
Brazil's Rousseff Says She's the Victim of a "Farce"

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BRASILIA – Brazil's suspended president, Dilma Rousseff, who is out of office pending the result of an impeachment trial in the Senate, said in a letter to the upper chamber committee that is handling the proceedings against her that she was the victim of a "farce" and would fight to remain in power.

During Wednesday's hearing, defense attorney Jose Eduardo Cardozo appeared on Rousseff's behalf and read aloud the 32-page missive in which she insisted that "an innocent person" who had received 54 million votes when re-elected in 2014 was being put on trial.

Rousseff is accused of various illegal fiscal maneuvers to mask a large budget deficit, including signing decrees that altered government budgets without congressional authorization and securing loans for the federal government from state-owned banks.

The Federal Court of Accounts, known as the TCU, found last year that Rousseff's administration had committed fiscal irregularities, while a nonpartisan team of Senate budget experts partially confirmed in an analysis carried out at the request of her defense team that she had engaged in wrongdoing.

Rousseff has said she bears no direct responsibility for these matters and that the decrees were issued after consultation with members of her budget team, which signed off on them.

She also maintains that the transactions involving state-owned banks were not loans but mere delays in repaying funds that had been used to cover the cost of social programs.

A two-thirds majority is needed in the Senate to permanently remove Rousseff from office.

If that occurs, Michel Temer, her former vice president and current interim head of state, would serve out the remainder of her term, which expires on Jan. 1, 2019.

