



MOVEMENT FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

2018 April 6.

Movement for Social Justice Condemns the LAWFARE against Lula and the PT

The Movement for Social Justice (MSJ) of Trinidad and Tobago unequivocally condemns the decision to imprison Luis Inacio Lula de Silva, the former President of Brazil and the leader of the Workers' Party (PT) of Brazil. The MSJ is a member of the Foro Sao Paulo and we stand in solidarity with the PT. The MSJ has no doubt at all that this decision is consistent with the "lawfare" that has been continuously waged against Lula and the PT over the past several years by the economic elite of Brazil, supported by the right-wing media and sections of the Brazilian political and judicial class that have remained implacably opposed to the transformation of Brazil that took place under the Lula led PT government.

We are very clear. Since the re-election of Dilma Rousseff in 2014 there has been waged a political war of a very different type in Brazil. This has been dubbed "lawfare" as the ruling elites have used their hold on state institutions to persecute the main leaders of the PT in order to remove them and the PT from the politics of Brazil. These elites are doing so to preserve their own power and privilege. Lula and the PT were obstacles in their way. In the absence of physical warfare, they used "lawfare".

In Lula's own words "Millions of young people, in Brazil, for the first time got into university. We were the last country in the Americas to create a university institution... We were the last to abolish slavery. We were in the vanguard of backwardness. In twelve years of our government, we managed to guarantee the first generation of Brazilians that did not have hungry children. We brought over 40 million people out of poverty without causing detriment to the social sector, without persecuting anyone. That had never happened in the history of our country. It was possible to use politics to benefit the majorities. It was possible, through the State, to make public policies of inclusion and promote social justice. We showed that the people know how to govern better than the elites. That is why they hate us".

In the minds of the elites, it is this progress towards social justice that had to be reversed. Their strategy was to first remove Dilma from the Presidency by any means possible. They accomplished that by a Parliamentary coup d'etat, using their majority in the Congress to impeach Dilma on trumped up charges.

Simultaneously, the "lawfare" against Lula began. In the space of two years Lula was subjected to:

- Illegal wire-tapping – even his attorneys were wire-tapped – and their contents made public;
- 38 search and seizure warrants executed against Lula, his family members and colleagues;
- Multiple investigations into the same allegations but by different jurisdictions (e.g. investigations and/or prosecutions by federal prosecutors and state prosecutors of the same alleged charges at the same time). There were some eleven investigations against Lula
- 2 Federal audits of the Lula Institute and his LILS Speaking Company.
- The illegal leaking of Lula's banking, tax and other information; as well as that of his family
- Detention and a coercive summons to give a statement in spite of previously having given testimony on 5 occasions to the Federal Police; and written testimony twice

It is to be noted that the only evidence of wrong-doing presented to the courts against Lula was the testimony of persons, already found guilty of corruption in the "Operation Car-Wash" investigation. These

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persons gave testimony against Lula as part of a plea-bargaining deal. In other words, to reduce their sentence they gave testimony against Lula. **In spite of all the seizures, searches, wire-taps, investigations there was no other corroborating evidence of wrong-doing by Lula.**

- NO evidence of monies in Lula's bank accounts or those of his family that were obtained by way of corruption
- NO evidence of his having obtained any real estate or other assets. The only real estate he owns is that which he had before becoming President
- NO evidence of his being involved in corruption with state enterprises such as Petrobras
- NO evidence of his wrongfully taking possession of gifts given to him as Head of State
- No evidence about illegal donations to the Lula Institute or to the LILS speaking company

Under Brazilian law, the testimony of person given under a plea bargaining deal cannot, on its own, result in the conviction of a person. But this is what the Court did to Lula. It was "lawfare". The objective was clear. Lula must be stopped from contesting the elections for President of Brazil, scheduled for October 2018. The hypocrisy of the elites is so obvious. Temer, who replaced Dilma as President, should be in jail for corruption – evidence of which is clear. But he, like Barrabas, is out free, while Lula is persecuted.

Lula is the clear front runner in the polls for the Presidency. The only person the right wing could find to challenge him is a neo-fascist Jair Bolsonaro, who in voting to impeach Dilma said he did so in the name of the general who tortured Dilma when she was a 19 year old activist against the dictatorship.

Having succeeded in convicting Lula on trumped up charges, the "lawfare" has moved to jail him. This, they believe, will stop his candidacy for President and thus enable a right wing victory at the polls. The neo-liberal agenda of economic and social policies started after Dilma's impeachment will then be intensified. Privatisations, massive job losses, increased prices of goods and services from education to health to transport to electricity to water; and the return to poverty of millions of Brazilians and the entrenching of the old system of huge wealth and income inequality are all key elements of this neo-liberal project.

Lula himself is absolutely clear about this. He said – *"I always tell them one thing. Never lose hope. Neoliberalism, often sustained by media monopolies, promises a better future for everyone but concentrates wealth and restricts the opportunities to a few, always the same people. In Brazil we proved that we could govern doing the exact opposite: that it was possible to include the poor in the public budget; that we could invest more in education; more in health and housing; put an end to hunger; build dignity; extend rights. They want to wipe out the memory of the people of this period of democratic victories. Today they condemn me, but what they want to condemn is this project and our future as a free, sovereign and just nation. They want to do this, but they will not succeed"*.

The MSJ agrees with Lula! The right wing will not succeed! Lula will be free! Brazil will once again be a free, sovereign and just nation!

Free Lula now! Stop the "lawfare"! Stop the persecution of the PT! #LulaLibre!



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