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Bolsonaro says torture methods of dictatorship can be used to fight corruption

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13/12/2019



Brasilia, December 13 (RHC)-- The president of Brazil, Jair Bolsonaro, says that he will not tolerate cases of corruption in his government and to deal with this, he said -- in an apparent metaphorical sense -- that he would use an instrument of torture of the military dictatorship with ministers who commit this type of crime.

In an official act in Palma, capital of the state of Tocantins (north), the far-right president cited the term "pau de arara," a torture technique that involves putting a person hanging on a stick, tied hand and foot, with the intention of showing determination in the fight against corruption.

"Could there be corruption in my Government? Yes, there might be. There may be and the government does not know," Bolsonaro said during his speech. "If it appears (corruption), I will place the minister in the 'pau de arara.' If he has a responsibility, obviously, because sometimes, at the end of the line, there is an advisor doing nonsense without our knowing it. It is our obligation and duty," he added.

"Pau de arara," which literally means "macaw stick," was used by the intelligence agencies of the Brazilian military regime as a method of torture to interrogate detainees and political prisoners.

Currently, there is an ongoing investigation against Tourism Minister Marcelo Alvaro Antonio, formally accused of electoral fraud by the Prosecutor's Office, although Bolsonaro has kept him in office.

Bolsonaro, who on January 1st will complete a year in power, is a captain of the Army reserve, leader of the Brazilian far-right and defends the military dictatorship. He also denies the existence of the coup that gave rise to 21 years of a military government.

This is not the first time that the government has made controversial comments on this bloody episode of the country's history. In August, he called the late Colonel Carlos Alberto Brilhante Ustra a "national hero." He was head in Sao Paulo of the Army organization accused of torturing a number of political prisoners to death during the dictatorship.

On another occasion, he questioned the official truth about the disappearance and death of an activist during that period. He also changed the majority of the members that make up the Special Commission on Political Deaths and Disappeared Persons (Cemdp) during the dictatorship by like-minded politicians and military because, he said, the government is now "right-wing."

In March, the Bolsonaro government decided to "commemorate" the anniversary of the coup that gave rise to the regime.

According to a report prepared by a Truth Commission that investigated the human rights violations committed during that period, the dictatorship left hundreds dead and disappeared for political reasons and thousands of cases of torture.

Edited by Ed Newman

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