

Dear comrades,

I would like to greet all comrades from Britain and also from other countries who are attending this Conference in Solidarity to Latin America and to congratulate the initiative of the Trades Union Congress (TUC) and other entities for organizing this important event.

In our region, for more than a decade, we had been building a model of socially and environmentally sustainable development based on the strengthening of democracy and human rights, the integration of our peoples and the increasingly expressive realization of the rights of those most in need: the excluded, women, blacks, indigenous people, workers and those persons discriminated against and persecuted.

However, Latin American elites cannot cope with democracy and the social inclusion of the poor, and that path of development and broadening of rights has been interrupted by undemocratic methods that include manipulating the judicial system for political persecution - lawfare - the ban on debate and the poisoning of society by the industrial spread of hate and fake news lies.

After spending 580 days in jail and receiving numerous displays of solidarity from around the world, I can say that the fight is not yet over. The “Lula Livre” campaign has ahead of it an even bigger and more decisive battle: I will continue to struggle to prove my innocence and quest for justice, democracy and the rights of the working class.

In Brazil, we will continue to stand up against a government that does not respect democracy nor human, labor or social rights, and disregards the environment: visible to the world in the recent Amazon fires and the oil spill disaster on the Northeastern coast of Brazil. We will win this fight because we have proved that it is possible to govern for the most needy, to bring the poor to universities, to create jobs and prosperity.

Latin America is going through decisive moments. Amidst huge popular mobilizations that are taking place throughout the region - in addition to Alberto Fernández's electoral victory in Argentina - comrade Evo Morales suffered a coup d'état in Bolivia. But unlike recent coups in Honduras, Paraguay and also in Brazil, which at least tried to simulate an environment of respect for constitutional order, the coup in Bolivia repeats the model of the bloody coups d'état of the 1960s and 1970s. I am sure that if the coup d'état in Bolivia does not suffer the utmost repudiation from the international community, military coups could once again be commonplace in our region.

Finally, I would like once again to register how deeply touched I was with all mobilizations and declarations of solidarity organized by the international trade union movement and other social organizations in the United Kingdom and around the world - such as the Trades Union Congress (TUC) and its unions. I did not expect so much affection and solidarity. These gestures do not only reach me, but all of those who defend democracy and justice in Brazil and suffer the consequences of this struggle.

Fraternal greetings,

Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva