Thursday 19 January 2023

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The storming of the Brazilian democratic institutions

European Parliament resolution of 19 January 2023 on the storming of the Brazilian democratic institutions (2023/2505(RSP))

(2023/C 214/08)

The European Parliament,

— having regard to Rules 144(5) and 132(4) of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas on 8 January 2023, thousands of far-right extremists and supporters of former Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro stormed and vandalised the National Congress, Supreme Court and Alvorada Palace in Brasília, calling for military intervention to overthrow President Lula da Silva; whereas ex-President Bolsonaro's former Justice Minister, Anderson Torres, has been arrested and the Governor of the Federal District (which includes Brasília), Ibaneis Rocha, has been suspended;

B. whereas violent attacks on democratic institutions by the far right are a global phenomenon; whereas the events in Brasília represent a flagrant attack on Brazilian democratic institutions and display clear similarities with the assault on the US Capitol in 2021; whereas former US President Donald Trump and ex-President Bolsonaro played an instrumental role in these respective events;

C. whereas social media platforms continue to fail to moderate or constrain the diffusion of anti-democratic campaigns, transnational fascism and extremism, especially through algorithms promoting hateful content and disinformation and an unwillingness to remove illegal content, and played a fundamental role in these events by amplifying aggressive rhetoric and violence and facilitating mobilisation and the spread of disinformation;

1. Condemns in the strongest terms the criminal actions perpetrated by supporters of ex-President Bolsonaro and supports the ongoing efforts to ensure a prompt, impartial, proper and effective investigation in order to identify, prosecute and hold accountable all those involved, including the instigators, organisers and financial backers, as well as state institutions that failed to act to prevent these attacks;

2. Expresses solidarity with democratically elected President Lula da Silva, his government and Brazilian institutions;

3. Deplores the attempts by ex-President Bolsonaro and some of his political supporters to discredit the voting system and the electoral authorities, despite there being no evidence of electoral fraud, and urges them to accept the democratic outcome of the elections;

4. Acknowledges the connection between rising transnational fascism, racism, extremism and, among others, the events in Brasília, the storming of the US Capitol in January 2021 and the arrests in December 2022 concerning a planned attack on Germany's Bundestag;

5. Highlights that on 13 January 2023, the Supreme Court approved a request from federal prosecutors to investigate ex-President Bolsonaro as he 'may have contributed, in a very relevant way, to the occurrence of criminal and terrorist acts'; expresses concern about the acts and omissions of public officials, in particular the Governor and Military Police of the Federal District;

6. Stresses the importance of legislative frameworks, such as the Digital Services Act, regulating social media platforms and tech companies, to effectively combat and prevent the online spread of hate speech and misinformation and thereby avoid further radicalisation;

7. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the Council, the Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the Council of Europe and the President, Government and Parliament of Brazil.