
Brazil: Landless Workers' Movement Directive Arrested at Rally

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The arrest came after an off-duty police officer supportive of Bolsonaro pulled a weapon at them.

Members of the Military Police of Caruaru arrested the national director of the Landless Workers' Movement (MST), Jaime Amorim, Saturday when he was giving away propaganda in favor of the leftist candidate Fernando Haddad.

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“Jaime Amorim, member of the national direction of the MST, was arrested by the military police and taken to the federal police station when giving away pamphlets in the center of Caruaru,” says a press release by the MST.

Two hours later, Amorim was release as there was no crime he could be accused of.

Witnesses report that supporters of the far-right candidate Jair Bolsonaro attacked the rally supporting the Workers' Party (PT) and its presidential candidate on the last day of campaigning.

Francisco Terto, a state director of MST in Pernambuco, Bolsonaro's supporters started a turmoil.

"They were not identified and started discussing using bad words. That's when people tried to speak with them about the risk our country is running," said Terto. "They then started to be very violent and step down from the motorcycle."

Bolsonaro's supporters then brought a off-duty police officer, who helped adding confusion and fear to the incident.

"There were threats and aggressions by voters of the other candidate [Bolsonaro], even after threats from an off-duty police officer who pulled out a weapon and pointed it at activists that were having the rally in the center of our city. They want to categorize handing in pamphlets as an electoral crime to keep him in jail," declared the MST.

"In Parnambuco the leader of @MST_Oficial Jaime Amorim was arrested for giving away the @Brasil_de_Fato journal. After the coup against @dilmabr, Brasil in democracy?"

The MST reported hours later that its leader had been released and thanked everyone for their support.

The lawyer Patrick Mariano said Amorim didn't do anything illegal, as his actions are allowed until Saturday 10 p.m. when the campaign period officially ends.

The activist was giving away numbers of the Brasil de Fato journal and pamphlets in favor of Haddad and the vice-president candidate Manuela d'Avila (Communist Party of Brazil) during the rally.

Shortly before being arrested Amorim highlighted the importance of voting during Sunday's run-off.

"For the moment everything is quiet and people will go out to vote," said Amorim. "The most important thing is not losing a minute, we will dispute vote by vote."

Often described as a fascist, Bolsonaro has spoken against the MST and the Movement of Workers Without a Roof, calling them terrorists and promising to put them into jail.

Both movements often squat portions of land unused by large landowners to use them in favor of the local communities, fighting for those campesinos that have no land to work and against those who have land and don't work with it.