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Trump Says Brazilian President Lula Welcome to Call Amid Tensions Over Tariffs and Sanctions

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Former U.S. President Donald Trump said Friday that Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva is welcome to contact him directly, as economic and political tensions between the two countries continue to mount. Trump's remarks come days after announcing steep tariffs and sanctions against Brazil in response to what he described as politically motivated actions against former Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro.

"He can talk to me anytime he wants," Trump said when asked about Lula, adding that he held affection for the Brazilian people but believed "the people running Brazil did the wrong thing."

The comment followed Trump's decision to impose a 50% tariff on Brazilian imports, with certain exemptions, beginning next week. The move is part of a broader response by Trump's administration to what it views as a politically driven legal campaign against Bolsonaro, who is currently on trial in Brazil for allegedly plotting a coup after losing the 2022 election.

In addition to the tariffs, the U.S. also announced targeted sanctions against a Brazilian Supreme Court justice overseeing Bolsonaro's trial. The measures have drawn criticism from Brazil's current government. President Lula labeled the tariffs and sanctions "unjustifiable" and called them an "unacceptable" interference in the country's legal system.

Brazilian Finance Minister Fernando Haddad responded to Trump's openness to dialogue, describing the comments as "great" and adding that he believes Lula would also be open to direct communication. Speaking from Brasília, Haddad said Lula would be willing to receive a call from the U.S. president if the opportunity arises.

Lula, for his part, did not mention Trump directly but emphasized Brazil's willingness to maintain diplomatic dialogue. In a post on his X (formerly Twitter) account, he said, "Brazil has always been open to dialogue."

Haddad also confirmed plans for a virtual meeting with U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent in the coming days. The meeting is expected to lay the groundwork for a

potential future conversation between Lula and Trump. However, Haddad stressed that such a meeting would require careful planning, particularly given recent tensions.

Earlier this week, Haddad raised concerns about how Lula might be received in Washington, referencing criticism directed at Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy during a contentious White House meeting with Trump and Vice President JD Vance earlier this year.

The dispute underscores the growing political divide between the two administrations and reflects Trump's ongoing support for Bolsonaro, a close political ally during Trump's previous term in office. The administration's recent actions also signal a more aggressive stance on foreign policy and trade as Trump positions himself for a potential return to the White House.