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Brazil: Electoral Court to Discuss Lula Candidacy Friday

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Brazil's top electoral court will begin deliberations Friday on whether former president [Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva](#) should be barred from running in this year's presidential election, according to a statement on the court's website.

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Lula, Brazil's most popular politician, was jailed in April to start serving a 12-year sentence on a corruption conviction, that the prosecutors have so far failed to bring concrete evidence to support. Despite him currently being imprisoned the Workers Party registered him as its presidential candidate for the October vote anyway, stating he should be allowed to prove his innocence.

Lula has also appealed an earlier decision by a Supreme Court justice who rejected a habeas corpus writ his lawyers had filed seeking his release. The full 11-member court will now rule on the appeal by electronic vote between September 7 and 13, the spokesperson said Tuesday.

Lula is leading polls by a long stretch ahead of the October 7 vote despite not being able to campaign or take part in presidential debates.

However, even if he is freed while awaiting appeals of his conviction, Brazilian electoral court could also ban him from running based on the rule barring candidates whose guilty verdicts have been upheld on a first appeal, as is Lula's case.

A few weeks ago, the United Nations, through its Human Rights Committee, determined that the [Brazilian state should allow Lula to exercise his full political rights](#) as a candidate in the October elections. These rights include Lula's right to participate in media events and debates, as well as convene with members of his Workers' Party.

Legal experts say that according to Brazil's constitution, Lula should not be prevented to participate in the elections until all of his legal appeals have been exhausted.

Lula has repeatedly denied receiving bribes from government contractors during his two terms in office and says the corruption case against him is a pretext to keep him from returning to power.

A Datafolha poll last week gave him 39 percent of voter support, almost twice that of his nearest rival, far-right candidate Jair Bolsonaro.

The news comes as Sao Paulo state prosecutors have accused Workers Party vice presidential candidate Fernando Haddad of administrative wrongdoing, according to court documents seen by Reuters Tuesday.

In a statement, Haddad's press representatives said all graphic materials produced during his mayoral campaign were declared. "There was no reason to receive any undeclared money from UTC," the statement said.

The accusations against the former mayor have to be accepted by a judge before he faces any possible trial. His place on the PT ticket is unlikely to be imperiled by the accusations.