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Brazil: Background and U.S. Relations

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SUMMARY

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Brazil: Background and U.S. Relations

Brazil has the potential to play an influential role in international affairs as the fifth-largest territory, seventh-most populous country, and ninth-largest economy in the world. Given Brazil's potential strategic importance, Members of Congress sometimes have explored ways to bolster U.S.-Brazil cooperation and Brazil periodically has been a focal point of U.S. policy in Latin America. The United States and Brazil historically have maintained robust political and economic ties, including regular high-level engagement on security and other matters and goods and services trade valued at more than $127 billion in 2024. Nevertheless, differing policy approaches and sometimes divergent national interests appear to have inhibited the development of a closer partnership.

Brazil's Domestic and Foreign Policy

President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (Lula) of the left-of-center Workers' Party was inaugurated to a third four-year term on January 1, 2023. Since returning to office, Lula has sought to restore the upward social mobility that characterized his first two terms (2003-2010) while addressing environmental destruction in the Brazilian Amazon and expanding Brazil's international influence. He has advanced portions of his domestic agenda through executive action, such as stricter environmental enforcement efforts, and secured congressional approval for some of his proposed socioeconomic policies. Other Lula administration initiatives, including certain fiscal reforms, have faced setbacks amid budget constraints and opposition in the center-right Brazilian congress. President Lula also is contending with a highly polarized society, in which Brazilians of differing political ideologies have diverged in their confidence in Brazil's democratic institutions and their assessments of the Brazilian judiciary's response to alleged threats to democracy, including an alleged attempt by right-wing populist President Jair Bolsonaro (2019-2023) to remain in office after losing the 2022 presidential election. Lula's efforts to reassert Brazil's influence abroad have included some high-profile international summits, but some other diplomatic initiatives—such as efforts to mediate regional and international conflicts—have yet to bear fruit. As of July 2025, 43% of Brazilians approved of Lula's performance in office and 53% disapproved, according to a Genial/Quaest poll.

U.S.-Brazil Relations

U.S.-Brazil relations have waxed and waned over the past decade, depending, in part, on the relative ideological alignment between the administrations in power. During 2019 and 2020, then-President Bolsonaro brought Brazil's foreign policy into closer alignment with that of the United States, President Donald Trump designated Brazil as a major non-NATO ally, and the U.S. and Brazilian governments concluded a trade facilitation agreement. Relations cooled somewhat during 2021 and 2022, as the U.S. Administration of President Joe Biden carried out a high-level diplomatic effort with the stated objective of ensuring Brazil's 2022 elections were free and fair and resulted in a peaceful transfer of power. Lula's return to office in 2023 spurred increased bilateral cooperation on climate change and environmental conservation—top priorities of both governments.

While working-level cooperation related to security and other areas of mutual interest appears to have continued during the initial months of the second Trump Administration, some bilateral disagreements have emerged over the Brazilian judiciary's prosecution of former President Bolsonaro, Brazil's regulation of social media content, and U.S. trade policy. Tensions appear to have escalated since July 2025, when President Trump announced his intention to increase tariffs on imports from Brazil to 50% and the U.S. Departments of State and Treasury imposed sanctions on some Brazilian supreme court justices.

Congressional Action

Some Members of Congress have monitored developments in Brazil and sought to influence the trajectory of U.S.-Brazilian relations. Environmental conservation has been a major area of focus for some Members. In FY2024 appropriations (P.L. 118-47, Division F), carried forward into FY2025 by the Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025 (P.L. 119-4), Congress designated $23.75 million for environmental programs in the Brazilian Amazon. Some Members also have expressed concerns about Brazilian judicial orders regulating social media platforms and have expressed support for the Trump Administration's sanctions against Brazilian supreme court justices for allegedly infringing on freedom of expression. Some other Members have criticized the Trump Administration for purportedly using U.S. sanctions and trade policy to undermine Brazil's democracy and rule of law. The 119th Congress may assess whether—and, if so, how—to continue shaping U.S.-Brazil relations on these and other issues as it considers FY2026 appropriations and exercises its other legislative and oversight prerogatives.

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Introduction

Brazil has the potential to play an influential role in international affairs as the fifth-largest territory, seventh-most populous country, and the ninth-largest economy in the world; it is also a top global food and energy producer and home to the majority of the Amazon forest (see **Figure 1** for a map of Brazil).[1] Over the past 25 years, Brazil has forged coalitions with other large, developing countries to push for changes to multilateral institutions and to ensure that global agreements on issues ranging from trade to climate change adequately protect mutual interests. At times, Brazil also has sought to play a greater role in promoting peace and stability, contributing to UN peacekeeping missions and attempting to mediate conflicts in South America and elsewhere. Although some domestic challenges have led Brazil to turn inward and appear to have weakened its standing as a global leader over the past decade, the country continues to exert some influence on international policy issues that affect the United States.

Brazil at a Glance

Population: 212.6 million (2024 est.)

Official Language: Portuguese

Race/Ethnicity: mixed race—45.3%, White—43.5%, Black—10.2%, Indigenous—0.6%, Asian—0.4%, (Self-identification, 2022 census)

Religion: Catholic—56.8%, Evangelical—26.9%, none—9.3%, other—6.9% (Self-identification, 2022 census)

Land Area: 3.3 million square miles (slightly larger than the 48 contiguous U.S. states and the District of Columbia)

Gross Domestic Product (GDP)/GDP per Capita: $2.2 trillion/$10,214 (2024 est.)

Sectoral Components of GDP: Services—71.9%, industry—20.8%, agriculture—8.1% (2024 est.)

Top Exports: oil, soybeans, iron ore, meat, and sugar (2024)

Top Export Partners: China (28.0%), European Union (14.3%), United States (12.0%), Argentina (4.1%)

Life Expectancy at Birth: 76.4 years (2023)

Poverty Rate: 27.4% (2023)

Sources: Population, race/ethnicity, religion, land area, life expectancy, and poverty statistics from the *Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística*; GDP estimates from the International Monetary Fund; Sectoral GDP estimates from the Economist Intelligence Unit; export data from Trade Data Monitor.

Some analysts have characterized Brazil as a global "swing state" with the potential to affect the trajectory of the international order.[2] Given Brazil's potential strategic importance, some of those analysts argue that the United States should more actively engage the country and devote increased attention and resources to forging a close partnership. Several previous efforts to establish closer ties have left policymakers in both countries frustrated, however, as differing policy approaches and sometimes divergent national interests have inhibited cooperation.[3] Some analysts argue that Brazil is unlikely to ever closely align with the United States but the two countries may be able to cooperate on particular issues at particular times.[4]

During the 118th Congress, some Members expressed support for enhanced economic, environmental, and security cooperation with Brazil. Others argued the U.S. government should impose sanctions or other pressure on Brazilian officials in response to certain foreign policy

[1] World Bank, "DataBank," accessed June 13, 2025.

[2] Daniel M. Kliman and Richard Fontaine, *Global Swing States: Brazil, India, Indonesia, Turkey and the Future of International Order*, German Marshall Fund of the United States and Center for a New American Security, November 2012; and Jared Cohen, *The Rise of Geopolitical Swing States*, Goldman Sachs, May 15, 2023.

[3] See, for example, Mônica Hirst, *The United States and Brazil: A Long Road of Unmet Expectations* (New York: Routledge, 2005).

[4] See, for example, Matias Spektor and Margaret Myers, remarks during a Carnegie Endowment for International Peace event on "Pivotal States: A New Era for U.S.-Brazil Relations?" August 17, 2023.

decisions and Brazilian judicial actions they characterized as censorship.[5] The 119th Congress may continue monitoring developments in Brazil and assess whether and, if so, how to influence U.S. Brazilian relations as it oversees U.S. defense and trade policies, considers appropriations for security and environmental assistance, and debates sanctions and other potential legislation.

Figure 1. Map of Brazil

Source: Map Resources. Adapted by CRS Graphics.

[5] For a variety of views, see U.S. Congress, Senate Foreign Relations Committee, *The Future of U.S.-Brazil Relations*, 118th Cong., 1st sess., March 16, 2023, S.Hrg. 118-50 (Washington: GPO, 2023); and U.S. Congress, House Foreign Affairs Committee, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations Subcommittee, *Brazil: A Crisis of Democracy, Freedom, & Rule of Law?*, 118th Cong., 2nd sess., May 7, 2024.

Brazil's Domestic Situation

Background

Brazil declared independence from Portugal in 1822, initially establishing a constitutional monarchy and retaining a slave-based, plantation economy. Although the country abolished slavery in 1888 and became a republic in 1889, economic and political power remained concentrated in the hands of large rural landowners and the vast majority of Brazilians remained outside the political system. The authoritarian government of Getúlio Vargas (1930-1945) began to incorporate the working classes into politics but exerted strict control over labor as part of its broader push to centralize power in the federal government. Vargas also began to implement a state-led development model, which endured for much of the 20th century as successive governments supported the expansion of Brazilian industry.[6]

Brazil experienced two decades of multiparty democracy from 1945 to 1964 but struggled with political and economic instability that ultimately led the military to seize power. A 1964 military coup ushered in two decades of authoritarian rule. The U.S. government dispatched military assets to potentially aid the pro-coup forces and expressed support for the post-coup government.[7] Although repressive, the military government was not as brutal as the dictatorships established in several other South American countries around this same time period. Brazilian security forces killed at least 434 dissidents during the dictatorship and they detained and tortured an estimated 30,000-50,000 others.[8] The military government nominally allowed the judiciary and congress to function during its tenure but stifled representative democracy and civic action, carefully preserving its influence during one of the most protracted transitions to democracy to occur in Latin America.[9]

Brazil restored civilian rule in 1985, and a national constituent assembly, elected in 1986, promulgated a new constitution in 1988. The constitution divides power among three branches of government: an executive branch led by a president with extensive policymaking authority; a legislative branch consisting of the 513-member Chamber of Deputies and the 81-member Senate; and an independent judicial branch charged with interpreting and applying the numerous political, economic, and social rights enshrined in the constitution.[10] Under Brazil's federal structure, the national government shares authority with 26 states, a federal district that includes the capital city of Brasília, and 5,568 municipalities. Organizations that attempt to track respect for democracy globally generally recognize Brazil's democracy for its competitive elections and

[6] For additional information on Brazil's history, see *Brazil: A Country Study*, ed. Rex A. Hudson, 5th ed. (Library of Congress, Federal Research Division, 1998).

[7] *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1964–1968, Volume XXXI, South and Central America; Mexico, eds. David C. Geyer and David H. Herschler (Washington: GPO, 2004), Documents 198 and 212, at https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1964-68v31/ch5.

[8] At least 8,350 Indigenous people in Brazil also were killed during the dictatorship, either directly by government agents or indirectly due to government policies. Ministério Público Federal, Procuradoria Federal dos Direitos do Cidadão, "PFDC Contesta Recomendação de Festejos ao Golpe de 64," press release, March 26, 2019; and *Relatório da Comissão Nacional da Verdade*, December 10, 2014, at http://cnv.memoriasreveladas.gov.br/.

[9] For background on the military government, see Thomas E. Skidmore et al., *The Politics of Military Rule in Brazil, 1964-1985* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988).

[10] The text of the Constitution of the Federative Republic of Brazil is available in English at https://www.stf.jus.br/arquivo/cms/legislacaoConstituicao/anexo/brazil_federal_constitution.pdf.

political pluralism but identify some shortcomings, including endemic corruption and high levels of political polarization and violence.[11]

Lula Administration (2023-Present)

Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (Lula) of the left-of-center Workers' Party (*Partido dos Trabalhadores*, or PT) was inaugurated to a third four-year term on January 1, 2023, marking a significant political comeback. Lula originally rose to prominence during the 1970s as the leader of Brazil's metal workers union. He subsequently helped found the PT amid the push to restore democracy in Brazil, and led the party in three unsuccessful presidential bids before being elected in 2002. Lula presided over a period of sustained economic growth and improving living conditions in Brazil during his first two terms (2003-2010), and left office with an 87% approval rating.[12] He was convicted on corruption charges in 2017, however, and imprisoned for 19 months before Brazil's Federal Supreme Court (*Supremo Tribunal Federal*, or STF) annulled those convictions on procedural grounds and ruled that the presiding judge had acted with bias. Lula then narrowly defeated incumbent President Jair Bolsonaro (2019-2022), a right-wing populist affiliated with the Liberal Party (*Partido Liberal*, or PL), 50.9% to 49.1%, in an October 2022 presidential runoff election.[13]

During his third term, President Lula has focused on raising Brazilians' living standards, addressing environmental concerns, and expanding Brazil's international influence. He faces several challenges, including a polarized society, a center-right congress, budget constraints, persistent inflation, and a loss of public support. According to a July 2025 poll, 43% of Brazilians approve of Lula's performance in office and 53% disapprove.[14] The 79-year-old president reportedly has stated that he intends to seek a fourth term in 2026, contingent on his health.[15]

Political Polarization and Threats to Democracy

Over the past decade, Brazilian society has grown more polarized and Brazilians of differing political ideologies have diverged in their confidence in Brazil's democratic institutions.[16] These shifts appear to stem, in part, from Brazilians' reactions to a series of crises, including a deep economic recession (2014-2016); the impeachment and removal from office of Lula's successor and fellow member of the PT, President Dilma Rousseff (2011-2016); record high homicide rates (2016-2017); and wide-ranging corruption scandals that implicated parties and politicians from across the political spectrum (2014-2021). Anti-establishment sentiment helped fuel the rise of

[11] See, for example, Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2025: Brazil*, February 26, 2025; and Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), *Democracy Index 2024: What's Wrong with Representative Democracy?*, February 2025, pp. 57-58.

[12] Reuters, "Brazil's Lula to Leave with Record-High Popularity," December 16, 2010.

[13] Tribunal Superior Eleitoral (TSE), "Eleição Geral Ordinária 2022, 2º Turno: Presidente," October 31, 2022.

[14] The remainder did not know or did not respond. Genial/Quaest, "Pesquisa da Avaliação do Governo Lula," July 2025.

[15] "Lula Fala em 4º Mandato, Mas Diz em Evento do PT Não Querer Repetir Biden: 'Preciso estar 100% de Saúde'," *Folha de São Paulo*, August 3, 2025.

[16] See, for example, Brazilians' evaluations of the federal government, electoral tribunal, and judiciary, broken down by 2022 presidential vote, in AtlasIntel and Bloomberg, "Latam Pulse Brasil," June 2025, https://atlasintel.org/polls/latam-pulse.

President Bolsonaro, who repeatedly clashed with other branches of government and expressed distrust in Brazil's electoral and judicial institutions.[17]

In the aftermath of Bolsonaro's 2022 election defeat, some Bolsonaro supporters set up camps outside Brazilian military barracks and called for the armed forces to intervene to prevent Lula from taking power. Three such supporters were convicted of planting a bomb in a fuel truck near Brasília's airport in late 2022 in an attempt to provoke military action.[18] On January 8, 2023, a week after Lula's inauguration, a group of Bolsonaro supporters stormed Brazil's congress, supreme court, and presidential palace, occupying and vandalizing the mostly vacant buildings for several hours until security forces regained control. As of July 3, 2025, Brazil's STF had convicted 643 individuals involved in the events of January 8, issuing sentences ranging from 1 to 17 years in prison, and public prosecutors had concluded 555 non-prosecution agreements, in which defendants admitted to crimes and agreed to comply with certain other legal conditions in exchange for lesser penalties.[19] Some Bolsonaro-aligned legislators have introduced bills in the Brazilian congress to grant amnesty to those involved in the events of January 8, 2023.

In February 2025, Brazil's attorney general charged former president Bolsonaro and 33 others—including former cabinet ministers and high-level military officers—with several crimes, including attempting a coup d'état to hold onto power irrespective of the 2022 election results.[20] Bolsonaro and his allies are alleged to have engaged in activities to discredit the elections, blocked opposition voters from getting to the polls, drafted decrees to overturn the election results, and pressured members of the armed forces to support a coup. Bolsonaro also is alleged to have been aware of a plan to assassinate then-President-elect Lula, the vice president-elect, and the head of Brazil's Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE) during the presidential transition period. These charges are said to be based on documents, electronic communications, and witness testimony from some former Bolsonaro advisers and military commanders gathered over the course of a nearly two-year investigation.[21] In May 2025, an STF panel began hearing witness testimony in the preliminary phase of the trial of the alleged core group of coup plotters, which includes Bolsonaro. Bolsonaro is already barred from seeking public office until 2030 due to a 2023 TSE ruling that some of his efforts to question Brazil's electronic voting system amounted to an abuse of power.[22]

Bolsonaro reportedly testified that he and his military commanders had discussed options "within the constitution" to overturn the 2022 election results, but denies the charges against him and has repeatedly asserted that he is being politically persecuted.[23] In March 2025, his son Eduardo Bolsonaro, who is a member of Brazil's Chamber of Deputies and reportedly was among the

[17] See, for example, Oliver Stuenkel, "Brazil's Polarization and Democratic Risks," in *Divisive Politics and Democratic Dangers in Latin America*, ed. Thomas Carothers and Andreas E. Feldmann (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2021); and Jack Nicas et al., "How Bolsonaro Built the Myth of Stolen Elections in Brazil," *New York Times*, October 25, 2022.

[18] "Brazil: Pro-Military-Coup Protests Intensify," *LatinNews Daily*, November 16, 2022; and Tribunal de Justiça do Distrito Federal e dos Territórios, "Justiça Condena Mais um Envolvido no Caso da Bomba Próxima ao Aeroporto de Brasília," August 17, 2023.

[19] Ministério Público Federal, Procuradoria-Geral da República (PGR), "Atos Antidemocráticos: Mais de 640 Réus já foram Condenados," July 3, 2025.

[20] PGR, "PGR Denuncia 34 Pessoas por Atos Contra o Estado Democrático de Direito," February 18, 2025.

[21] PGR, "PGR Denuncia 34 Pessoas por Atos Contra o Estado Democrático de Direito," February 18, 2025; and Polícia Federal, *Relatório Nº 4546344/2024*, November 2024.

[22] TSE, "Por Maioria de Votos, TSE Declara Bolsonaro Inelegível por 8 Anos," June 30, 2023.

[23] "Brazil: Bolsonaro Denies Plotting Coup," *LatinNews Daily*, June 11, 2025.

advisers urging a coup d'état, stated that he was seeking asylum in the United States.[24] Over the past five years, Bolsonaro and his allies also have accused the STF of engaging in censorship as a result of court orders blocking the social media accounts of some Bolsonaro-aligned legislators and media personalities for communications the STF has deemed to be disinformation or threats to democratic institutions (see "Democracy and Freedom of Expression").

Relations with Congress

In addition to navigating Brazil's polarized politics and concerns about civil-military relations raised by the alleged coup attempt by Bolsonaro and some military commanders, President Lula is contending with a fragmented congress in which 20 political parties from across the political spectrum have representation. As of the start of the Brazilian National Congress's 57th legislature (2023-2027), legislators aligned with Lula held approximately 27% of seats in the Chamber of Deputies and 19% of seats in the Senate, while the political opposition, led by Bolsonaro's PL, held about 33% of the seats in the Chamber of Deputies and 37% of the seats in the Senate. Lula forged working majorities with the conditional support of a bloc of centrist and center-right parties that held about 40% of the seats in the Chamber of Deputies and 44% of the seats in the Senate; these parties typically work with whatever administration is in power in order to increase their influence over government policy and staffing.[25]

Over the past two-and-a-half years, the Brazilian congress has approved minimum wage increases, an expansion of the country's conditional cash transfer program for low-income Brazilians, and modifications to Brazil's fiscal framework, among other Lula administration proposals. The congress also has blocked some key Lula administration tax reforms, and advanced some environmental deregulation and conservative social policy bills opposed by the president. Lula's working majorities remain fragile and could collapse if his approval rating declines further and/or economic circumstances further restrict the resources available to support legislators' priorities.

Socioeconomic Conditions

President Lula campaigned on restoring the upward social mobility that characterized his first two terms in office, when Brazil's gross domestic product (GDP) expanded by an average of 4.1% per year, driven by a surge in international demand (particularly from China) for Brazilian commodities such as oil, iron, and soybeans. Brazil's GDP growth, which averaged less than 1.0% between 2011 and 2022, has accelerated over the past two years, amounting to 3.2% in 2023 and 3.4% in 2024.[26] This acceleration has been driven, in part, by rising household consumption tied to improving labor market conditions, an expansion of credit, and government income transfer programs. The International Monetary Fund projects that Brazil's GDP growth will slow to 2.3% in 2025 amid tight monetary and financial conditions, government fiscal constraints, and global policy uncertainty.[27]

Brazilians' concerns about the cost of living appear to have taken a toll on Lula's popularity. In a June 2025 poll, 55% of Brazilians rated the Lula administration's efforts to combat inflation as

[24] "Bolsonaro's Son Moves to US Claiming Persecution," *LatinNews Daily*, March 19, 2025; and "Wife and Son Encouraged Bolsonaro to Stage a Coup, Mauro Cid Says," *Valor International*, January 27, 2025.

[25] Antônio Augusto de Queiroz, "Base do Governo Lula no Congresso," *Boletim do Departamento Intersindical de Assessoria Parlamentar*, February 8, 2023.

[26] International Monetary Fund (IMF), "World Economic Outlook Database, April 2025," April 22, 2025.

[27] IMF, "IMF Executive Board Concludes 2025 Article IV Consultation with Brazil," July 17, 2025.

"bad" or "terrible."[28] Consumer prices rose by 5.3% in the 12 months through July 2025, driven, in part, by food, education, and energy prices.[29] Brazil's inflation rate has remained above the independent Brazilian Central Bank's target range (1.5%-4.5%), even as it has raised the benchmark interest rate to 15% (as of June 2025).[30] The Lula administration has reduced import taxes on certain food products and proposed an income tax exemption to help low-income households deal with rising costs.[31] The Brazilian government is also under pressure from international investors to tighten its fiscal policy, however, given that the country's general government gross debt is equivalent to about 77% of GDP.[32]

Approach to the Amazon Forest

About 62% of the greater Amazon region, encompassing the Amazon Forest and Amazon Basin, is located within Brazil.[33] Deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon,[34] which fell by nearly 77% over the course of Lula's first two terms, began rising in 2012 and reached a 15-year high of 5,034 square miles in 2021 (see **Figure 2**). Some analysts have linked the increase in deforestation to a series of government policy reversals that cut funding for environmental enforcement, reduced the size of protected areas, and relaxed conservation requirements.[35] Market incentives, such as international prices for beef, soybeans, and gold, among other commodities, also appear to have contributed to deforestation trends.[36] Some scientists have warned that the Amazon forest may be nearing a tipping point at which the forest, no longer able to sustain itself, could transition to a drier, savanna-like ecosystem.[37] This cycle of deforestation and drought could reduce the forest's capacity to absorb and sequester carbon, as well as reduce the precipitation that fuels forest regeneration and growth and Brazil's agricultural and hydropower production.[38]

The Lula administration has pledged to eliminate net deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon by 2030.[39] Effectively monitoring and controlling activities in the region is difficult given the size of

[28] Ipsos, "Avaliação do Governo Federal em Diversas Áreas," June 2025.

[29] IBGE, "Sistema Nacional de Índices de Preços ao Consumidor, IPCA-15: Julho de 2025," July 25, 2025, p. 8.

[30] Banco Central do Brasil, "COPOM Increases Selic Rate to 15.00% p.a.," press release, June 23, 2025.

[31] Reuters, "Brazilian President Lula's Disapproval Rating Hits All-Time High, Poll Finds," April 2, 2025.

[32] Banco Central do Brasil, "Estatísticas Fiscais," press release, July 31, 2025.

[33] Daniel Santos et al., *Fatos da Amazônia 2025*, Amazônia 2030, April 30, 2025, p. 14.

[34] Within Brazil, the government has established an administrative zone known as the Legal Amazon, which is comprised of nine states that fall within the Amazon Basin: Acre, Amapá, Amazônia, Maranhão, Mato Grosso, Pará, Rondônia, Roraima, and Tocantins. Although rainforest covers most of the Legal Amazon, savanna (*Cerrado*) and wetlands (*Pantanal*) are also present in portions of the region.

[35] See, for example, Philip Fearnside, "Business as Usual: A Resurgence of Deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon," *Yale Environment 360*, April 18, 2017; and Associação Nacional dos Servidores de Meio Ambiente, *Cronologia de um Desastre Anunciado: Ações do Governo Bolsonaro para Desmontar as Políticas de Meio Ambiente no Brasil*, September 4, 2020.

[36] See, for example, Javier Miranda, Wolfgang Britz, and Jan Börner, "Impacts of Commodity Prices and Governance on the Expansion of Tropical Agricultural Frontiers," *Scientific Reports*, vol. 14 (2024); and Nora L. Alvarez-Berríos and T. Mitchell Aide, "Global Demand for Gold is Another Threat for Tropical Forests," *Environmental Research Letters*, vol. 10 (2015).

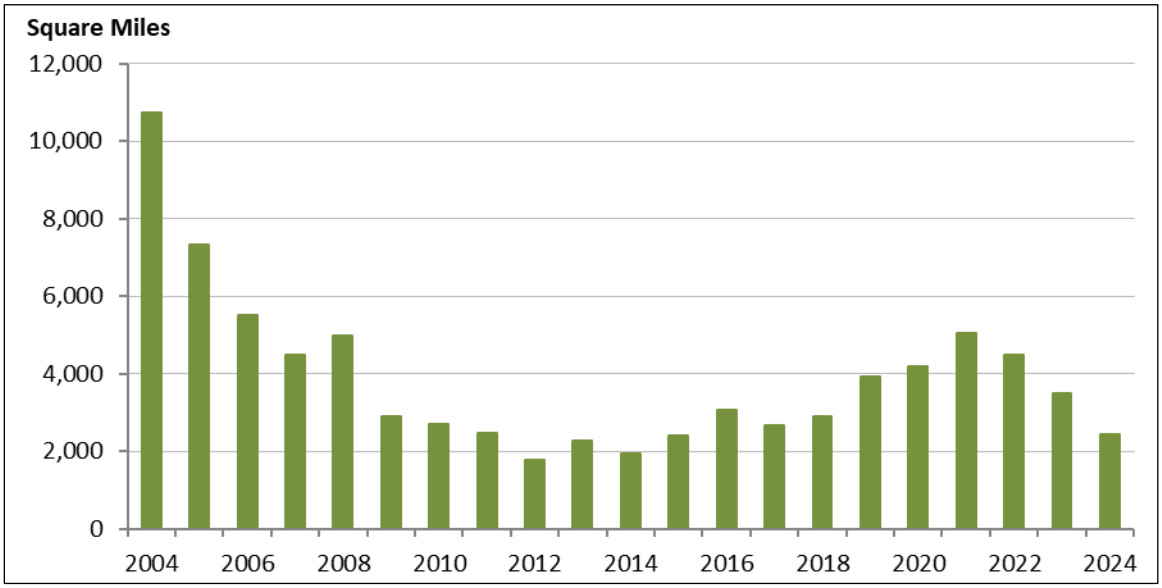
[37] Thomas Lovejoy and Carlos Nobre, "Amazon Tipping Point: Last Chance for Action," *Science Advances*, vol. 5, no. 12 (2019).

[38] According to Brazil's Empresa de Pesquisa Enegética, Hydropower accounted for 55.3% of Brazil's electricity generation in 2024. Luciana V. Gatti et al., "Amazonia as a Carbon Source Linked to Deforestation and Climate Change," *Nature*, vol. 595 (2021); Augusto Getirana et al. "Brazil is In Water Crisis—It Needs a Drought Plan," *Nature*, vol. 600 (2021).

[39] Ministério do Meio Ambiente e Mudança do Clima, *Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Deforestation in the Legal Amazon (PPCDAm): Fifth Phase (2023-2027)*, 2023.

the Brazilian Amazon, which encompasses 58.9% of Brazil's territory and is home to 26.7 million inhabitants.[40] Over the past two-and-a-half years, the Lula administration has increased environmental enforcement operations, expanded protected areas, implemented an income support program for families engaged in conservation, and issued concessions for sustainable forest management and forest restoration.[41] The Lula administration, with the support of other countries, also relaunched the Amazon Fund—created in 2008 but frozen during the Bolsonaro administration—as a vehicle for international donors to support such efforts. The politically-powerful rural caucus in the Brazilian congress and some state governments, such as Mato Grosso, have pushed back on some of the Lula administration's environmental policies. The Lula administration also has continued to support the expansion of oil and gas production in Brazil, including in environmentally sensitive areas in the Amazon Basin. Nevertheless, the Lula administration's approach appears to be lowering deforestation rates, which declined by 46% in the Brazilian Amazon between 2022 and 2024 (see **Figure 2**).

Figure 2. Deforestation in Brazil's "Legal Amazon": 2004-2024



Source: CRS presentation of data from the Brazilian government's Instituto Nacional de Pesquisas Espaciais (INPE), "PRODES (Deforestation)," TerraBrasilis database, accessed May 27, 2025, https://terrabrasilis.dpi.inpe.br/app/dashboard/deforestation/biomes/legal_amazon/rates.

Notes: Annual monitoring periods run from August to July (e.g., 2024 data include deforestation from August 2023 to July 2024). The "Legal Amazon" is an administrative region designated by the Brazilian government that is comprised of nine states that fall within the Amazon Basin: Acre, Amapá, Amazônia, Maranhão, Mato Grosso, Pará, Rondônia, Roraima, and Tocantins. Although rainforest covers most of the Legal Amazon, savanna (Cerrado) and wetlands (Pantanal) are also present in portions of the region.

Brazil's Foreign Policy

Although the short-term areas of emphasis of Brazilian foreign policy have varied, successive Brazilian administrations generally have sought to increase the country's influence on global

[40] Daniel Santos et al., *Fatos da Amazônia 2025*, Amazônia 2030, April 30, 2025, p. 19.

[41] Presidência da República, "Marina Silva Presents Overview of Federal Environmental Protection Results," June 17, 2024.

affairs while maintaining Brazil's autonomy.[42] While pursuing these objectives, Brazilian officials have emphasized the principles of multilateralism, peaceful dispute settlement, and nonintervention in the affairs of other countries.[43] In practice, this approach has involved the pursuit of cooperative relations with international partners of varying ideologies and systems of government, including the United States and European Union (EU) and fellow members of the BRICS group (originally named for Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa).[44]

President Lula has sought to reassert Brazil's influence abroad after eight years in which Brazil's leaders have been more focused on domestic challenges. He has placed particular emphasis on convening and hosting gatherings of world leaders. These gatherings have included a summit of South American leaders (May 2023), a meeting of Amazon Basin countries (August 2023), a Group of 20 (G-20) summit (November 2024), and a BRICS summit (July 2025). Additionally, Brazil is scheduled to host the 30th session of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP30) in November 2025.

Similar to his previous terms, Lula also has sought to mediate some regional and global conflicts since returning to office. Perhaps most prominently, the Lula administration sought to mediate between the Venezuelan government of President Nicolás Maduro and the political opposition following an allegedly fraudulent 2024 presidential election, and put forward a joint peace proposal with the People's Republic of China (PRC, or China) to end the Russia-Ukraine war. Neither diplomatic initiative has proven fruitful. Although U.S. officials have urged the Brazilian government to take on a more prominent role in addressing the security crisis in Haiti, the Lula administration has limited Brazil's involvement, reportedly due in part to some Brazilian policymakers' dissatisfaction with the results of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti that Brazil commanded between 2004 and 2017.[45]

Brazil's approach to the BRICS group and relations with the PRC, which have been of particular interest to some Members of Congress, are discussed below.

Approach to the BRICS Group

Brazil has long sought a more prominent role and greater influence in the UN Security Council and other international institutions, which Brazilian officials argue need to better represent developing countries. Brazil's reform proposals have been frustrated repeatedly, giving rise to what appears to be a widespread perception among Brazilian foreign policymakers that the United States and European countries are unwilling to cede space. This is one reason Brazil has turned to informal coalitions like the BRICS group to increase the country's leverage in global

[42] Miriam Gomes Saraiva and Marcel M. Valença, *A Política Externa Brasileira e sua Projeção Internacional: Um Projeto Caracterizado pela Continuidade*, Centro Brasileiro de Relações Internacionais, 2012.

[43] Article 4 of Brazil's 1988 constitution, as amended, states that Brazil's international relations are governed by the following principles: national independence; prevalence of human rights; self-determination of the people; nonintervention; equality among nations; defense of peace; peaceful settlement of conflicts; repudiation of terrorism and racism; cooperation among people for the progress of humanity; and granting of political asylum.

[44] William McIlhenny, "Brazil: A Voice for All?," in *Alliances in a Shifting Global Order: Rethinking Transatlantic Engagement with Global Swing States*, German Marshall Fund of the United States, May 2, 2023, pp. 22-26.

[45] Jacqueline Charles, "Race, Discrimination and Haiti Dominate Discussions in Brazil as Top Biden Official Visits," *Miami Herald*, May 25, 2023; Oliver Stuenkel, "Why Lula is Silent on Haiti," *Foreign Policy*, April 1, 2024; and Evens Sanon, "Haiti to Send 400 Police Officers to Brazil for Training as Gangs Seize More Territory," Associated Press, July 28, 2025.

policy discussions.[46] Inclusion in the BRICS, alongside China and India, also has bolstered Brazil's efforts to portray itself as a rising power.

The Lula administration has described the BRICS as "a strategic platform to promote cooperation between emerging countries," and has pushed back against efforts—within and outside the BRICS—to characterize the bloc as "anti-Western."[47] At the same time, President Lula has repeatedly called for the BRICS to adopt alternatives to the U.S. dollar for trade among BRICS countries.[48] Brazil's relative influence within the bloc has declined since 2024, as Egypt, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Iran, and the United Arab Emirates have joined the BRICS. Brazil reportedly resisted this expansion, due in part to concerns that it could reduce the bloc's cohesion, shift the balance of power within the bloc in a more authoritarian direction, and complicate Brazil's efforts to maintain an autonomous foreign policy.[49]

Brazil assumed the rotating presidency of the BRICS in January 2025, and Lula's protégé, former President Dilma Rousseff (2011-2016), was appointed to a second five-year term as the President of the New Development Bank (formerly known as the BRICS Bank) in March 2025. During its year-long BRICS presidency, the Brazilian government intends to focus on cooperation in the "Global South," with a particular emphasis on health, trade and investment, climate change, artificial intelligence (AI), UN Security Council reform, and the institutional development of the BRICS group.[50] During the July 2025 BRICS summit in Brazil, the bloc issued a 126-point declaration that included calls for reform and increased representation for BRICS and other developing countries in international organizations, including the UN Security Council, and continued cooperation within the BRICS to increase the interoperability of BRICS payment systems. The declaration also condemned the rise of unilateral tariffs, the imposition of economic and secondary sanctions, and military strikes against Iran, without explicitly mentioning the United States.[51] Other documents adopted at the summit focused on climate finance, global governance of AI, and the elimination of diseases associated with poverty and inequality.

Brazil-China Relations

In addition to engaging in multilateral cooperation within the BRICS group and other fora, Brazil and China have forged extensive bilateral ties. The countries have maintained formal diplomatic relations since 1974 and a "strategic partnership" since 1993.[52] The Brazilian and PRC governments also have engaged in frequent high-level diplomacy, with China hosting state visits

[46] Oliver Stuenkel, "How Brazil Embraced Informal Organizations," *International Politics*, April 28, 2022.

[47] Presidência da República, "Speech by President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva at the Opening of the 78th UN General Assembly," September 19, 2023; and "Brazil: Brazil is a Western Country, Minister Claims," *Latin American Security & Strategic Review*, December 2024.

[48] See, for example, Presidência da República, "President Lula's Speech During the Open Plenary Session of the BRICS Summit," October 23, 2024.

[49] See, for example, Lisa Paraguassu, "Brazil Now Main Holdout Against BRICS Expansion, Source Say," Reuters, August 2, 2023; and Oliver Stuenkel, "BRICS Grouping Weighs Expansion Ahead of Leaders' Summit in South Africa," *Foreign Policy*, June 22, 2023.

[50] Presidência do Brasil – BRICS 2025, "Fortalecendo a Cooperação do Sul Global para uma Governança Mais Inclusiva e Sustentável," Nota Conceitual, 2025.

[51] BRICS, Rio de Janeiro Declaration, Strengthening Global South Cooperation for a More Inclusive and Sustainable Governance, July 6, 2025.

[52] The PRC and Brazilian governments have "elevated" bilateral ties several times, most recently characterizing the relationship as a "Community with a Shared Future for a More Just World and Sustainable Planet" in November 2024. Presidência da República, "Brazil and China Expand Bilateral Relations During State Visit by President Xi Jinping," November 21, 2024.

for each of the past five Brazilian presidents and Brazil hosting state visits for PRC leader Xi Jinping and his predecessor Hu Jintao.[53] During Lula's May 2025 state visit to China, the Brazilian and PRC governments signed 20 bilateral agreements related to AI, energy, infrastructure, mining, space, and trade, among other areas of cooperation.[54]

Brazil's relationship with China appears to have been driven primarily by economic interests. Between 2004 and 2024, Brazil's annual goods trade with China climbed from $9.1 billion to $158.0 billion, and China's share of Brazil's global goods trade rose from 5.8% to 26.3%. In 2024, Brazil ran a $30.7 billion trade surplus with China.[55] Brazilian export growth has been heavily concentrated in a few products, particularly benefitting Brazil's mineral extraction industry and the politically influential agribusiness sector. In 2024, for example, soybeans, iron ore, crude oil, and frozen beef collectively accounted for 81.9% of the total value of Brazilian exports to China.[56] Brazilian manufacturers, on the other hand, have faced increased competition from imports from China, which some blame for deindustrialization.[57] Some analysts have assessed that U.S. tariffs on China (and the PRC's retaliatory measures) could exacerbate these trends, with China opting to import a greater share of its agricultural products from Brazil rather than the United States and seeking to export a greater share of its industrial goods to Brazil in the face of U.S. trade barriers.[58]

PRC investment and development finance in Brazil also have increased over the past 20 years despite the fact that Brazil has not formally signed onto China's "Belt and Road Initiative."[59] According to the Brazil-China Business Council, between 2007 and 2023, PRC companies invested $73.3 billion in 264 projects in Brazil. The top sectors by project value were electricity (45%), oil and gas extraction (30%), manufacturing (7%), mining (6%), and infrastructure (5%).[60] The focus of such investments has shifted over time, with 72% of projects in 2023 focused on green energy and related sectors.[61] According to the China Global Investment Tracker database, which tracks investments over $95 million, Brazil received 4.9% of PRC investment worldwide between 2005 and 2024, ranking fourth behind the United States (13.4%), Australia (7.2%), and

[53] This total counts Lula twice due to his non-consecutive terms. Ministério das Relações Exteriores (MRE), "Bilateral Relations: People's Republic of China," February 7, 2025.

[54] MRE, "Atos Adotados por Ocasião de Estado do Presidente Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva a Pequim, China, 12 e 13 de Maio de 2025," May 14, 2025.

[55] Ministério do Desenvolvimento, Indústria, Comércio e Serviços (MDIC) data, as reported by *Trade Data Monitor*, accessed May 30, 2025.

[56] MDIC data, as reported by *Trade Data Monitor*, accessed May 30, 2025.

[57] Between 2004 and 2024, the manufacturing sector's share of Brazil's GDP fell from 15.8% to 10.6%. EIU, "Data" tool, accessed May 30, 2025.

[58] Susannah Savage, et al., "Donald Trump's China Trade War a 'Boon' for Brazil but Sends US Farmers Reeling," *Financial Times*, April 13, 2025; and "Brazil Eyes Tariff Hike to Counter Possible Surge in Chinese Imports," *Valor International*, May 21, 2025.

[59] The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), a signature policy initiative first announced by Xi Jinping in 2013, aims to expand China's global economic reach and influence by developing China-centered and -controlled global infrastructure, transportation, trade, and production networks. Although Brazil has opted not to formally join the BRI, China lists Brazil among BRI countries on its official BRI website: https://www.yidaiyilu.gov.cn/country. In November 2024, the Brazilian government announced that it would work with the PRC to pursue "synergies" between its industrial, infrastructure, and climate change mitigation and adaptation policies and the BRI. Presidência da República, "Brazil and China Expand Bilateral Relations During Visit by President Xi Jinping," November 21, 2024.

[60] Tulio Cariello, *Chinese Investment in Brazil, 2023: New Trends in Green Energy and Sustainable Partnerships*, Brazil-China Business Council, September 2024, pp. 34-35.

[61] Cariello, *Chinese Investment in Brazil, 2023*, p. 10.

the United Kingdom (7.0%).[62] Between 2005 and 2023, the Brazilian government and state-owned enterprises received $32.4 billion in loans from China's state-owned policy banks (i.e., China Development Bank and the Export-Import Bank of China). This PRC development finance has been concentrated primarily in the energy sector.[63]

Although some Brazilian leaders have expressed concerns at times about PRC investments in strategic sectors, they generally have lacked the political support, political will, or both to restrict such investments. For example, President Bolsonaro entered office warning that the PRC was "buying Brazil," but he appears to have done little to shift the economic relationship.[64] His administration also opted to allow PRC companies like Huawei to participate in the development of Brazil's commercial fifth-generation (5G) telecommunications infrastructure.[65]

To date, Brazil's military ties with China appear to have been limited. The Brazilian and PRC governments established a joint exchange and cooperation commission in 2004 and signed a defense cooperation framework agreement in 2011. Those mechanisms have facilitated education and training exchanges for some Brazilian and PRC military personnel as well as occasional joint exercises.[66] Brazil, which has a well-developed defense industry, does not appear to have made any significant purchases of PRC military equipment, and it competes with China to supply the South American defense market.[67] In 2024, the PRC state-owned defense company China North Industries Corporation (Norinco) reportedly expressed interest in acquiring a 49% stake in Avibras Indústria Aeroespacial, a top—but financially-struggling—Brazilian defense firm that specializes in missiles and rocket artillery. President Lula met with Norinco's president during his May 2025 visit to China and the Brazilian government reportedly suggested it was open to the acquisition.[68]

U.S.-Brazil Relations

The United States and Brazil marked 200 years of diplomatic relations in 2024. Historically, the two countries have maintained robust political and economic ties but differing perceptions of their respective national interests appear to have hindered the development of a closer partnership. That dynamic changed to some extent in 2019 and 2020, as then-President Bolsonaro brought Brazil's foreign policy into closer alignment with U.S. foreign policy, President Donald Trump designated Brazil as a major non-NATO ally, and the U.S. and Brazilian governments negotiated a Protocol on Trade Rules and Transparency intended to facilitate trade and regulatory cooperation (see "Defense" and "Trade and Investment Relations"). The Biden Administration

[62] Derek Scissors, "$2.5 Trillion: 20 Years of China's Global Investment and Construction," American Enterprise Institute, January 2025, pp. 6 and 8.

