigation is proceeding. I think we have to take into account that the principal witness taped the interviews with Temer, and the person engaged as one of the biggest capitalists owning one of the biggest beef exporting businesses in the world. The fact that he is testifying against Temer on the basis of his own personal experience weighs heavily. The fact that many of Temer's strongest supporters are jumping ship, that he doesn't have a supporting party outside of his narrow circles. I think that is the end of the trail. I think Temer is holding on because he has the backing of international financial groups; he has the backing of many of the elites that have been involved in the stock market, but nobody else. I think that is not enough to stay in power. The sooner he realizes the quicker we will turn to what will replace Temer, and that is a struggle between the Congress, where the conservative forces exercise a majority, or whether they will open to a new election, in which case the center-left, the Workers' Party may have a strong chance of reelecting a new president.

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Dr. Francisco Dominguez, Head of Latin American Studies at Middlesex University

RT: *Many in Brazil are demanding President Temer's impeachment. How likely is that to happen?*

Francisco Dominguez: The government is imploding, and the level of corruption is just unbelievable. The people are very angry. They were taken away their right to vote for the president that they elected due to the coup - or the '*impeachment*' as they call it over there. Now the people, who were supposed to be fighting Dilma Rousseff because of corruption, are absolutely corrupt themselves. The level of corruption is really reaching incredible levels. People around him, everybody, including Aecio Neves, the Presidential candidate, who disputed the presidency as a candidate with Dilma Rousseff is also centrally involved. People are being imprisoned, people are being arrested, and the amount of money that is being mentioned in the media is very partial in many respects... The government is unlikely to survive, regardless of whether there is violence or not. The mass protest is going to be so powerful from now on, and the people will not settle for anything else, but direct elections.

The statements, views and opinions expressed in this column are solely those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of RT.
