
Brazil Crisis Deepens as VP Faces Possible Impeachment

06/04/2016



Justice Marco Aurelio Mello's ruling is subject to appeal, but the implications are stark.

Temer is first in the line of succession and now could be removed from office along with Rousseff, but second in line is the speaker of the lower house of Congress, Eduardo Cunha, who is under indictment for corruption associated with the \$2 billion scandal centered on state oil company Petrobras.

The third in line for the presidency would be Senate president Renan Calheiros, but he is also implicated in the Petrobras case, which could drive him from office, too, thus opening the door to Supreme Court Chief Justice Ricardo Lewandowski at the country's helm.

Justice Mello accepted a motion by attorney Mariel Marley Marra, who filed the move against Temer last December with the lower house, which this month voted to begin proceedings leading toward Rousseff's possible impeachment but refusing to proceed against the vice president.

Rousseff is facing the possibility of impeachment for having ostensibly manipulated budget numbers to disguise the size of the deficit.

Marra contends that Temer, whose signature appears on some of the relevant budget documents, shares responsibility with Rousseff.

Mello said that his ruling "does not make any judgment regarding the conduct of the vice president," but he added that house speaker Cunha "did not follow the required legal formalities" by rejecting the suit against Temer and accepting the one against Rousseff.

Within that framework, Mello said the lower house needs to appoint a special commission, similar to the one already established to analyze the accusation against Rousseff, but focusing on the vice president.

Amid the country's monumental political entanglement, there are voices that have begun to urge moving forward the presidential elections scheduled for October 2018.

Sen. Valdir Raupp, who is very close to Temer, gave legal form to that proposal on Monday on presenting a bill proposing new elections this coming October along with the already-scheduled municipal balloting.

That proposition is also being pushed by Marina Silva, who came in in third place in the 2010 and 2014 presidential elections, both of which were won by Rousseff.

"Neither Dilma nor Temer. A new election is the solution," said Silva at an event held Tuesday in Brasilia.

Rousseff, who characterizes the attempt to force her from office as a coup, declined to comment on the proposals during a brief press conference at which she preferred to speak sarcastically about the matter.

"I neither accept nor reject proposals, but let them try to convince all the congressmen and senators to leave office this year," she said.
