

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION
ITUC OnLine

Brazil: Trade Unions and Human Rights Lawyers #StandWithLula as Show-Trial Looms

Brussels, 21 September 2016 (ITUC OnLine): International and US trade unions joined with prominent human rights lawyers in denouncing unfounded charges against former Brazilian President Luis Inácio Lula da Silva, at a special event in New York on 20 September hosted by the ITUC and the AFL-CIO. As the event took place, with an address from Lula via video link, prosecutor Sérgio Moro announced in Brazil that he will now act as judge in hearing charges against Lula which first surfaced through right-wing media conglomerate Globo more than five years ago. One of Moro's fellow prosecutors, Roberson Pozzobon, admitted last week that there was no clear evidence around the central charge that Lula secretly owned an apartment in Guarujá.

Leading global human rights lawyer Geoffrey Robertson QC said: "The world is watching Brazil. The international legal community is shocked by the abuses of the Car Wash prosecutors against Lula and his family. This is a persecution of Lula not a prosecution. This is why we have taken this case to the United Nations Human Rights Committee in Geneva. I am meeting numerous lawyers and human rights advocates here in the United States during the United Nations General Assembly to outline the situation in Brazil."

AFL-CIO Executive Vice-President Tefera Gebre said: "The defence of democracy is fundamental to labor unions. American workers and the AFL-CIO are proud to stand with former President Lula and the working women and men of Brazil. Justice matters in a democracy, where people are at the heart of representation, and justice matters for Lula and the Brazilian people."

Sharan Burrow, ITUC General Secretary, described the charges against Lula as a "partisan political attack, using elements of the judiciary to try and destroy a man who lifted tens of millions out of poverty as the most popular President in Brazil's history. Lula has already effectively been declared guilty by the man who will preside over his trial without jury, as corporate interests seek to consolidate their control over the country. We stand with Lula in opposing this travesty of justice."

Lula's lawyers have listed a catalogue of violations of Lula's fundamental rights in the campaign against him, including deprivation of liberty, illegal phone tapping and leaking of correspondence, interception of his communications with his lawyers, the presumption of guilt without any evidence or trial, and the absence of an unbiased judge and of fair legal proceedings.

Some of Lula's most vocal opponents have criticised the move to charge him, concerned that the weakness of the case may undermine the overall "Car Wash" corruption investigations. 352 of the 594 members of Brazil's Congress face serious criminal allegations or charges, many of them in connection with the Car Wash investigations.

For more information, and to sign the international petition: <http://www.standwithlula.org>

The ITUC represents 180 million workers in 162 countries and territories and has 333 national affiliates.

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