[63] Rebecca Ray and Margaret Myers, "Chinese Loans to Latin America and the Caribbean Database," Inter-American Dialogue and Boston University Global Development Policy Center, 2024, https://www.thedialogue.org/MapLists/#/Policy/country/brazil.

[64] Jake Spring, "Bolsonaro's Anti-China Rants have Beijing Nervous about Brazil," Reuters, October 25, 2018.

[65] Facing pressure from the U.S. government, the Bolsonaro administration excluded Huawei from a separate network for government communications. "China Ganha por Pontos Batalha Brasileira na Guerra do 5G com os EUA," *Folha de São Paulo*, November 4, 2021.

[66] Danilo Marcondes and Pedro Henrique Batista Barbosa, "Brazil-China Defense Cooperation: A Strategic Partnership in the Making?," *Journal of Latin American Geography*, vol. 17, no. 2 (July 2018); and Yuanyue Dang, "In Rare Shift, China Will Send Marine Corps to Brazil for Joint Exercise," *South China Morning Post*, September 6, 2024.

[67] Nelson Mendonça Júnior, *Os Reflexos da Inserção da China no Mercado de Defesa da América do Sul para a Indústria de Defesa Brasileira*, Escola de Comando e Estado-Maior do Exército, Trabalho de Conclusão de Curso, Rio de Janeiro, 2019.

[68] Amber Wang, "Lula's Trip May Open Door to Defence Cooperation," *South China Morning Post*, May 19, 2025.

continued to engage with the Bolsonaro administration on military and economic matters while carrying out a high-level diplomatic effort that had the stated of aim of ensuring Brazil's 2022 elections were free and fair and resulted in a peaceful transfer of power (see "Democracy and Freedom of Expression"). After Lula took office, the Biden Administration's cooperation with Brazil shifted to place more emphasis on climate change and other environmental concerns (see "Environmental Cooperation").

President Lula has expressed interest in maintaining a cordial U.S.-Brazilian relationship with President Trump despite the two leaders' ideological differences and Lula's stated support for then-Vice President Kamala Harris in the 2024 U.S. presidential election.[69] In June 2025, a State Department official asserted that the Trump Administration "will continue to support economic and security cooperation with Brazil that will uphold and advance our foreign policy agenda."[70] Although working-level cooperation related to security and other areas of mutual interest appears to have continued during the initial months of the second Trump Administration, some bilateral disagreements have emerged over the Brazilian judiciary's prosecution of former President Bolsonaro, Brazil's regulation of social media content, and U.S. trade policy. In July 2025, President Trump announced his intention to increase tariffs on imports from Brazil to 50% and the U.S. Departments of State and Treasury imposed sanctions on some STF justices (see "U.S. Tariffs" and "Democracy and Freedom of Expression")

The Trump Administration's approach to bilateral relations appears to be generating some backlash in Brazil.[71] According to a July 2025 poll, 50.5% of Brazilians have negative views of the United States (up from 44.5% in January 2025) and 63.2% have negative views of President Trump (up from 52% in January 2025).[72] Such views could provide incentives for President Lula and other Brazilian policymakers to take a more confrontational approach to the Trump Administration, especially during the leadup to Brazil's presidential and legislative elections scheduled for October 2026.

Democracy and Freedom of Expression

Over the past four years, some Members of Congress and other U.S. policymakers have expressed concerns about potential threats to democracy and freedom of expression in Brazil. Like Brazilians, they have articulated different views about the source of such threats and U.S. policy responses.

2022 Elections and Aftermath

In the lead up to Brazil's October 2022 elections, the Biden Administration repeatedly expressed confidence in Brazil's electoral institutions and reportedly urged then-President Bolsonaro and other Brazilian officials not to cast doubts on the election system or results. In September 2022, the U.S. Senate adopted a resolution (S.Res. 753) that urged the Brazilian government to ensure "free, fair, credible, transparent, and peaceful" elections. The resolution also called on the U.S. government to speak out against efforts to undermine the electoral process, immediately

[69] "Lula Diz que Espera Civilidade de Trump e Relação Não Ideológica," *Folha de São Paulo,* November 18, 2024; Agence France-Presse, "Lula: 'Hincho por Kamala'," November 1, 2024.

[70] Mignon Houston, Deputy Spokesperson, "Strengthening our Borders and Broadening Regional Partnerships with Deputy Spokesperson Mignon Houston," Foreign Press Center briefing, U.S. Department of State, June 10, 2025.

[71] Letter from Donald J. Trump, President of the United States, to Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, President of the Federative Republic of Brazil, July 9, 2025, as posted on *X* by the White House Rapid Response account (@RapidResponse 47), https://x.com/RapidResponse47/status/1943043154946457812.

[72] AtlasIntel and Bloomberg, "Tarifas de Trump," July 2025.

recognize the outcome of elections determined by international observers to be free and fair, and make clear that undemocratic actions would jeopardize U.S.-Brazilian relations, including U.S. security assistance. By some accounts, these U.S. efforts helped ensure a peaceful transition in Brazil.[73]

In the aftermath of the January 8, 2023 riots in Brazil, some Members of Congress introduced resolutions condemning the attacks on Brazilian government institutions (e.g., H.Res. 106 and S.Res. 32). Some Members also sought to collaborate with their Brazilian counterparts and share best practices on congressional investigations.[74] Additionally, some Members called on the Biden Administration to investigate any actions taken on U.S. soil to organize the events of January 8, and to work with the Brazilian government to uphold the rule of law, including by ensuring former President Bolsonaro is held accountable for any crimes he may have committed.[75]

As Brazil's justice system has investigated and prosecuted former President Bolsonaro and others allegedly responsible for an alleged coup attempt and other anti-democratic actions (see "Political Polarization and Threats to Democracy"), some other Members of Congress and U.S. policymakers have expressed concerns about potential political persecution in Brazil. In July 2025, for example, President Trump announced his intention to increase tariffs on imports from Brazil to 50%, partly in response to the trial of former President Bolsonaro, which he characterized as a "witch hunt."[76] President Lula described the tariff announcement as "unacceptable blackmail" and suggested he may take retaliatory trade measures against the United States (see "U.S. Tariffs" for further discussion).[77]

Freedom of Expression

Brazil's regulation of digital communications is another topic about which Members of Congress have expressed different views. During the 118th Congress, some Members of Congress expressed concerns about how disinformation and misinformation may have contributed to the January 8 riots and called on social media companies to work with Brazilian authorities to address the potential exploitation of their platforms.[78] Other Members have characterized such regulation as censorship.[79]

[73] See, for example, Matt Stott, Michael Pooler, and Bryan Harris, "The Discreet US Campaign to Defend Brazil's Democracy," *Financial Times*, June 21, 2023; and Oliver Stuenkel, "How U.S. Pressure Helped Save Brazil's Democracy," *Foreign Policy*, February 20, 2024.

[74] Reuters, "Exclusive: U.S. and Brazil Lawmakers Seek to Cooperate on Investigation of Brasilia Riots," January 11, 2023.

[75] See, for example, Letter from Joaquin Castro, Member of Congress, et al. to Honorable Joseph R. Biden, President of the United States, January 12, 2023, https://castro.house.gov/imo/media/doc/2023.1.11_BolsonaroJan8Attack_Final.pdf.

[76] Letter from Donald J. Trump, President of the United States, to Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, President of the Federative Republic of Brazil, July 9, 2025, as posted on *X* by the White House Rapid Response account (@RapidResponse 47), https://x.com/RapidResponse47/status/1943043154946457812.

[77] Presidência da República, "Pronunciamento do Presidente Lula: Brasil Soberano," July 17, 2025.

[78] See, for example, Senator Tim Kaine, "Menendez, Kaine Lead Seven Democratic Colleagues in Introducing Resolution Expressing Solidarity with the Brazilian People in Aftermath of Insurrection," February 2, 2023.

[79] U.S. Congress, House Foreign Affairs Committee, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations Subcommittee, *Brazil: A Crisis of Democracy, Freedom, & Rule of Law?*, 118th Cong., 2nd sess., May 7, 2024.

The Brazilian constitution sets forth several principles related to freedom of expression.[80] Brazil also has ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which contains obligations related to the freedom of expression while allowing for certain restrictions.[81] Freedom House, a nongovernmental democracy and human rights advocacy organization, asserts that Brazil's legal framework "provides inadequate protection for freedom of expression," due in part to the proscription and regulation of certain types of speech.[82] For example, libel, slander, and defamation are criminal offenses, and Brazil's electoral code tightly regulates political campaign activities. Additionally, Brazil's 2014 civil rights framework for the internet established certain rights and obligations related to internet use, and a 2021 law for the defense of the democratic rule of law criminalizes inciting animosity between the armed forces and the executive, legislative, or judicial branches of government, among other offenses.[83]

The STF has taken on a prominent role in regulating online content since March 2019, when then-STF President José Antonio Dias Toffoli opened an investigation into alleged "fake news" and internet threats targeting the STF, its justices, and their family members. Some legal analysts questioned the STF's decision to open an investigation unilaterally, and some transparency and press rights advocates condemned the STF for using the investigation to order an online media outlet to remove a report about an STF justice.[84] STF Justice Alexandre de Moraes, designated as the rapporteur for the fake news investigation, has kept the investigation open for more than six years.[85] He also is serving as the rapporteur for several other inquiries, including the investigations into the alleged 2022 coup attempt and the riots of January 8, 2023.[86] Justice de Moraes has used his broad powers to authorize searches, freeze social media accounts, and order arrests, among other actions; these decisions generally have been upheld by the broader STF.

Brazil's TSE also has exercised its authority to combat the spread of information it deems false. During the 2022 electoral campaign, for example, the TSE regularly ordered online content to be deleted "at the request of both the Lula and Bolsonaro campaigns."[87] Justice de Moraes served as the president of the TSE between August 2022 and June 2024.

