
Brazil Committee Votes on Rousseff Impeachment

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A 21-member special committee in Brazil's Senate is debating whether or not to continue impeachment measures against President Dilma Rousseff and is widely expected to send Senator Antonio Anastasia's recommendation that the impeachment charges against Rousseff are serious enough to remove her from office to the full chamber.

The Senate, which is controlled by the opposition, is due to vote on May 11 on whether to try Rousseff, at which point she will be automatically suspended during a trial that could last up to 180 days.

Senate chief Renan Calheiros will have 48 hours to oversee a vote in the Senate.

Five senators, who make up nearly one quarter of the committee, are involved in the Petrobras state oil corruption probe known as Operation Car Wash that has been at the center of the country's fraud scandals for the past two years.

Of the 21-member committee set to vote Friday on whether to recommend Rousseff's impeachment, over half, or 12 officials, face charges for corruption and other crimes, according to data from Transparencia Brasil analyzed by teleSUR.

President Rousseff, however, has not been implicated in the scandal and the impeachment charges brought against her are related to the management of the state's bank accounts.

"All previous presidents used the same practices as I, identical to mine ... What is up for consideration is an indirect election, disguised as an impeachment," said Rousseff Friday.

Vice President Michel Temer, who is under investigation for his role in the scandal, would take over as acting president.

Rousseff called her vice president an "accomplice" of what she has deemed a coup attempt.

Temer and his party, the PMDB, has already floated ideas for his government's political program.

Rousseff said Temer lacked the legitimacy to implement a political program that was rejected by voters in the last presidential election in 2014 that saw Rousseff re-elected for a second term.

The Brazilian president reminded the public that the impeachment process was driven by the former president of the Chamber of Deputies, Eduardo Cunha, who was unanimously suspended from his post by the Supreme Court for using his position to obstruct investigations against him.

Rousseff said Cunha "blackmailed" her party, threatening to begin impeachment proceedings if her Workers' Party failed to back him in his effort to avoid an investigation into his allegedly illegal activities.

Cunha faces accusations of money laundering and hiding illicitly gained money in foreign bank accounts.
