
Brazil: Electoral Authorities Ban Lula From Presidential Race

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The electoral tribunal opted to ignore the UN's legally binding demand that Lula's political rights be respected and he be allowed to run for the presidency.

Brazil's Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE) has voted to ban former President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva from running in the next presidential elections during a special session brought forward more than two weeks.

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The magistrate Luis Barroso, who was leading the case, was the first to vote against Lula's right to postulate late Friday, arguing respect for Brazil's constitution.

Minister Edson Fachin later voted in favor of Lula, on the grounds of the UN Human Rights Committee's legally binding [demand](#) to guarantee political rights for Lula, let him run in the elections and even campaign from prison if necessary.

Fachin said an international agreement couldn't be violated by a court. Barroso, on the other hand, decided to dismiss it. Fachin was the only one to vote in

Lula's favor.

Judge Admar Gonzaga, who as a lawyer worked for Lula's handpicked successor Dilma Rousseff during her 2010 election, cast the decisive vote in the 6-1 decision that sealed the leftist icon's ejection from the presidential election.

"What is at stake here today is the equality of all citizens before the law and the Constitution," Judge Og Fernandes told the court in his vote to declare Lula ineligible.

The trial was brought forward more than two weeks at the request of Barrosos, who said he preferred "the list of candidates to be defined before the beginning of the cost-free propaganda period."

Barroso also said Lula's sentence is not based on innocence or guilt, but rather on the fact that he was convicted of a crime – unjustly or not –which legally prevents him from running in the elections.

vigil outside the Federal Police Superintendence in Curitiba, Brazil August 31, 2018. Photo | Reuters

But it's not all over for Lula. The Workers' Party (PT) and the former president's defense team can still appeal to the Supreme Court. Another alternative is to postulate an alternate president and vice-president formula, but that could limit PT's chances.

Lula enjoys about 39 percent of the vote intention in most polls, the most recent by Datafolha, leaving far behind right-wing Jair Bolsonaro with 19 percent.

Lula has been associating his name with Fernando Haddad, who is currently the vice-presidential candidate and would replace Lula if the need ultimately arose, transfer the vote intention.

The party has until Sept. 17 to change the names on the ballot, but the court has given it just 10 days to make the alteration.

Ads by the Workers Party calling on Brazilians to vote for Lula began to appear on social media on Friday, and will be shown on television as of Saturday when the race enters its final 35 days of campaigning.

The court also ruled that Lula should not appear in Workers Party television and radio ads campaign until the ticket has been officially altered to remove him.

The court on Thursday had rejected another request by opponents of Lula to exclude his name from opinion polls.
