



[Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, Former President of Brazil, Released from Prison](#)

Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, former President of Brazil, was released from prison last week after spending the previous 580 days behind bars. Lula, as he is known in Brazil, was jailed on a corruption conviction while leading the polls in Brazil's most recent election that culminated in far-right candidate Jair Bolsonaro coming to power. Lula has alleged that his accusers are politically motivated, and a large part of Bolsonaro's campaign was ran on slamming Lula and his Workers' Party for being corrupt. Lula was released from prison on the back of a Supreme Court ruling that people could remain free until all of their appeal options had been exhausted. Lula remains locked in court battles over multiple cases, including the purchase of a beachfront apartment. Should he lose the cases, Lula will be re-imprisoned.

Lula first came to power on the support of the working class in Brazil, particularly the metalworker's union. He helped to found the Workers' Party in the 1980's, which was the first major socialist party in Brazil. Lula initially won the Presidency in 2003 after three failed runs. He was the President during a time of huge economic growth for Brazil, and he spent lavishly on social programs. Estimates show that his administration elevated between 30 and 40 million Brazilians out of poverty. Lula served for two terms, the maximum allowed in Brazil, and stepped down in 2011 with record high approval ratings. Dilma Rousseff succeeded him as President, and although he was a strong ally of Lula, his administration was unable to replicate the success of his predecessor. Lula ran for President again in the 2018 elections and was leading in the polls when an electoral court barred him for running due to the allegations of corruption against him.

In February of 2018, Lula was found guilty of accepting a seaside apartment in exchange for favorable treatment of construction companies. He was initially sentenced to twelve years in jail, but the term was later increased by an additional thirteen years. Lula denied the allegations and showed that his name was not on the property documents for the apartment, but the prosecution submitted evidence showing he and his family inhabited the residence. Lula spent just under two years in jail before the recent Supreme Court decision, and has vowed to continue his legal battle while fighting against the Bolsonaro Government. He accused Brazil's new justice minister, Sergio Moro, of being politically motivated, and said he could have taken refuge in an embassy or fled the country, but was determined to clear his name and prove the bias against him. Lula also called out Jair Bolsonaro and demanded a strong challenge to his administration in the 2022 elections. Bolsonaro responded by calling him a "scoundrel" who did not respect the rule of law.

Moving forward, Lula has been barred from running for public office again, but experts predict that his release will galvanize the Brazilian opposition ahead of the 2022 elections. The Bolsonaro Government has come under scrutiny for contentious policies regarding the protection of the Amazon rainforest and gang violence, and Lula's Workers' Party will likely attack Bolsonaro on these policy fronts. On the government's side, the prosecution will redouble their effort in the case against Lula, in an attempt to quash his appeal and re-imprison him.