

Bolsonaro Denies Brazil Election Results on the Basis of a Software ‘Malfunction’

The Brazilian President lost his bid for re-election to Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva by a slim margin, and has refused to concede in the weeks since.

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Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro filed a complaint on Tuesday contesting the results of the run-off [election he lost](#) more than three weeks ago. In it, Bolsonaro’s lawyer Marcelo de Bessa claims that a “software bug” on 59% of the voting machines used across Brazil invalidates many ballots, according to [a report](#) from the Associated Press.

BRASILIA, Brazil (AP) — More than three weeks after losing a reelection bid, President Jair Bolsonaro on Tuesday blamed a software bug and demanded the electoral authority annul votes cast on most of Brazil’s nation’s electronic voting machines, though independent experts say the bug doesn’t affect the reliability of results.

Such an action would leave Bolsonaro with 51% of the remaining valid votes — and a reelection victory, Marcelo de Bessa, the lawyer who filed the 33-page request on behalf of the president and his Liberal Party, told reporters.

The electoral authority has already declared victory for Bolsonaro’s nemesis, leftist former President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, and even many of the president’s allies have accepted the results. Protesters in cities across the country have steadfastly refused to do the same, particularly with Bolsonaro declining to concede.

Liberal Party leader Valdemar Costa and an auditor hired by the party told reporters in Brasilia that their evaluation found all machines dating from before 2020 — nearly 280,000 of them, or about 59% of the total used in the Oct. 30 runoff — lacked individual identification numbers in internal logs.

The 33-page complaint describes the alleged voting machine issue as an “irreparable non-compliance due to malfunction,” affecting all machines more than two years old, said the

AP. And the filing demands that ballots cast on the ~280,000 machines in question be voided. Specifically, an auditor hired by Bolsonaro's Liberal Party said the voting machines lacked individual identification numbers, without explaining how that could've possibly impacted election results, according to [a report](#) from Politico.

"It does not undermine the reliability or credibility in any way," Wilson Ruggiero, a computer engineer at the Polytechnic School of the University of Sao Paulo, told the AP.

Another expert, Diego Aranha, a systems security researcher at Aarhus University in Denmark who has previously been part of security tests of Brazil's election system, also told the AP something similar. Arhana explained that, though the machine ID numbers didn't show up in internal digital logs, they did appear on printed receipts tallying the votes cast for each candidate.

Bolsonaro's loss (and Lula's victory) has already been declared by [Brazil's electoral authority](#), and the results have been widely accepted by politicians across the country—[even many of Bolsonaro's](#) allies.

In response to Bolsonaro's new claims, the leader of Brazil's Superior Electoral Court said it would not reassess the election results unless the Liberal Party files a new complaint inclusive of the congressional elections it won earlier in October, Politico reported.

The concept of faulty and vulnerable voting machines have been a constant refrain in Bolsonaro's attempts to undermine Brazil's democracy for years. However, there has [never been any evidence of fraud](#) or ill-doing via the machines that have been used since 1996—despite regular audits, according to another AP report.

Though the complaint is unlikely to have a direct impact on government actions or sway election officials, according to multiple outlets, it is likely to fuel [ongoing protests](#) by Bolsonaro supporters. Emboldened by Bolsonaro's earlier refusal to officially concede, tens of thousands of Brazilians have taken to the streets, refusing to accept the President's loss. Sure sounds like he's taking a page out of former President Donald Trump's [election-denying playbook](#).

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