

ADD A MENU

Special Content

Why

Home > Brazil >

# What you need to know about Brazil's pivotal elections – NBCNEWS



Sanya Mansoor  
September 15, 2022 9 views



## MOST VIEW



**PRESS RELEASE** 667 views  
Golddodge Sachs Introduces the First Cryp...



**PRESS RELEASE** 610 views  
The School of Business, Woxsen Universit...



**KARO, WISATA** 399 views  
Loken Barn Resort Tongging : Tour above ...



**BLACK LABOR UNIONS, BLACK NEWS, BLACK-WORKERS-RIGHTS, BROTHERHOOD-OF-SLEEPING-CAR-PORTER, COLORED NATIONAL LABOR UNION, LABOR DAY WEEKEND, LABOR UNIONS, LISTICLE, NEWS, NEWSLETTER** 391 views  
5 Black-Led Unions That Paved the Way fo...



**PRESS RELEASE** 370 views  
LiveCare Health's New Service Offe...



**ENTERTAINMENT** 320 views  
Amazing, Indecent Video Jeje Slebew Vira...

**PRESS RELEASE** 302 views  
USAID Announces \$200 Million Commitment ...

## What you need to know about Brazil's pivotal elections – NBCNEWS

[Clique aqui para ver a notícia no site](#)

Brazil heads to the polls on October 2 for crucial general elections in Latin America's largest economy and most populous country, which will determine the next president, vice president and national congress. The main question on everyone's mind is whether right-wing President Jair Bolsonaro will get another term, or whether left-wing former President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva will return to office as part of a resurgent pink tide in the region that has recently seen how leftists took power Colombia, Argentina, Mexico and elsewhere.

The choice between the two men couldn't be more stark.

Over the past four years, incumbent President Jair Bolsonaro questioning the role of the Supreme Court and repeatedly suggested without proof that the electoral system is rigged. He has compared COVID-19 to "a little flu", and approved destructive environmental policies that have devastated the Amazon rainforest.

Lula ruled from 2003 to 2010 after winning two four-year terms and helped lift millions out of poverty, making him one of the country's most popular leaders. "Lula runs out of nostalgia to win back his old job," said Gustavo Ribeiro, journalist and founder of the English-language political site The Brazilian Report.

However, Lula is also controversial, but in different ways. In September 2016, he was struck with: charges of corruption that arose from a money laundering investigation known as Operation Car Wash aimed at eradicating corruption under senior Latin American political and business leaders. In July 2017 he was found guilty and a court ruled that he could not stand for re-election in 2018. But in March last year, Brazil's Supreme Court decided overturned the conviction citing some technicalities and saying that Lula's right to a fair trial had been jeopardized by a biased judge, allowing him to run for president this time.

Brazilian presidential candidate and former president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, speaks at an election rally on sustainable development in Manaus, Brazil, on August 31, 2022.

Michael Dantas/AFP—Getty Images

Lula has presented the Supreme Court ruling as proof of his innocence, arguing that the corruption charges were designed by right-wing forces to keep him out. But recent surveys have shown that public opinion is divided.

Read more: [BRasil's Most Popular President Returns From Political Exile With Pledge To Save The Nation](#)

Anyway, polls suggest Lula will comfortably beat Bolsonaro, although it is unclear if he will have enough votes to avoid a second vote on October 30. -header match between the two frontrunners, this year almost certainly Bolsonaro and Lula.

### Brazil's Democratic Decline

"Bolsonaro has eroded accountability bodies, he is rotting the state from within," Ribeiro said. However, Bolsonaro made a rare confession on a podcast Monday that he would? resign as defeated. "If that is the will of God, I will continue, but if not, I will pass the presidential sash and retire."

That rhetoric hasn't allayed concerns that the transfer of power if Bolsonaro loses might not go smoothly, though experts say he's unlikely to have the power to topple the election. "I don't think he has the institutional support to do that," Ribeiro said. But even attempting to suggest that he was wronged could help him maintain significant influence in Brazil. "Everyone thinks Bolsonaro would try a January 6 in Brazil if he loses. We're not so sure... if this will be a coup. I don't think so, but it could just be a way to leave power and still keep his people," said Thomas Traumann, a Brazilian journalist and political analyst.

