

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Technical note

Anti-democratic Attacks in Brasilia

Sao Paulo

January 8, 2023

At approximately 3 PM on January 8, 2023, the National Congress, the Planalto Palace (the headquarters of the Brazilian executive), and the Supreme Federal Court building were attacked by vandals opposed to the result of the 2022 elections. The buildings, designed by renowned Brazilian architect Oscar Niemeyer, which are symbols of Brazil's democracy, were attacked and damaged until the Federal District security forces intervened, having been slow to act because Anderson Torres (former Minister of Justice, then Secretary of Public Security in the Federal District) was out of the country, creating a lack of leadership and coordination in the security forces. The attack is being compared with the attack on the Capitol after Donald Trump's defeat in the USA and has been reported nationally and internationally.

IMMEDIATE CONSEQUENCES

Soon after the invasions in Brasilia, President Lula, who was in Sao Paulo state, blamed former president Bolsonaro and the political authorities in the Federal District, declaring a federal intervention in Public Security in the Federal District. So, the state security forces will report to Ricardo Cappelli, and no longer to the state authorities. This needs to be confirmed by the National Congress.

This was only one of the direct consequences. Others include:

- Meetings between lawmakers and senators have been convened to address the topic, even though they are in recess.
 - Soon after the act came into force, the Secretary of Public Security in the Federal District, Anderson Torres, was removed by the State Governor.
 - The Attorney General's Office asked the Supreme Court
- to arrest of Anderson Torres, and several protesters. It also demanded digital platforms and social media channels demonetize content that supports anti-democratic acts.
 - The Minister of Justice, Flavio Dino, and Senator Randolfe Rodrigues, said they will request the immediate withdrawal of protesters camped near other public buildings and army barracks.
 - Applications have been made to the Audit Court to survey the extent and value of the damage caused, so that those responsible are held civilly and financially liable, as several historical works of art and furniture have been damaged or destroyed.

- The army has put 2,500 men on standby.
- The STF, in the figure of Minister Alexandre de Moraes, ordered the removal of the Governor of the DF, Ibaneis Rocha, for a period of 90 days, due to alleged connivance and incompetence in the management of the attacks perpetrated on the country's constitutional order.

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INTERNATIONAL REACTION

Soon after the beginning of the attacks, international leaders began to condemn them and reiterate their support for Brazil's institutions and democracy. Among the main messages were:

Gabriel Boric, President of Chile: "The government of Brazil has our full support in the face of this cowardly and vile attack on democracy."

Pedro Sanchez, Prime Minister of Spain demonstrates "all his support for President Lula and the institutions freely and democratically elected by the Brazilian people."

Antony Blinken, Secretary of State for the US Government, said he supports President Lula in adopting measures that put an end to these actions.

President Gustavo Petro of Colombia said there is an urgent need to convene an OAS meeting to discuss the prevention of anti-democratic acts in the region.

Ignacio Ybanez, the European Union's ambassador to Brazil, said he is following the developments with great concern and declared all his support for Brazilian institution.