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Jailing Lula Would Cause Problems for Brazil Says Temer

16/11/2016



The president said it would be a problem if the popular former head of state, Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, was jailed as part of ongoing investigations.

On Monday, Brazilian President Michel Temer – who gained power through a parliamentary coup in August – said that an ongoing investigation into the popular ex-president, Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, could create problems for the country.

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“If Lula was jailed, would this cause a problem for the government? I think it would cause a problem, not just for the government, but for the country,” Temer said in an interview with TV Cultura.

The wildly popular ex-president is expected to run again in the 2018 elections, but he currently faces three investigations into alleged corruption connected to the long-running “Car Wash” scandal. Lula vehemently denies all allegations and was [cleared last August](#) by Judge Sergio Moro of charges that he had bought an apartment using money from the state oil company Petrobras, which is at the heart of the “Car Wash” investigation.

Temer appeared to blame the possibility of unrest on the powerful social movements which have supported Lula's Workers Party in the past. “The social movements, especially in the event of a judicial decision (against Lula) could create instability,” continued Temer.

Temer's comments come just days after protesters shut down a major highway in Sao Paulo in protest of the Temer government's proposal to freeze social spending for the next 20 years, and one week after the launch of a national campaign in support of Lula organized by various social movement groups. Since Temer came to power in a parliamentary coup against the democratically-elected Dilma Rousseff last August, his government has arrested at least nine members of the powerful Landless Workers Movement, or MST, and on Nov. 4, armed state police raided a key MST school in Sao Paulo.

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Temer himself faces ongoing allegations of corruption. Just last week lawyers for former President Rousseff presented a Brazilian court with evidence that a key player in the Petrobras scandal had deposited millions of dollars in the general election fund of Temer's PMDB party, which subsequently issued a check – a copy of which Rousseff's lawyers submitted to the court – for the same amount to Temer's personal election fund.

In the same interview, Temer said he was “not worried” about the investigation, which could depose Temer and his government if it finds he did accept illegal donations.

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