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Prosecutors Allegations Against ex-President Lula put Brazil's Justice System on Trial

Brussels, 15 September 2016 (ITUC OnLine): Allegations by prosecutor Deltan Dallagnol against former Brazilian President Lula, recycling discredited claims that he secretly owned a beach apartment in Guarujá and alleging that he presided over a massive corruption scandal, are putting Brazil's justice system itself on trial, according to the ITUC. Populist judge Sérgio Moro, whose daily media appearances have turned him into a star of right-wing press conglomerate Globo, now has the power to decide to press formal charges based on the allegations. Moro was forced to apologise to the country's Supreme Court for illegally tapping Lula's phone in March.

International human rights lawyers, including prominent UK-based jurist Geoffrey Robertson, are supporting a case brought by Lula to the United Nations Human Rights Commission over the sustained but baseless attacks against him. According to Robertson, "Lula is bringing his case at the UN because he cannot get justice in <https://www.theguardian.com/world/brazil> under its inquisitorial system. The same judge who is invading his privacy in this case can have him arrested at any moment and will then become his trial judge, deciding on his guilt or innocence without a jury." The ITUC is supporting this case due to the systematic denial of Lula's fundamental rights.

Many in Brazil, including some of Lula's most prominent opponents, have attacked the move by Dallagnol, saying that it could seriously damage the ongoing national "Car Wash" corruption investigations. One of the prosecutors, Roberson Pozzobon, provoked a storm of criticism when he told a media conference yesterday "We don't have proof, but we are convinced".

Sharan Burrow, ITUC General Secretary, said: "Brazil's justice system is now under the spotlight, as powerful corporate interests seek to use it to attack Lula, his Workers' Party and the enormous positive legacy of over a decade of social and economic progress. We stand with Lula, and we are resolutely opposed to the misuse of judicial power to persecute him. The latest manoeuvres put democracy and rights at further risk and also provide a convenient smokescreen for the government led by Michel Temer, which having deposed President Dilma Rousseff in a political coup, is pressing ahead with privatisations, asset sales and plans to eviscerate the labour code. Irreparable damage is being done to Brazil's future under the guise of a solution to Brazil's current fiscal challenges."

<http://www.standwithlula.org>

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