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Lula counters Bolsonaro's anti-democratic comments

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Former President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva called on Congress and Brazilian citizens to defend democracy against the calls for a coup by ultra-right-wing ruler Jair Bolsonaro and retired general Augusto Heleno.

Bolsonaro sent a message via WhatsApp to his close circle of allies in which he calls for "action" against Congress and follows the proposal of General Heleno, his advisor, and current Minister of Institutional Security. The Folha de Sao Paulo and Estado de Sao Paulo newspapers revealed the information.

Countering his call, Lula took to his social networks in order to warn that "Bolsonaro and General Heleno are promoting demonstrations against democracy, the constitution and the institutions, in another authoritarian gesture by those who daily attack freedom and rights."

"It is urgent that the National Congress, institutions and society speak against this attack to defend democracy," he added. "What Brazil needs is to generate jobs, get people out of poverty. Bolsonaro has never combined well with democracy. He is a false patriot who gives our sovereignty over to the United States," he added.

In a similar tone, ousted former President Dilma Rousseff denounced that "Bolsonaro and General Heleno are blatantly attacking the Constitution and democracy by calling for a demonstration against the National Congress." "An urgent and strong response from the institutions is needed, or our country will go under once again into the darkness of dictatorships," she said.

Earlier this month, Bolsonaro dismissed his chief of staff, Onyx Lorenzoni, one of the first politicians to back his presidential bid in 2018, and the last politician in his inner Cabinet. He offered the position to Army General Walter Braga, hence distancing himself further from political parties in his closest circle of advisors, who are now all military men.

The appointment of Braga raises to seven the number of military men in the 20-member Cabinet, not counting Vice

President Hamilton Mourao, a retired general.

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