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Brazilian Demonstrators Applaud Trump's Tariff Move Amid Bolsonaro Trial

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Supporters of former Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro rallied in major cities across Brazil on Sunday to express solidarity with United States President Donald Trump's recent actions aimed at pressuring Brazil's judiciary. The demonstrators, many of whom view Bolsonaro's ongoing trial as politically motivated, praised Trump's decision to impose tariffs on Brazilian imports and welcomed the U.S. Treasury Department's sanctions against Supreme Court Justice Alexandre de Moraes.

Bolsonaro, 70, is currently facing trial in the capital city of Brasília over allegations that he attempted to orchestrate a coup after his defeat in the 2022 presidential election by Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, a left-wing candidate. Prosecutors accuse the former president of conspiring to cling to power despite losing the vote, a charge that could lead to a

significant prison sentence. Due to a court order, Bolsonaro is barred from attending public events or using social media during the proceedings.

Thousands of demonstrators turned out in cities such as São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, and Brasília, many dressed in Brazil's national colors—green and yellow. Some carried American flags or signs that read “Thank you Trump,” in a show of support for the former U.S. president's recent moves. Speaking at a rally in Brasília, Valdecir Galvão, a stenographer, stated, “I am here to defend our people against censorship and judges who act arbitrarily.”

The protests came days after President Trump labeled Bolsonaro's trial a “witch hunt” and announced sweeping tariffs on Brazilian imports. The tariffs, totaling up to 50 percent on certain goods, are scheduled to take effect on August 6. This economic measure was widely interpreted as a retaliatory move against what Trump views as judicial overreach in Brazil.

In tandem, the U.S. Department of the Treasury levied sanctions against Justice Alexandre de Moraes, the Supreme Court judge overseeing the trial. De Moraes has become a central figure of controversy in Brazil due to his efforts to crack down on misinformation, which Bolsonaro's base views as a form of censorship.

Maristela dos Santos, a 62-year-old teacher who attended the Copacabana Beach rally in Rio de Janeiro, said she supported the U.S. actions. “Since no solution was found here, it had to come from elsewhere,” she remarked, wearing an American flag draped over her shoulders. Although she acknowledged the potential economic impact of tariffs, she emphasized her broader concerns, saying, “What worries me is that Brazil will become like Venezuela and we won't be able to find anything to eat in the supermarket.”

Another attendee, Paulo Roberto, a 46-year-old entrepreneur, voiced a similar perspective. “Unfortunately, you have to take a few steps back in order to aspire to greater freedom and a better quality of life in the future,” he said, accepting the economic consequences as necessary for long-term change.

The demonstrations signal continued deep divisions in Brazilian politics, with many of Bolsonaro's supporters viewing both domestic and international institutions as hostile to their values. As Bolsonaro's trial nears its conclusion, attention is now focused on how Trump's policies—and Brazilian public sentiment—may influence both the outcome of the case and the broader political climate.