Some U.S.-based social media companies have clashed with Justice de Moraes and the STF over online content regulation. In February 2025, for example, Justice de Moraes ordered the suspension of the U.S.-based video-sharing platform *Rumble* in Brazil due to the company's refusal to comply with previous STF orders to suspend certain accounts, pay resulting fines, or

[80] Constitution of the Federative Republic of Brazil, Articles 5 and 220. For more information, see Eduardo Soares, "Brazil," in *Civic Space Legal Framework* (Law Library of Congress, 2020).

[81] See Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966), https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-civil-and-political-rights.

[82] Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2025: Brazil*, February 26, 2025.

[83] Eduardo Soares, "Brazil," in *Initiatives to Counter Fake News in Selected Countries* (Law Library of Congress, 2019); and Presidência da República, Lei Nº 14.197, Arts. 286, 359.-L, and 359-M, September 1, 2021.

[84] Eduardo Soares, "Brazil: Federal Supreme Court Orders Criminal Investigation into Fake News Involving the Court," Law Library of Congress, April 1, 2019; Transparency International, "(April 2019) Supreme Court Decision in Brazil Violates Freedom of the Press and Sets Concerning Precedent," April 17, 2019; and Committee to Protect Journalists, "Brazilian Court Orders Online Magazine Crusoé to Remove Article About Judge," April 16, 2019.

[85] Within Brazil's judicial system, the rapporteur (*relator*) is charged with directing the judicial process and preparing a report that summarizes the case and provides an initial opinion and recommendations to the remaining justices.

[86] Typically, the STF uses random assignment to determine which justice will serve as the rapporteur in a given case. Justice de Moraes is serving as the rapporteur for several inquiries based on the justification that they are connected to the original fake news investigation. Mariana Schreiber, "Excessos? O Que Dizem Juristas Sobre 'Superpoderes' de Alexandre de Moraes Contra Golpismo," *BBC News Brasil*, January 31, 2023.

[87] Freedom House, *Freedom on the Net 2023: Brazil*, October 3, 2023.

appoint a legal representative in Brazil.[88] *Rumble* and the *Trump Media & Technology Group* (owner of *Truth Social*) have sued Justice de Moraes in U.S. federal court, arguing his orders violated U.S. free speech protections by seeking the suspension of the accounts of an individual who resides in the United States.[89] The individual in question is a pro-Bolsonaro media personality who is wanted in Brazil for defamation and other alleged crimes but who the U.S. government has reportedly declined to extradite.[90] A similar dispute with *X Corp.* (formerly *Twitter*) resulted in the STF suspending Brazilians' access to that social media platform for more than a month in 2024; *X Corp.* ultimately complied with the STF orders. A June 2025 STF ruling that social media companies can be held legally responsible for users' posts and requires such platforms to immediately remove illegal material (e.g., hate speech or incitement to anti-democratic acts) without a prior judicial order could generate additional conflict between the STF and U.S.-based companies.[91]

Information regarding the full scope of court orders related to social media activity in Brazil is not publicly available. In a court filing, *X Corp.* reportedly stated that the company had blocked 223 accounts between 2020 and September 2024 in response to judicial orders in Brazil—158 in response to STF orders and 65 in response to TSE orders.[92] STF and TSE orders subpoenaed from *X Corp.* by the U.S. House Judiciary Committee during the 118th Congress indicated that the blocked accounts included some prominent figures associated with the ideological right in Brazil, including former President Bolsonaro; at least six federal legislators; and several journalists, political commentators, and social media influencers.[93]

The Biden Administration did not comment publicly on Brazil's regulation of digital communications. The Trump Administration has condemned the STF's actions. In February 2025, for example, the U.S. State Department criticized the STF's suspension of *Rumble* in Brazil, asserting that "blocking access to information and imposing fines on U.S. based companies for refusing to censor people living in the United States is incompatible with democratic values, including freedom of expression."[94] The Department of Justice (DOJ) reportedly sent a letter to Justice de Moraes asserting that DOJ takes "no position on the enforceability of the various orders and other judicial documents directing *Rumble* to act within the territory of Brazil, which is a matter of Brazilian law," but "such directives are not enforceable judicial orders in the United States."[95] The Brazilian government asserted that the State Department had distorted the meaning of the STF's orders, which it maintained were only intended to apply in Brazil.[96]

[88] STF, Petição 9.935 Distrito Federal, February 21, 2025. A panel of five STF justices upheld Justice de Moraes's order in March 2025.

[89] Rumble, "Rumble and TRUTH Social Sue Brazilian Judge Over Censorship Orders Targeting U.S. Users," February 19, 2025.

[90] STF, Petição 9.935 Distrito Federal, February 21, 2025; and "Interpol e EUA Contrariaram Moraes sobre Allan dos Santos," *Poder360,* March 23, 2025.

[91] STF, "STF Define Parâmetros para Responsabilização de Plataformas por Conteúdos de Terceiros," June 26, 2025; and Michael Pooler, "Brazil Supreme Court Rules Digital Platforms are Liable for Users' Posts," *Financial Times*, June 27, 2025.

[92] Mateus Coutinho and Rafael Neves, "X Afirma Ter Derrubado Mais de 200 Contas por Ordem De STF e TSE desde 2020," *UOL*, October 9, 2024.

[93] U.S. Congress, House Committee on the Judiciary and the Select Subcommittee on the Weaponization of the Federal Government, *The Attack on Free Speech Abroad and the Biden Administration's Silence: The Case of Brazil*, Interim Staff Report, 118th Cong., 2nd sess., April 17, 2024.

[94] U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs (@WHAAsstSecty), X post, February 26, 2025, https://x.com/WHAAsstSecty/status/1894785615247622540

[95] "Leia a Íntegra em Português da Carta que os EUA Enviaram a Moraes," *Poder360*, May 31, 2025.

[96] MRE, "Statement by the U.S. Government Regarding Decisions by the Brazilian Judiciary," February 26, 2025.

On July 18, 2025, Secretary of State Marco Rubio announced that he had ordered visa revocations, pursuant to a provision of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA; 8 U.S.C. §1182(a)(3)(C)), for Justice de Moraes, "his allies on the court," and their immediate family members, due to the STF's regulation of social media and the judicial proceedings against former President Bolsonaro.[97] According to press reports, the State Department revoked the visas of at least 8 of the 11 STF justices—including Chief Justice Luís Roberto Barroso, as well as the head of the autonomous public prosecutor's office (*Procurador-Geral da República*), Paulo Gonet, prohibiting their entry into the United States.[98] On July 30, 2025, the U.S. Department of the Treasury imposed additional economic sanctions on Justice de Moraes pursuant to the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act (Title XII, Subtitle F of P.L. 114-328, as amended) for purportedly using his position to "authorize arbitrary pre-trial detentions and suppress freedom of expression."[99] The sanctions block Justice de Moraes from accessing any property under U.S. jurisdiction, and prohibit U.S. persons from engaging in transactions with him.[100] President Trump also has linked U.S. tariffs on Brazil to the STF's actions (see "U.S. Tariffs").

Some of former President Bolsonaro's allies, including his son Eduardo who has been in the United States seeking support from U.S. policymakers, welcomed the U.S. sanctions.[101] The STF expressed solidarity with Justice de Moraes, noted that his rulings have been upheld by the broader court, and asserted that it would continue to uphold Brazil's laws and constitution.[102] The STF also reportedly has frozen the bank accounts of Eduardo Bolsonaro and further restricted former President Bolsonaro's movements and communications for allegedly seeking to "induce, instigate, and assist" the Trump Administration in taking "hostile acts against Brazil" in an attempt to influence the judicial process.[103] On August 4, 2025, Justice de Moraes placed former President Bolsonaro on house arrest for alleged noncompliance with the STF's restrictions.[104] President Lula and the presidents of the Brazilian Chamber of Deputies and Senate, Hugo Motta and Davi Alcolumbre, have rejected the U.S. sanctions as unacceptable interference in Brazil's justice system.[105] Some civil society organizations—including groups that have been critical of

[97] Secretary of State Marco Rubio, "Announcement of Visa Restrictions on Brazilian Judicial Officials and Their Immediate Family Members," U.S. Department of State, July 18, 2025.

[98] Marcela Ayres, "Senior Brazilian Official Says Judiciary Won't be Intimidates by US Visa Bans," Reuters, July 19, 2025.

[99] U.S. Department of the Treasury, "Treasury Sanctions Alexandre de Moraes," July 30, 2025.

[100] For more information on Global Magnitsky sanctions, see CRS In Focus IF10576, *Human Rights and Anti-Corruption Sanctions: The Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act*, by Michael A. Weber.

[101] "Ofensiva de Bolsonaristas nos EUA Mira Presidente do STF e Insinua Novas Sanções de Trump," *Folha de São Paulo*, July 20, 2025; and "'Sensação de Missão Cumprida', Diz Eduardo Bolsonaro após Sanção de Trump a Moraes," *Folha de São Paulo*, July 30, 2025.

[102] STF, "Nota Oficial sobre Sanções dos EUA ao Ministro Alexandre de Moraes," July 30, 2025.

[103] EFE News Service, "Brazil's Supreme Court Blocks Bolsonaro's Son's Bank Accounts," July 22, 2025; STF, "STF Impõe Medidas Cautelares a Ex-Presidente Jair Bolsonaro por Coação e Atentado à Soberania Nacional," July 18, 2025; and STF, "STF Confirma Medidas Cautelares Impostas ao Ex-Presidente Jair Bolsonaro," July 22, 2025.

[104] STF, "STF Determina Prisão Domiciliar do Ex-Presidente Jair Bolsonaro por Descumprimento de Medidas Cautelares," August 4, 2025.

[105] President Lula (@LulaOficial), *X* post, July 19, 2025, https://x.com/LulaOficial/status/1946556466665529728; Presidência da República, "O Brasil é um País Soberano e Democrático," July 30, 2025; Chamber of Deputies President Hugo Motta (@HugoMottaPB), *X* post, July 30, 2025, https://x.com/HugoMottaPB/status/1950673741031350708; and Senate President Davi Alcolumbre (@davialcolumbre), *X* post, July 30, 2025, https://x.com/davialcolumbre/status/1950752011009343985.

some STF decisions, such as Brazil's bar association (*Ordem dos Advogados do Brasil*) and the Brazilian chapter of Transparency International—also have condemned the U.S. sanctions.[106]

Options for Congress

Congress may continue to monitor democracy and freedom of expression in Brazil, the extent to which Brazilian judicial orders affect entities and individuals in the United States, and the Trump Administration's approach to such issues, including sanctions. Some Members of Congress have expressed support for the Trump Administration's visa revocations and sanctions on Justice de Moraes.[107] Some other Members have characterized the U.S. actions as a misuse of sanctions authorities,[108] and an attack on Brazil's sovereignty, rule of law, and democracy.[109] Congress could consider measures to codify or restrict the Administration's sanctions actions. For example, the "No Censors on our Shores Act" (H.R. 1071), reported by the House Judiciary Committee in February 2025, would expand INA inadmissibility criteria to specifically include foreign officials engaged in actions that infringe on the free speech rights of U.S. citizens who reside in the United States. Members also could engage with their Brazilian counterparts on these issues, as the Brazilian congress has been debating legislation regarding the regulation of online content and various measures to limit the authority of the STF.

