

# Lula: I Will Not Trade My Dignity for My Freedom

Lula declared in a letter that he will only accept leaving prison when Brazil's justice system recognizes his innocence

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*Former Brazilian president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva wrote in a letter that he will only leave his [current situation of incarceration](#) if his full innocence is recognized. This declaration came after the Operation Car Wash prosecutors filed a petition with the substitute judge of the 12th federal district, Carolina Lebbos, to change the conditions of incarceration for Lula from closed to semi-open. The letter was given from Lula to his lawyers this Monday, September 30, after a visit.*

By law, Lula should already have the right to change the conditions of his incarceration, but he has refused the request presented by the prosecutors that [conspired to have him imprisoned](#) because he understands that this would harm his dignity; Lula was convicted without evidence and demands that he should be considered innocent to leave prison.

“I want you to know that I won't accept bargaining with my rights and my freedom,” affirmed Lula in a letter presented by his lawyers after they visited him this afternoon at the jail in the [Federal Police Headquarters in Curitiba](#).

According to the ex-president the prosecutors should be worried about “apologizing to the Brazilian people, to the millions of unemployed people, and my family, for the harm they have done to democracy, to the system of justice, and to the country.”

Outside the Federal Police headquarters, lawyer Cristiano Zanin explained to journalists and activists at the Free Lula vigil that Lula “does not recognize the legitimacy of the process that has put him in prison,” and as such he rejects the change in the conditions of his incarceration.

“The moment that he does not recognize the legitimacy, he is not obliged to accept any condition of the State,” says Zanin.

Several journalists asked what would happen if the Justice decides to send Lula to a semi-open prison anyways. The lawyer reiterated that it would be necessary to respect the will of the ex-president as it does not represent a non-compliance to the legal system.

What Lula wants, according to Zanin, is for Brazil's Supreme Court (STF) to analyze the resources questioning the illegalities of the process that brought him to prison, bringing the annulment of the sentence and the full liberty of the president. The proposal from the prosecutors does not take into account the demand of Lula for the complete revocation of

his imprisonment and the *habeas corpus*.

“We want to reiterate to the Supreme Court the requests made since last year. This is the path so that the processes can be annulled because they were made without observance to legal due process,” the lawyer added.

The leadership of the Workers’ Party (PT) also addressed the [Free Lula Vigil](#) to explain Lula’s decision. President of the PT Gleisi Hoffman commented that

“They [the prosecutors] have a big problem. They did not understand the dimension or size of Lula and what they are dealing with. And now they have a problem, because they are stuck in a lie and they cannot get out.”

Fernando Haddad, [who stepped in as presidential candidate for the Workers’ Party after Lula’s candidacy was rejected](#), highlighted the importance of the voting of the Supreme Court on habeas corpus which seeks to suspend former judge Sergio Moro from the case. This ruling would annul the sentence in the Operation Car Wash case wherein Lula was sentenced to 12 years in prison for supposedly accepting a remodeled triplex apartment. Haddad said,

“We are saying that this trial has to happen because, if this sentence is annulled, we will bring Lula home, with his head raised, looking at each one of us.”

The Operation Car Wash task force team, which was once heralded nationally and internationally for its groundbreaking work to fight high-level corruption in Brazil, was recently uncovered to be a group of prosecutors with political motivations who violated the law throughout their investigation and prosecution of former Brazilian president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva. *The Intercept* [published a series of reports](#) in early June detailing how prosecutors worked with the judge on the case, Sergio Moro, on tactics and lines of investigation in order to seal a conviction for Lula. They also [revealed how the prosecutors schemed](#) on how to stop Lula from giving a televised interview before the elections in order to not give PT candidate Haddad a boost.

Due to these violations and irregularities, and prior ones which had been denounced by the legal defense team of former president Lula throughout the proceedings, his defense filed a habeas corpus petition requesting that Sergio Moro be suspended from the case. [Moro was one of the head judges overseeing the Operation Car Wash investigation, which involves dozens of corruption cases, and was responsible for sentencing Lula to nine and a half years in prison in 2017](#). The hearing was set to take place on June 25, but the judges of Brazil’s Supreme Court decided to postpone it.

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Lula’s Letter

To the Brazilian people

I will not trade my dignity for my freedom.

All the Car Wash Prosecutors should really do is to apologize to the Brazilian people, to the millions of unemployed people, and my family, for the harm they have done to democracy, to the system of justice, and to the country.

I want you to know that I won't accept bargaining with my rights and my freedom.

I have demonstrated that the charges against me are false. They are the ones who are trapped in the lies they have told Brazil and the world, and not me.

Faced with the arbitrary acts committed by the Prosecutors and by Sergio Moro, it is up to the Supreme Court now to make amendments so that there be independent and impartial justice, as it is entitled to every citizen.

I am fully aware of the decisions I have made in this procedure and I won't rest until truth and justice prevail again.

Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva

Curitiba, September 30, 2019

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