

## Brazil's Moro slams Bolsonaro, rules out 2022 bid

Brasília

Former Brazil justice minister Sergio Moro said President Jair Bolsonaro and leftist rival Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva are “two extremes to be avoided,” in an interview during which he appeared to rule out his own presidential bid in 2022.



Former Brazilian Minister of Justice and Public Security, Sergio Moro

Moro, 47, made his name as a judge in leading the high-profile Car Wash corruption investigation that notably saw Lula jailed for accepting a bribe.

He later joined Bolsonaro's government but stormed out in April, accusing the president of interfering with Federal Police investigations.

Here are the main excerpts from the interview on Monday by video conference:

### After your accusations against Bolsonaro, do you feel partly responsible for the political crisis in Brazil?

“My intention was not to harm the government, it was to clarify why I was resigning. After the beginning of the pandemic, there was a crisis of government credibility and growing tension with the other powers, the Federal Supreme Court and the Congress. My resignation falls within that context but it is only a part of it, I don't feel responsible (for the crisis).”

- Did the president break his promise to fight corruption? -  
“We managed to make progress in fighting violent crime and organized crime, but not much in relation to corruption, and one of the problems -- with all due respect -- was the lack of more support from the (Presidential) Planalto Palace.”

### What do you make of the president's more moderate stance in recent weeks?

“The change in the president's position, with less hostility and a more moderate discourse, is good for the country... for stability.”

“Unfortunately, some of the president's pronouncements created unnecessary tension, giving the country a negative image. Brazil was always a reliable democracy and the Brazilian people were always seen as very tolerant, very nice, and that image was being eroded by a hostile discourse. It's good that this is changing.”

### Ten of the 23 ministers in Bolsonaro's government are military officers. How did you feel about their presence in the cabinet?

“I lived with the military (in the government) and there is no possible perspective of an authoritarian movement, all of a sudden, on the part of the Armed Forces.”

“The presence of the military in the government, of itself, is not negative. What is wrong is to try to use that presence as if they were in a position of strength that could be imposed on other powers.”

“That never came from the Armed Forces but from the mistaken discourse of the Planalto (presidential palace) itself.”

### “Do you see similarities between Bolsonaro and Lula?”

“Both have a somewhat populist character in the formulation of public policy. The difference is that President Bolsonaro would be a right-wing populist and President Lula a left-wing populist. In a way, they are two extremes, with all due respect, that should be avoided.”

### Is a presidential bid with former health minister Henrique Mandetta as running mate likely in 2022?

“With the coronavirus, the challenges of 2020 are too great for us to think about 2022. It's an absolutely unpredictable scenario.” “During the pandemic, (Mandetta) grew a lot because he adopted a policy that transmitted a sense of calm to the population, mainly through transparency, he had a way of making people feel comfortable. But I think that neither (of us is) seriously thinking about 2022.”

“I'm going to target the private sector, I have good contacts in the academic area. I was a professor before I became a judge. My task at the moment is to reintegrate in 2020 and not think about 2022.”

# Bolsonaro, unmasked

Brazil's outspoken, far-right leader



Brazil's Bolsonaro removes face mask after testing positive for virus

Rio de Janeiro

Brazil's far-right president Jair Bolsonaro is known for his brash style, which in part carried him to power more than a year ago. Removing his face mask after announcing he had coronavirus was perfectly on brand.

The 65-year-old head of state shrugged off his diagnosis Tuesday, insisting that “life goes on” in the face of what he for months has been calling a “little flu” -- otherwise known as the global COVID-19 pandemic that has claimed the lives of 65,000 Brazilians and counting.

The next few days will tell whether he is right.

A veteran lawmaker and former paratrooper, his rise to power in late 2018 almost cost him his life when he was stabbed in the stomach while campaigning.

But his recovery burnished his audacious image among supporters, an image he has leaned on heavily as the novel coronavirus ravages his nation of 210 million, presenting him with perhaps the biggest challenge of his presidency -- even before his diagnosis.

Analysts say that if Bolsonaro suffers just a mild case of COVID-19, he could feel vindicated in dismissing the virus and his repeated flouting of lockdown orders.

“If he overcomes COVID-19 without serious symptoms, it could strengthen his radical supporters for whom he is a messianic superman,” Oliver Stuenkel, a professor at the Getulio Vargas University, tweeted in reference to the president's middle name, ‘Messias.’

‘Authority, not authoritarianism’

The virus is not the only chal-

lenge Bolsonaro faces.

Eighteen months into his term the president is bedeviled by investigations and possible impeachment, forcing him closer to his military allies.

Bolsonaro is openly nostalgic for the 1964-1985 military dictatorship, and has cultivated a special relationship with the generals -- though he insists he will be a “slave to the constitution” who will govern “with authority but not authoritarianism.”

Ten of his 23 cabinet ministers are military officers. Even his current health minister, tasked with fighting the pandemic, is a general.

Long a divisive figure, Bolsonaro burst onto the international stage in late 2018 when voters in Latin America's largest and most populous country elected him on his promise to get tough on rising street crime.

He has long set his sharp blue gaze on easing gun laws to allow “good” people to dispense justice themselves, arguing that it “will cut violence in Brazil for sure.”

He has shown little concern by the outrage over his often racist, misogynistic and homophobic remarks.

And he has faced down international anger over his sluggish response to raging fires in the Amazon rainforest aimed at expanding farm land.

When a surge of devastating wildfires sparked global concern, Bolsonaro said it was fueled by jealousy of the region's mineral wealth.

Under pressure on the world stage, he eventually sent the army to protect the rainforest.

‘Tropical Trump’

A keen social media user with millions of followers, Bolsonaro has much in common with US



Bolsonaro enjoys strong support among Brazil's evangelical community, and is backed by the powerful agribusiness lobby



A man demonstrates near military police during a “Stop Bolsonaro” protest against political scandals engulfing the president and his family in late June 2020 in Rio de Janeiro



A funeral home worker in Curitiba watches the live news as President Jair Bolsonaro announces his positive COVID-19 test result

President Donald Trump.

Both prefer speaking directly to their base, avoiding pesky journalists' questions, and both regularly mangle syntax -- yet spout pithy sayings their fans gleefully repeat.

Unlike Trump, Bolsonaro had a long political career before his election, having held a seat in the lower-house Chamber of

Deputies since 1991. Nevertheless, he presents himself as an outsider.

He is backed by powerful lobbies in Congress, notably those representing the interests of agribusiness and evangelicals.

Bolsonaro himself is Catholic, a fact that has earned him some from the pious for having fathered five children from three relationships.

After fathering four sons, he said in 2017 he must have “weakened” because his last offspring was a daughter.

His eldest son Flavio, elected to the senate, was arrested in June in a corruption probe.

‘Too ugly’

Bolsonaro was born in 1955 in Campinas, a town close to the megalopolis of Sao Paulo, to a family of Italian descent.

In 2014 he created headlines by verbally attacking a leftwing deputy, Maria do Rosario, who he said was “not worth raping” because she was “too ugly.”

Bolsonaro has also made multiple anti-gay statements. In one instance in 2011, he told Playboy magazine that he would prefer to see a son “killed in an accident” than declare himself homosexual.

His military career was marked by moments of insubordination. In the 1980s he was accused of being involved in a bomb plot designed to bring about a pay rise.

But he was also known in the army, where he rose to the rank of captain, for his sporting prowess, earning him the nickname of “Cavalao,” or “Big Horse.”

It's that athleticism which lead him to brag in March that if he was infected with COVID-19, he wouldn't have to worry -- a claim that is now being put to the test.