Trade and Investment Relations

Trade policy often has been a contentious issue in U.S.-Brazilian relations. Since the early 1990s, Brazil's trade policy has prioritized integration with its South American neighbors through the Common Market of the South (*Mercosur*) and multilateral negotiations at the World Trade Organization (WTO).[110] Brazil is the industrial hub of Mercosur, which it established with Argentina, Paraguay, and Uruguay in 1991 with the stated goal of facilitating economic integration.[111] As a partial customs union, Mercosur facilitates mostly duty-free trade amongst its members and levies a common external tariff on imports from outside the bloc. Within the WTO, Brazil has joined with other developing countries to push the United States and other developed countries to reduce their agricultural tariffs and subsidies while resisting developed countries' calls for increased access to developing countries' industrial and services sectors. Those differences blocked conclusion of the most recent round of multilateral trade negotiations (the

[106] Ordem dos Advogados do Brasil, "OAB Defende a Soberania Nacional," July 20, 2025; and Transparência Internacional – Brasil, "Public Statement: Alarming and Unacceptable Misuse of the Magnitsky Act," July 30, 2025.

[107] See, for example, Representative María Elvira Salazar (@RepMariaSalazar), *X* post, July 30, 2025, https://x.com/RepMariaSalazar/status/1950612454763028728; and Representative Rick McCormick (@RepMcCormick), *X* post, July 31, 2025, https://x.com/RepMcCormick/status/1950995808137978090.

[108] See, for example, Senate Foreign Relations Committee, "Top Senate Democrats Sound Alarm on Treasury Misusing Sanctions Programs Meant to Address Serious Human Rights Abuse to Instead Help Trump's Political Allies," July 31, 2025.

[109] See, for example, House Foreign Affairs Committee, "Meeks to Introduce Resolution Terminating Brazil Tariffs," July 31, 2025; and Representative Sydney Kamlager-Dove (@RepKamlagerDove), *X* post, July 31, 2025, https://x.com/RepKamlagerDove/status/1951011122682720492.

[110] João Augusto de Castro Neves, *Brazil's Slow and Uncertain Shift from Protectionism to Free Trade*, Inter-American Dialogue, working paper, January 2014.

[111] Treaty Establishing a Common Market between the Argentine Republic, the Federal Republic of Brazil, the Republic of Paraguay and the Eastern Republic of Uruguay, 1991. Mercosur admitted Venezuela as a full member in 2012 but suspended the country in 2017 due to Venezuela's failure to adhere to the bloc's democratic norms. Bolivia joined Mercosur as a full member in 2024 but has a four-year period to comply with Mercosur's regulations.

WTO's Doha Round), as well as U.S. efforts in the 1990s and 2000s to establish a hemisphere-wide Free Trade Area of the Americas.[112]

A 2011 Agreement on Trade and Economic Cooperation (ATEC) has served as the primary formal mechanism for U.S.-Brazilian discussions of trade and investment issues. In October 2022, the U.S. and Brazilian governments concluded a Protocol on Trade Rules and Transparency that added three annexes to the ATEC related to cooperation on trade facilitation and customs administration, regulatory practices, and anti-corruption measures.[113] Brazil's congress ratified the protocol in November 2021 and the agreement entered into force in February 2022. The U.S. Congress has not specifically authorized or approved the protocol, which did not include any provisions eliminating tariffs or nontariff barriers to trade that would have required changes to U.S. law.[114]

Trade and Investment Flows

U.S.-Brazilian trade has been affected by economic volatility over the past decade, including Brazil's 2014-2017 recession and the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic-driven downturn. Nevertheless, the total value of U.S.-Brazilian trade in goods and services reached a record high of $127.4 billion in 2024. U.S. goods exports to Brazil totaled $48.8 billion while U.S. goods imports from Brazil totaled $42.5 billion, resulting in a $6.2 billion U.S. goods trade surplus. The United States also ran a $23.1 billion surplus in services trade with Brazil in 2024, as U.S. exports were valued at $29.6 billion and U.S. imports were valued at $6.5 billion (see **Figure 3**, below). In 2024, the top U.S. goods exports to Brazil were aircraft and parts, mineral fuels, machinery, plastics, and pharmaceutical products. The top U.S. goods imports from Brazil included mineral fuels (primarily crude oil), iron and steel, machinery, aircraft and parts, and coffee.[115] In 2024, Brazil was the ninth-largest goods export market for the United States (2.4% of total goods exports). The United States was Brazil's third-largest goods export market (12.0% of total goods exports) behind China (28.0%) and the 27-member EU (14.3%), but reportedly remained Brazil's top destination for exports of manufactured goods in 2024.[116]

According to the U.S. Department of State, the Brazilian government actively encourages foreign direct investment (FDI) in certain sectors, such as automobiles, life sciences, mining, oil and gas, renewable energy, and transportation infrastructure. Brazil, however, imposes restrictions on FDI in other sectors, including aerospace, healthcare, insurance, maritime, mass media, rural property, and telecommunications.[117] The United States is the largest source of FDI in Brazil. As of 2023 (most recent year for which data are available), the accumulated stock of U.S. FDI in Brazil was

[112] For additional background on these issues, see CRS Report R46619, *U.S.-Brazil Economic Relations*, coordinated by M. Angeles Villarreal.

[113] The text of the protocol is available at https://ustr.gov/sites/default/files/files/Press/Releases/ATECProtocolUSBREnglish.pdf.

[114] For analysis of congressional and executive authorities related to foreign trade agreements, see CRS Report R47679, *Congressional and Executive Authority Over Foreign Trade Agreements*, by Christopher T. Zirpoli.

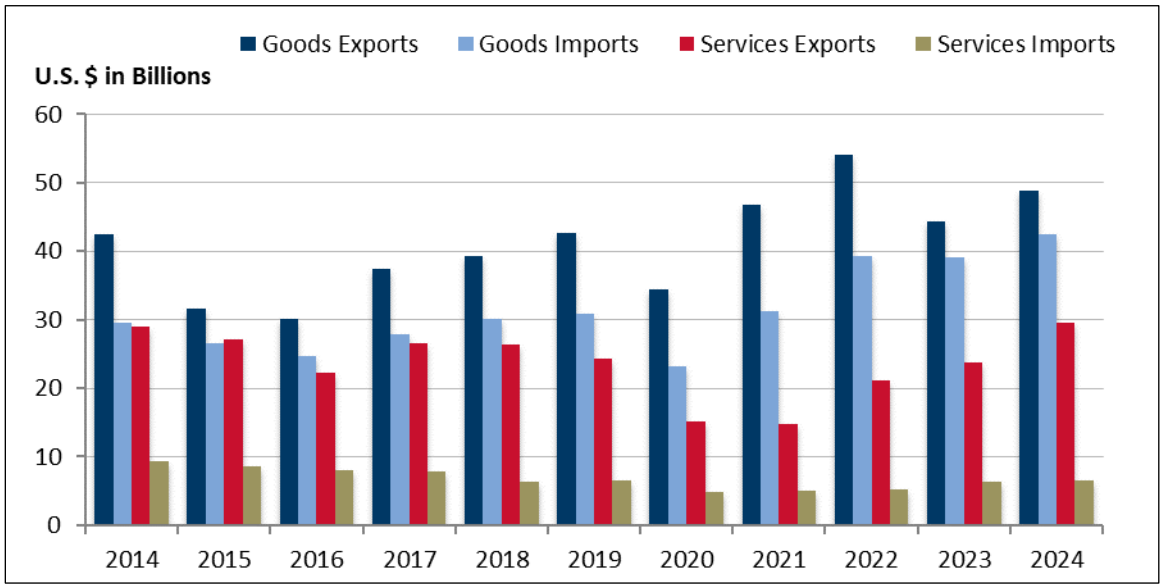
[115] Product descriptions based on two-digit Harmonized Tariff Schedule (HTS) codes. U.S. Census Bureau and MDIC data, as reported by *Trade Data Monitor*, accessed July 16, 2025.

[116] U.S. Census Bureau and MDIC data, as reported by *Trade Data Monitor*, accessed July 16, 2025; and Anaïs Fernandes, "Exports to U.S. Reach Record High Ahead of Tariffs," *Valor International*, January 17, 2025.

[117] U.S. Department of State, *2024 Investment Climate Statements: Brazil*, July 2024.

$87.9 billion, with significant investments in manufacturing and finance, among other sectors. The same year, the stock of Brazilian FDI in the United States totaled $6.5 billion.[118]

Figure 3. U.S. Trade with Brazil: 2014-2024



Source: CRS presentation of data from the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, "Brazil – International Trade and Investment Country Facts: Trade," June 24, 2025.

Over the past five years, the U.S. and Brazilian governments and some private sector entities have identified critical minerals as a potential area for enhanced bilateral cooperation.[119] Brazil is among the top source countries of 10 mineral commodities for which imports account for more than half of U.S. consumption.[120] Since 2020, the U.S. and Brazilian governments have engaged within a Critical Minerals Working Group, and the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC) has invested $55 million in critical mineral (cobalt and nickel) production in Brazil.[121] A Strategic Minerals Investment Fund, launched by Brazil's National Bank for Economic and Social Development (*Banco Nacional de Desenvolvimento Econômico e Social*, or BNDES) in 2024, aims to raise over R$1 billion (about $183 million) for new mineral ventures and research and development, potentially providing opportunities for U.S. companies.[122] In October 2024, the DFC and BNDES announced a framework for co-investment in critical sectors in Brazil, including mining.[123] The second Trump Administration reportedly has expressed

[118] U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, "Brazil – International Trade and Investment Country Facts: Direct Investment," July 23, 2024.

[119] For more information on critical minerals, see CRS Report R47982, *Critical Mineral Resources: National Policy and Critical Minerals List*, by Linda R. Rowan.

[120] U.S. Geological Survey, *Mineral Commodity Summaries 2025*, March 2025, pp. 6-8.

[121] U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC), "Active Projects" database, accessed June 27, 2025.

[122] International Trade Administration, "Brazil Mining Projects Fund," May 29, 2024; and Ministério de Minas e Energia, "Fundo de Minerais Críticos Deve Destinar até R$1 Bilhão para Pesquisa de Minerais Estratégicos para a Transição Energética e Segurança Alimentar," October 4, 2024.

