



Brazil's Supreme Court Slaps Jan. 8 Protesters With 17-year Sentence

There are strong parallels between the heated political climates of the United States and Brazil.

On Thursday, the Latin American country's highest court — the Supreme Federal Tribunal (STF) — gave 17-year sentences to two of the first defendants to be implicated in the January 8 Brasilia riot that took place at key federal buildings (such as the National Congress Building).

Like January 6, 2021 in the U.S., January 8, 2023 in Brazil has been treated by the political establishment and by Brazil's current leftist government as an “attempted coup d’etat” and “attempted abolition of the democratic rule of law,” as noted by [Breitbart News](#).

The two defendants in question were part of a crowd of thousands of supporters of former President Jair Bolsonaro, who were at the governmental buildings in Brazil's capital to protest what they believed to be a stolen election that removed the right-wing Bolsonaro in favor of Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva of the left-wing Workers' Party.

Breitbart reported of the defendants:

Aécio Lúcio Costa Pereira, 51, was identified as part of a crowd of thousands of supporters of conservative former President Jair Bolsonaro who stormed the Brazilian Congress, STF headquarters, and office of the presidency in January in large part due to videos Pereira himself published on social media in which he documented the chaos in the capital.

“For those who didn't believe it, we're here,” he said in one of his social media videos, wearing a shirt reading “military intervention now.” “It will work. Don't give up, get on the streets.”

The court processed Pereira alongside two other defendants: 43-year-old Já Thiago de Assis Mathar and 24-year-old Matheus Lima de Carvalho Lázaro. Like Pereira, Lima de Carvalho was sentenced to 17 years in prison. Mathar received a 14-year prison sentence, lower than the others because he did not publish videos online or use social media to encourage more people to join the riot.

The defendants were also ordered to pay a fine of 30 million reais (\$6.15 million) for property damage.



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It is anticipated that there will be hundreds of criminal cases related to January 8. As with January 6 in



Written by [Luis Miguel](#) on September 17, 2023

the United States, the events of the Brazilian riot allowed the government to effectively shut down doubts about the legitimacy of the presidential election, which had until then been expressed through peaceful protests throughout the country.

Bolsonaro lost to Lula narrowly by the lowest margin for a presidential election in decades. Some of Bolsonaro's supporters claimed there was evidence of mass voter fraud, such as a statement in November by Brazil's armed forces about a "possible security risk" that could have compromised the results of the race.

Still others made the argument that Lula, who was president from 2003 to 2010, was not qualified to be on the ballot in the first place, as he was convicted of corruption in 2017 (and served prison time) for allegedly leveraging the office of the presidency to enrich himself — thus making him ineligible to run for president under Brazilian law.

In 2021, STF overturned his conviction without presenting evidence of his innocence — allowing him to run, and eventually win, on a technicality.

Although the Left has referred to the events of January 8 as a "coup," Bolsonaro supporters argue their calls for military intervention are based on a provision in the Brazilian Constitution that can be used to prevent a president's inauguration "to curb a serious compromise of public order, to maintain national integrity, to repel a foreign invasion," along with several other reasons.

Thus far, the office of Brazil's attorney general has charged 1,390 individuals in relation to the Brasilia riot.

In addition, as *The New American* previously reported, a seven-judge panel banned Bolsonaro from running for office until 2030, thereby killing his chances of a 2026 challenge to Lula. The Superior Electoral Tribunal (TSE) accused Bolsonaro of spreading "misinformation" about voter fraud.

"This is an injustice against me, my God in heaven! Show me something concrete I have done against democracy. Perhaps my crime was doing the right thing for four years," Bolsonaro said of the decision. He has said he will appeal, but even if he succeeds there are 15 more cases pending against him, any one of which could result in another ban.

The news out of Brazil comes shortly after some of those charged with January 6-related offenses in America have been slapped with similar sentences.

For example, Joe Biggs, a Proud Boy leader convicted of seditious conspiracy for allegedly serving as an "instigator and leader" of the Capitol riot, was sentenced to [17 years](#) in federal prison last month.

Enrique Tarrio, former Proud Boys chairman, was sentenced to 22 years for his involvement in January 6.

Rather than compete in the realm of ideas and policy, the Left, both in the United States and abroad, is more interested in silencing political dissent by imprisoning opponents and censoring criticism.



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