

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 28, 2026

The Honorable Marco Rubio
Secretary of State
Department of State
2201 C Street N.W. Washington, D.C. 20451

Dear Secretary Rubio,

We are writing to express our concern regarding actions by the Administration that threaten our strategic alliance with Brazil and undermine the Western Hemisphere's second-largest democracy ahead of its upcoming presidential election in October 2026.

Over the course of President Trump's second term, we have seen U.S. officials engage in a campaign of interference and destabilization in Brazil. This effort first escalated sharply during the summer of 2025, with the Administration deploying [tariffs and targeted sanctions](#) to attempt to shape the Brazilian Supreme Court's verdict in the trial of former President Jair Bolsonaro on charges of attempting to foment a military coup to stay in power.¹

Despite some [subsequent measure of deescalation](#) in the months that followed, including direct and cordial talks between Presidents Trump and Lula, the campaign directed at Brazil's authorities resumed with the [appointment of Darren Beattie](#) as a senior advisor on Brazil issues in the State Department.² Beattie, a noted [far-right extremist and white supremacist](#), came into this post with a [record](#) of public statements signaling an overt ideological commitment to undermining Brazil's democratic institutions and advancing the interests of the Brazilian far-right.³ More recently, the Administration again targeted Brazilian imports with [steep tariffs](#) following a Section 301 investigation by the U.S. Trade Representative.⁴ The investigation was reportedly initiated at President Trump's direction at the same moment that he [publicly criticized](#) Brazilian court actions against former President Bolsonaro and U.S. social media companies.⁵

¹ France 24, *Trump Slaps Massive Tariffs, Sanctions on Brazil over Bolsonaro Trial* (July 31, 2025), <https://www.france24.com/en/americas/20250731-trump-slaps-massive-tariffs-sanctions-on-brazil-over-bolsonaro-trial>

² Stephen Quillen, *Trump Meets Brazil's Lula at ASEAN Summit, Touts 'Pretty Good Deals'* (October 26, 2025), Al Jazeera, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/10/26/trump-meets-brazils-lula-at-asean-summit-touts-pretty-good-deals>; Ana Ionova, *A New Trump Envoy Stirs Fears of U.S. Interference in Brazil's Elections* (March 13, 2026), The New York Times, <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/03/13/world/middleeast/brazil-election-darren-beattie-trump.html>

³ Aishvarya Kavi, *Fired Speechwriter From First Trump Term Appointed to Lead the Institute of Peace* (July 25, 2025), The New York Times, <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/07/25/admin/darren-beattie-institute-of-peace.html>

⁴ Al Jazeera, *US to Impose New 25 Percent Tariffs on Some Brazilian Imports* (July 16, 2026), <https://www.aljazeera.com/economy/2026/7/16/us-to-impose-new-25-percent-tariffs-on-some-brazilian-imports>

The Administration's most recent actions point toward an effort to interfere with, and potentially undermine, Brazil's general election in October. Senator and presidential candidate Flávio Bolsonaro's recent [Oval Office meeting with President Trump](#), undertaken while attempting to mitigate a [domestic political scandal](#), underscores the Administration's willingness to insert itself in the election.⁶

The contrast with the United States' approach during Brazil's previous presidential election could not be clearer. Immediately following the announcement of the election results in 2022, the United States moved swiftly—in coordination with allies and partners—to [recognize President Lula's victory](#), helping to deny legitimacy to efforts to contest or reverse the outcome.⁷ Following the January 8, 2023, attacks on Brazil's democratic institutions, the United States stood firmly with Brazil's newly elected government and played a key role in [rallying support across the region](#) for Brazil's efforts to defend its hard-won 1988 constitution and the democratic institutions it established.⁸

Today, rather than helping defend Brazilian democracy, the United States is using diplomatic, economic, and political pressure in ways that risk weakening the country's democratic institutions, undermining confidence in Brazil's electoral process, and inflicting further damage on our relationship with a strategic U.S. ally and trading partner. These actions reflect a broader and deeply troubling pattern of interference by the Trump Administration in recent electoral processes across Latin America, as seen during Argentina's midterm elections and the presidential elections in Honduras and Colombia. This pattern risks not only undermining the integrity of electoral processes in individual countries but also progressively eroding public confidence in democratic processes and institutions across the region.

Given the Administration's actions, we request answers to the following questions:

- How does the Department coordinate its democracy and human rights objectives with regional partners in the Western Hemisphere, particularly regarding technical assistance or monitoring of electoral and judicial processes?

⁵ Kanishka Singh and Ricardo Brito, *Trump Imposes 50% Tariffs on Brazil After Spat with Lula* (July 9, 2025), Reuters, <https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/trump-says-us-will-charge-brazil-with-50-tariff-2025-07-09/>

⁶ Folha de S.Paulo, *Flávio Bolsonaro Meets Trump and Says He Asked to Classify PCC and CV as Terrorist Groups* (May 27, 2026), <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/internacional/en/world/2026/05/flavio-bolsonaro-meets-trump-and-says-he-asked-to-classify-pcc-and-cv-as-terrorist-groups.shtml>; Laura Intrieri, *Lula abre vantagem sobre Flávio no 2º turno após caso 'Dark Horse', aponta Meio Ideia* (May 28, 2026), Folha de S.Paulo, <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/poder/2026/05/lula-abre-vantagem-sobre-flavio-no-2o-turno-apos-caso-dark-horse-aponta-meio-ideia.shtml>

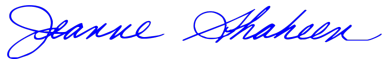
⁷ Reuters, *Biden Congratulates Lula for Winning 'Free, Fair' Brazil Election* (October 30, 2022), <https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/biden-congratulates-lula-winning-free-fair-brazil-election-2022-10-30/>

⁸ Prime Minister of Canada, *Joint Statement by President Joe Biden, President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on Brazil* (January 9, 2023), <https://www.pm.gc.ca/en/news/statements/2023/01/09/joint-statement-president-joe-biden-president-andres-manuel-lopez>

- Will the Administration commit to recognizing the certified outcome of Brazil's 2026 democratic elections and to supporting normal diplomatic relations with whichever candidate is freely and fairly chosen by the Brazilian people?

Thank you for your assistance. We look forward to your responses.

Sincerely,



Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



Peter Welch
United States Senator



Tim Kaine
United States Senator