Fueling some of these fears is Bolsonaro's call last September to tens of thousands of his supporters to protest the court after his dispute with the judiciary about changes in the voting system where the president tried to push for paper ballots. Brazilian and international media compared the incident until the January 6 uprising on Capitol Hill. While some point to Bolsonaro taking a page out of US President Donald Trump's playbook, Ribeiro says it may be the other way around. "Bolsonaro attacked the system long before Trump became president... He has threatened time and again not to recognize the results if he doesn't believe they are fair."

Civil rights advocates fear a second term from Bolsonaro could lead to a democratic setback, or worse.

### Bolsonaro's record in office

There are concerns about the rate of Amazon deforestation reach a tipping point where it turns into a dry savanna under a second Bolsonaro term. That, in turn, would accelerate global climate change; the Amazon has long functioned as a sink for draining carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, absorbing about 2 billion tons of CO2 per year (or 5% of emissions). Data from the Brazilian National Institute of Space Research showed that: more than 3,980 square kilometers deforested in the first six months of this year, the highest amount since 2016.

Under Bolsonaro, deforestation laws have been relaxed and environmental agencies have faced staffing and budget cuts. "Very little has

been monitored or fined or attempted to regulate deforestation,” said Amy Erica Smith, an associate professor of political science and expert on Brazilian politics at Iowa State University. In addition, Ribeiro says: “Bolsonaro encourages the use of indigenous lands, environmental protection areas for mining, for ranching.”

Bolsonaro has also been criticized for his handling of the COVID-19 pandemic, and spreading misinformation about the virus and vaccines. Brazil has more than 685,000 recorded COVID deaths, which is one of the highest death tolls worldwide.

What do voters really care about?

While Bolsonaro has raised concerns about Brazil’s democracy, it’s unlikely to be the average Brazilian voter, experts say. More than a third of Brazilian families are dealing with food insecurity, according to a study published in May by the Getulio Vargas Foundation (FGV), a Brazilian academic institution.

A customer counts money at a fruit and vegetable stall in a market in Salvador, Bahia State, Brazil, on August 26, 2022

Rafael Martins/AFP —Getty Images

“People have a really hard time,” Ribeiro says. “That’s why Bolsonaro broke the bank to increase social spending.”

Bolsonaro has slashed fuel taxes to lower prices after they rose in part due to Russia’s war in Ukraine. He increased aid payments to the poorest countries through a program called Auxilio Brasil or Brazil Aid; in August he started handing out \$120 monthly cash payments to 20 million families. Inflation has also not been as much of a problem in Brazil as in the US and Europe, due to lower energy prices. But wages are still shrinking and unemployment is still high, albeit declining.

Bolsonaro is also especially popular among evangelicals Christians, who make up nearly a third of the country’s population, according to the polling agency Datafolha. (In 2018 about 70% of these voters supported Bolsonaro.) “There are plenty of evangelicals out there who can really matter,” Smith says.

“Bolsonaro is the first candidate to really embrace them,” says Traumann. He gave them important ministerial positions as well as named judge of the Supreme Court who was evangelical. Lula, on the other hand, faced curbing many evangelicals next comments he made earlier this year that abortion should be seen as a public health problem, rather than a religious one. Bolsonaro has repeatedly emphasized his commitment to ensuring that most abortions in Brazil remain illegal.

That is not to say that all evangelicals vote in a block. Some female voters in particular may be put off by what experts say is Bolsonaro’s misogyny. Smith doubts evangelicals will emerge as strongly as they did for Bolsonaro in 2018, as “they will evaluate him not only on issues of culture wars like abortion and LGBTQ rights, but also on his performance on the economy and pandemic,” she says.

But if the polls are correct, and Lula wins on October 2 or 30, Brazilians — and much of the world — will tune in to see what comes next.

More must-read stories from TIME