[J P Linstroth](https://www.thenews.com.pk/writer/j-p-linstroth)

May 4, 2021

**Crisis in Brazil**

The Supreme Court of Brazil has authorized a Senate Commission (CPI, Commisão Parlamentar de Inquérito) to investigate Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro on his handling of COVID-19 in Brazil. The impetus for investigating the Brazilian president seems to be appropriate given how much Bolsonaro has downplayed the Coronavirus and the fact that Brazil has the second-highest death toll from Covid-19 in the world with 395,000 deaths and with a total of 14.4 million cases, only the United States has more. Moreover, the seven-day death toll in Brazil remains above 3,000 according to Al Jazeera.

According to the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) News, the Brazilian Senate commission will be investigating whether or not the Bolsonaro administration’s response time to Covid-19 in Brazil has been adequate; whether or not Bolsonaro has minimized the severity of the pandemic; whether or not there has been a lack of procurement of medical equipment to handle the virus; whether or not the promotion of unproven medications such as hydroxychloroquine by Bolsonaro and his administration was appropriate; whether or not President Bolsonaro had allowed the Coronavirus to spread in order to attain herd immunity; and whether or not the Bolsonaro administration committed genocide against the Brazilian Amerindian population by not controlling the deadly variant of Covid-19 and providing adequate support to indigenous peoples.

In addition, the inquiry by the Brazilian Senatorial Commission may weaken Bolsonaro’s presidency and may lead to criminal procedures and/or impeachment. This is significant since the next Brazilian presidential election is in 2022. What the Commisão Parlamentar de Inquérito (CPI) finds may in fact derail Jair Bolsonaro’s chances for winning the presidency altogether.

A former health minister, Humberto Costa, told Al Jazeera, that CPI will “…investigate allegations that Bolsonaro sabotaged social distancing measures, targeted local authorities that tried to implement lockdowns, acted negligently in acquiring vaccines, as well as touted ineffective medicines such as chloroquine. Altogether, 11 senators and seven substitutes will form the committee who will call witnesses to testify.”

In March, a Supreme Court judge annulled the conviction of Brazil’s former president, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, which restored his political rights, thereby creating the possibility of Lula’s run for another term as president, perhaps in 2022. Many observers think Lula would be a contender if Bolsonaro loses his popularity because of the CPI hearings.

Equally, it is important to note, Médicins Sans Frontières (MSF) has heavily criticized the Bolsonaro administration for its lackadaisical response to the Covid-19 crisis in Brazil.

Excerpted: ‘Brazilian Senate Will Question: Bolsonaro on COVID-19 Response’

Counterpunch.org