

U.S. Imposes Sanctions on Brazilian Supreme Court Justice Over Alleged Rights Violations

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– Categories: Human Rights



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The U.S. Department of the Treasury has announced sanctions against Brazilian Supreme Court Justice Alexandre de Moraes, citing allegations of political repression and suppression of free speech. The move comes as de Moraes oversees a high-profile criminal case involving former Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro.

Justice de Moraes is currently presiding over proceedings that accuse Bolsonaro of orchestrating efforts to remain in power following his defeat in the 2022 presidential election to Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva. The trial has drawn international attention, particularly from critics who view the charges as politically motivated and part of a broader crackdown on Bolsonaro and his allies.

In a statement, U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said, “De Moraes is responsible for an oppressive campaign of censorship, arbitrary detentions that violate human rights, and politicized prosecutions – including against former President Jair Bolsonaro.” The sanctions, issued under the Global Magnitsky Act, target individuals responsible for serious human rights abuses or corruption around the world.

The Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act allows the U.S. government to block property and interests in property within the United States and prohibit U.S. persons from engaging in transactions with designated individuals. As a result of these sanctions, any assets de Moraes may hold in the U.S. will be frozen, and American entities will be barred from conducting business with him.

Supporters of the sanctions argue they underscore the United States’ commitment to safeguarding democratic values and freedom of expression abroad. The Biden administration has faced pressure from lawmakers and advocacy groups to take a stronger stance against judicial actions perceived as politically charged, particularly in countries facing heightened polarization.

Justice de Moraes has been a central figure in Brazil’s legal landscape, especially during the nation’s recent electoral disputes. While some in Brazil view his actions as necessary to uphold democratic institutions, critics have raised concerns about the scope of his authority and the use of judicial power against political opponents.

The Brazilian government has not immediately responded to the U.S. sanctions, though the action may further strain diplomatic ties between Washington and Brasília at a time when bilateral relations have already been tested by divergent political developments.

This latest move by the U.S. Treasury reflects a broader foreign policy approach that emphasizes accountability for international human rights violations, even when such actions involve top officials from allied or partner nations.