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Rousseff: Brazilian Society Will Not Accept a “Breakdown” of Democracy

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“Stop looking for a third electoral round. The elections are over and a third round won’t happen, unless someone wants a breakdown of our democracy,” she told reporters after a public event at the presidential palace.

The president, who won a second term in a runoff last October, was referring to the demonstrations being promoted for next Sunday by opposition groups that say Rousseff should be impeached for her supposed responsibility for the corruption scandal at Petrobras and for the fragile state of the nation’s economy.

With regard to the protests, Rousseff noted the difference between those demanding that she stand a political trial in court from those engaged in loud pot-banging Sunday night in cities around the country while she was giving a nationally broadcast speech to mark International Woman’s Day.

“In Brazil, people can demonstrate and have the right to do so,” the president said, adding that she herself comes “from a time when people who protested ended up in jail or were tortured and killed,” an allusion to the 1964-1985 military regime that brutalized its opponents, including a young Dilma Rousseff.

“The fact that Brazil went through that democratic process and guarantees the right to protest is very valuable to all of us,” she said.

The head of state again defended the austerity program promoted by her government to eliminate a budget deficit and said that she is also aiming at restarting growth of an economy that is currently bordering on recession.

“The country would be very wise to understand that stability is essential” and that it is necessary “to calm all our conflicts,” since Brazil now faces a “deeper phase of the international economic crisis,” Rousseff said.

Earlier Monday, the president’s Workers Party, or PT, said opposition parties “orchestrated” the pot-banging protests during her speech.

The pot-banging and booing were heard in upper- and middle-class neighborhoods in at least 12 state capitals Sunday night.

The protests were a “coup-oriented orchestration and were started mainly by sectors of the bourgeoisie and the upper middle class,” PT vice chairman Alberto Cantalice said in a statement accusing opposition parties of organizing and financing the demonstrations.

The protests, according to the PT, were a failure, since they didn’t spread to the whole population and were particularly absent in “popular districts.”

Unions and social movements that support the government are organizing marches on Friday “in defense of the rights of the working class, of Petrobras, of democracy and political reform.”

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