

《Bad news piles up for Temer as ally leaves government》



A woman demonstrates against Brazil's president Michel Temer during a protest in Union Square in the Manhattan borough of New York City, New York, US May 21, 2017. [Photo/Agencies]

RIO DE JANEIRO - The Brazilian Socialist Party (PSB) -- an ally of President Michel Temer -- announced Saturday that it was leaving the government led by Temer and is seeking his removal from office.

The PSB will also seek a constitutional amendment to call for direct elections if the presidency is vacated, instead of the indirect elections in Congress currently mandated, according to PSB president Carlos Siqueira.

"Today's decision, first of all, is to suggest to the president that, to help find a solution for our country, he should quit as fast as possible," commented Siqueira, adding that the PSB would also support Temer's impeachment.

He explained that Temer has lost the condition to govern the country. Whoever concludes the president does not have the condition to lead a national project, de facto, enters the opposition.

The PSB's announcement came after a recording was released this week in which Temer seemingly endorses the bribing of former speaker Eduardo Cunha in exchange for his silence.

Since the recording was revealed this week, the Temer government has already lost two ministers.

Bruno Araujo, the minister of cities, distanced himself from the scandal and resigned, while Roberto Freire, the minister of culture, also quit, citing "the political instability generated by facts that directly involve the presidency."

The PSB currently holds one ministry, that of mines and energy.

On Saturday, Temer said that the recording had been doctored to harm him and asked the Supreme Court to drop the investigation into him.

Brazil's former president, Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva (2003-2010), called Saturday for the resignation of Temer.

Lula promised he was "in the trenches" to demand Temer's resignation and to call for new elections, to allow the people to elect their new leader. "We want Temer to leave but we don't want an indirectly elected president," he told supporters at Sao Bernardo do Campo, near Sao Paulo.

This was his first public appearance since JBS owner, Joesley Batista, told judicial investigators he paid Lula 80 million U.S. dollars on foreign accounts, although the ex-president did not address these claims.

Lula's concern about direct elections stems from the fact that, if Temer resigns or is impeached, his successor will be elected by parliament.

While Lula is the favorite to win next year's presidential elections in 2018 according to opinion polls, he is facing five different court cases, which could declare him ineligible to run.

"I had never thought I would be a candidate again. Now, with this provocation, with this amount of accusations, with things being invented every week, I want to contest the elections," he said.

Lula added, his Workers' Party (PT) had learned over its 12 years in power (2003-2016) how to fight corruption, as nobody created more mechanisms than the PT.