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Brazil: Lula Supporters Convene in Porto Alegre Before Trial

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Construction of the “Encampment for Democracy and in Defense of Lula” is currently underway by members of the Popular Brazil Front.

Dozens of jurists, intellectuals and politicians have convened in the Federation of Workers in Financial Institutions of Rio Grande do Norte, Fetrafi, to discuss the legal right of former Brazilian President Luiz Inacio "Lula" da Silva to run in this year's presidential election, as well as defending democracy.

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A sticking point in the discussion revolved around a number of irregularities in the Operation Car Wash investigations. Lula has been sentenced by judge Sergio Moro for his alleged connection to the graft scandal. His appeal ruling is scheduled for Jan. 24.

“Maybe much greater than those judicial deficiencies is the use of the Criminal Law for political ends,” said Jacson Zilio, professor of Criminal Law at the Federal university of Parana, UFPR. “This is a process in which what is in debate is precisely that destruction of the democratic state governed by the rule of law in

which criminal processes are configured as processes of exception.”

Another professor of Criminal Law at UFPR, Juarez Cirino, shared Zilio's opinion, according to Brasil de Fato. He said that as a result of successive electoral losses by Lula's political opponents, as well as the projected loss at the polls later this year, “they've discovered this method of political struggle, dislocating the electoral campaign from public squares” to the Fourth Regional Federal Court, TRF-4 in Porto Alegre, capital of Rio Grande do Sul.

Cirino went on to note that Lula, as many people had anticipated, “was condemned without proof and the people are here, united, in in order to support him at this point in time.”

Having left office with a record approval rating of 83 percent, according to Datafolha, Lula now leads upcoming presidential polls conducted by Vox Populi, Datafolha, Data Poder 360, Instituto Parana, the National Confederation of Transportation/MDA and Ipsos. His two terms in office were marked by slew of social programs, lifting millions of Brazilians out of poverty and removing the country from the U.N. World Hunger Map. He also made significant improvements in housing and education, which stand in contrast to those who governed the country in the past.

Brazil's Fourth Regional Federal Court, TRF-4, will rule on his passive corruption case on Jan. 24. Some argue that the trial was scheduled in a loathsome twist of planning as it falls on the one-year anniversary of his wife's stroke that led to her death.

Construction of the “Encampment for Democracy and in Defense of Lula” is currently underway by members of the Popular Brazil Front and landless farmers. The site will play host to supporters of Lula's cause as they accompany the ruling in Porto Alegre.

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