

IndustriALL stands with Lula

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TRADE UNIONS STAND WITH LULA

Some 300 trade unions at the IndustriALL Global Union 2nd Congress in Rio de Janeiro unanimously endorsed a resolution supporting former Brazilian President Luiz Inácio 'Lula' da Silva and condemning the attacks on the working class in Brazil.

The democratically elected President of Brazil, Dilma Rousseff, was ousted by a right wing coup under Michel Temer in May this year. Since then, workers' rights in the country are being eroded and the persecution of Lula has intensified.

"The de facto government is reversing all we have achieved in the last 12 years. It has no respect for democracy, women or youth. We must defend our rights. We need your support," said Lucineide Varjão, president of Brazilian affiliate the national chemical workers federation (CNQ/CUT) in proposing the resolution.

Since coming to power, Temer has begun to cut back social programmes in Brazil and installed an all-white, all-male cabinet, last seen in 1979.

"What we have seen with the current government of Brazil is the social rights of workers being destroyed. There is a proposal for labour reform to be voted on in Congress that would generalize outsourcing, which will hinder the rights of workers. We need to have the solidarity and support of all unions in IndustriALL," said Jaoao Paulo Da Costa Cunha from Brazilian metalworkers' union CNTM.

Speaking at the opening ceremony at IndustriALL's Congress, Lula said:

"We were making real progress in Brazil, creating good jobs, building a powerful, sustainable economy. But the coup by the right wing threatens to undo all of this.

"We need to take advantages of democratic spaces that are still open to us. We need to fight for the rights we have won, and demonstrate to the world that we can do things differently."

IndustriALL affiliates at Congress resolved to join the ITUC campaign to defend former President Lula for the legal abuses perpetrated against him in Brazil, as well as to denounce the powerful vested interests that seek to limit his freedom of political action.

Lula was born into poverty and became a metalworker at the age of 14. As a leader of the ABC Metalworkers union, he led a wave of strikes in the 1970s that saw him being imprisoned under the military dictatorship. He was one of the founders of the Workers Party in 1980 and went on to become Brazil's most popular president, introducing social changes that lifted 30 million out of poverty and promoted a thriving economy.

His personal approval ratings when he left office in January 2011, were the highest ever recorded in Brazil at more than 80 per cent.

However, his popularity is a threat to neo-liberal forces in Brazil who have embarked on a relentless campaign to undermine him. In the past year, Lula has been forced to give testimony five times to the Federal Police and the Federal Attorney General's Office. In March this year he was forcibly and illegally taken from his home by to give a statement.

There have been 38 search and seizure warrants at the homes of Lula, his family, employees of his institute and his associates. State agencies have leaked details of his banking and tax records to the press, as well as those of his family, the Lula Institute and his public speaking

profile

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company. He has had his phone tapped and communications over the internet accessed, and so have his family and even his attorneys.

Despite no evidence of any wrongdoing by Lula, the Temer-backed Public Ministry is pressing ahead with charges against him and his wife in relation to the corruption investigation into state-oil company Petrobras.

In October 2016, the United Nations Human Rights Committee announced it will examine allegations that Sergio Moro, the lead judge in the Petrobras investigation, had "violated Lula's right to privacy, his right not to be detained arbitrarily and his presumption of innocence."

A new movement of unions, political parties and civil society, called **for a just Brazil for all and for Lula** has been established with the aim of restoring democracy and ending the political persecution of Lula.

Lula remains the favourite to win a Presidential election in 2018. However, if he were to be found guilty of corruption, he would be unable to run for office.

To sign up to the ITUC campaign and stand with Lula go to:

 www.standwithlula.org