[123] DFC, "DFC and the Brazilian Development Bank (BNDES) Sign Framework to Co-Invest in Critical Sectors," October 28, 2024.

ongoing interest in Brazil's critical minerals, though it is unclear whether prior bilateral initiatives have continued.[124]

U.S. Tariffs

On April 2, 2025, President Trump issued Executive Order (E.O.) 14257, asserting that "a lack of reciprocity" in bilateral trade relationships, disparate tariff rates and non-tariff barriers, and U.S. trading partners' economic policies constitute "an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and economy of the United States."[125] The E.O. declared a national emergency under the National Emergencies Act (NEA; 50 U.S.C. §§1601 et seq.) and invoked the International Emergency Economic Powers Act of 1977 (IEEPA; 50 U.S.C. §§1701 et seq.) to impose a minimum 10% tariff on all U.S. imports (including a 10% tariff on imports from Brazil), with exceptions for certain goods, starting on April 5, 2025. According to a White House press release, the tariffs are to remain in effect until President Trump determines that "the threat posed by the trade deficit and nonreciprocal treatment" is resolved.[126] These universal tariffs are subject to legal challenges.[127] In 2024, Brazil's average most-favored-nation applied tariff rate was 12.0% while that of the United States was 3.3%.[128] The United States has run trade surpluses with Brazil each year for more than a decade (see **Figure 3**).

On July 30, 2025, President Trump issued E.O. 14323, asserting that the Brazilian judiciary's approach to regulating social media and prosecution of former President Bolsonaro and his allies for alleged undemocratic activities constitute an "unusual and extraordinary threat" to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States (also see "Political Polarization and Threats to Democracy" and "Democracy and Freedom of Expression").[129] The E.O. invoked the NEA and IEEPA to impose an additional 40% tariff on U.S. imports from Brazil, increasing total tariffs to 50%, effective August 6, 2025. The American Chamber of Commerce in Brazil has expressed concerns that the tariffs could damage bilateral economic relations, negatively affecting companies' competitiveness, the labor market, and consumer purchasing power in both countries.[130] Some U.S. trade associations have expressed support for the tariffs, including the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, which has been seeking a full suspension of Brazilian beef imports due to purported animal health concerns.[131] The E.O. includes exemptions for some top U.S. imports from Brazil, including certain categories of mineral fuels, iron, and civilian aircraft and parts, among a variety of other products.[132]

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[124] "U.S. Ramps Up Pressure for Preferential Access to Brazil's Critical Minerals," *Valor International*, July 25, 2025.

[125] Executive Order 14257 of April 2, 2025, "Regulating Imports with a Reciprocal Tariff to Rectify Trade Practices that Contribute to Large and Persistent Annual United States Goods Trade Deficits," 90 *Federal Register* 15041, April 7, 2025.

[126] White House, "President Donald J. Trump Declares National Emergency to Increase our Competitive Edge, Protect our Sovereignty, and Strengthen our National and Economic Security," April 2, 2025.

[127] In May 2025, two federal trial courts ruled that President Trump's imposition of the tariffs exceeded the authority granted by IEEPA. Both of the trial courts' orders are currently stayed (paused) as higher courts consider appeals by the federal government. For more information, see CRS Legal Sidebar LSB11332, *Court Decisions Regarding Tariffs Imposed Under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA)*, by Christopher T. Zirpoli.

[128] World Trade Organization et al., *World Tariff Profiles 2025*, 2025, pp. 8 and 12.

[129] Executive Order 14323 of July 30, 2025, "Addressing Threats to the United States by the Government of Brazil," 90 *Federal Register* 37739, August 5, 2025.

[130] Câmara Americana de Comércio para o Brasil, "Nota da Amcham Brasil sobre a Aplicação de Tarifas de 50% pelos Estados Unidos às Exportações Brasileiras," July 30, 2025.

[131] Don Jenkins, "Trump's Beef with Brazil Cheer's Cattlemen's Groups," *Capital Press*, July 15, 2025.

[132] See Annex 1. White House, "Addressing Threats to the United States by the Government of Brazil," July 30, 2025.

The additional 40% tariff also does not apply to imports subject to tariffs under Section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962 (19 U.S.C. §1862, as amended), such as steel. In 2018, during the first Trump Administration, Brazil negotiated an import quota that allowed Brazil to export up to 3.5 million metric tons of semi-finished steel products and plates and 687,000 tons of rolled steel products to the United States without facing a 25% tariff imposed under Section 232.[133] President Trump eliminated that exemption on March 12, 2025, and increased the tariff on imported steel to 50%, effective June 4, 2025, asserting that such imports threaten U.S. national security.[134]

Taking into account the exemptions, Goldman Sachs, a multinational investment bank, reportedly estimates that the implementation of E.O. 14323 would result in an effective U.S. tariff rate on Brazilian imports of 30.8%.[135] U.S. imports from Brazil could face additional tariffs as a result of an investigation of Brazil under Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974, as amended (19 U.S.C. §§2411-2420).[136] That investigation, launched on July 15, 2025, is focused on whether "Brazil's acts, policies, and practices related to digital trade and electronic payment services; unfair, preferential tariffs; anti-corruption enforcement; intellectual property protection; ethanol market access; and illegal deforestation are unreasonable or discriminatory and burden or restrict U.S. commerce."[137]

The Lula administration lamented the U.S. imposition of Section 232 steel tariffs and 10% universal tariffs in March and April 2025, respectively, while expressing a willingness to engage in negotiations with the United States.[138] President Trump's July 2025 announcement that he intended to increase tariffs on imports from Brazil to 50% elicited a sharper response from the Brazilian government. The Lula administration rejected "interference or threats" related to Brazilian judicial proceedings, and asserted that the Brazilian government would respond "in accordance with Brazil's Economic Reciprocity Law," which authorizes Brazil's executive branch to take retaliatory trade measures, including the imposition of tariffs and the suspension of intellectual property rights obligations.[139] The Lula administration has stated that it remains open to discussing trade matters with the United States but Brazil's sovereignty and rule of law are nonnegotiable.[140] The presidents of the Brazilian Senate and Chamber of Deputies, Davi Alcolumbre and Hugo Motta, also have condemned U.S. tariffs and vowed to defend Brazilian sovereignty while expressing an interest in dialogue, including with the U.S. Congress.[141]

[133] U.S. Customs and Border Protection, "QB 18-137 Absolute Quota for Steel Mill Articles: Argentina, Brazil and South Korea," April 8, 2024.

[134] Proclamation 10947 of June 3, 2025, "Adjusting Imports of Aluminum and Steel Into the United States," 90 *Federal Register* 24199, June 9, 2025.

[135] Reuters, "Goldman Sees US Effective Tariff Rate on Brazil Imports at 30.8%," July 30, 2025.

[136] For information on Section 301, see CRS In Focus IF11346, *Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974*, by Danielle M. Trachtenberg.

[137] USTR, "Initiation of Section 301 Investigation: Brazil's Acts, Policies, and Practices Related to Digital Trade and Electronic Payment Services; Unfair, Preferential Tariffs; Anti-Corruption Enforcement; Intellectual Property Protection; Ethanol Market Access; and Illegal Deforestation; Hearing; and Request for Public Comments," 90 *Federal Register* 34069, July 15, 2025.

[138] MRE and MDIC, "Measures Regarding Steel and Aluminum Exports to the United States," March 12, 2025; and MRE and MDIC, "Trade Measures Adopted by the United States Government on April 2, 2025," April 2, 2025.

[139] Presidência da República, "Press Statement," July 9, 2025; and "Lei Nº 15.122, De 11 De Abril De 2025," *Diário Oficial da Uniáo,* April 14, 2025.

[140] MRE and MDIC, "Evio de Carta Sobre Tarifas dos Estados Unidos," July 16, 2025; and "Governo Brasileiro Diz que Soberania é Inegociável em Nota sobre Tarifa dos EUA," *Folha de São Paulo,* July 28, 2025.

[141] Agência Senado, "Davi Diz que Congresso e Governo Atuarão Juntos em Reação a Tarifaço dos EUA," July 16, 2025.

In the face of U.S. tariffs, Brazil is seeking to bolster its trade ties with other partners. Among other efforts, the Brazilian government has pushed to finalize a Mercosur-EU free trade agreement, promoted South American integration initiatives, and sought to increase and diversify its exports to China. The Lula administration is also reportedly seeking to coordinate with other countries to challenge U.S. tariffs at the WTO.[142]

Options for Congress

Congress has primary authority over U.S. trade policy through its constitutional power to levy tariffs and regulate foreign commerce, though it has delegated some of that authority to the executive branch.[143] Some Members of Congress have argued that the President has abused his trade authorities by imposing IEEPA tariffs and launching a Section 301 investigation to purportedly interfere in Brazil's justice system or subvert Brazil's democracy.[144] Some other Members have expressed concerns that U.S. sanctions on Brazil may damage U.S.-Brazil economic relations and undermine U.S. credibility to engage in negotiations with other countries.[145] Members could assess the trajectory of U.S.-Brazilian trade relations as well as the potential implications of the Trump Administration's trade policies. Such assessments could inform congressional decisions regarding potential measures to codify, terminate, or modify the Administration's tariffs on imports from Brazil. Congress also could set negotiating objectives for any trade discussions with the Brazilian government. Additionally, Congress could consider a reauthorization of the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) program, which provided nonreciprocal, duty-free tariff treatment to certain products imported from designated developing countries, prior to its expiration on December 31, 2020.[146] Brazil was the third-largest beneficiary of the program in 2020, with duty-free U.S. imports from Brazil valued at $2.2 billion.[147]

Security Cooperation

Although U.S.-Brazilian security cooperation has been limited at times due to political disputes and policy differences, bilateral military and law enforcement ties have grown closer over the past decade. The U.S. and Brazilian governments have engaged in regular high-level security discussions, the countries' armed forces have participated in joint training and exercises, and U.S. and Brazilian law enforcement agencies have cooperated on counterterrorism and counternarcotics efforts, among other issues. The United States also has provided some military and law enforcement aid to Brazilian security forces intended to strengthen their capacities and foster interoperability and collaboration.

[142] Pedro Rafael Vilela, "Brazil to Appeal to World Trade Organization Against U.S. Tariff Hike," Agência Brasil, July 11, 2025.

[143] For more information on constitutional powers regarding trade, see CRS Report R47679, *Congressional and Executive Authority Over Foreign Trade Agreements*, by Christopher T. Zirpoli.

[144] See, for example, Letter from Tim Kaine, United States Senator, et al. to Honorable Donald J. Trump, President, July 24, 2025, https://www.kaine.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/brazil_trade_war_letter.pdf, and Representative Linda Sánchez, "Sánchez: Brazil Trade Investigation Politically Motivated, Anti-Democratic," press release, July 18, 2025.

[145] See, for example, Senator Thom Tillis, "Tariffs," remarks in the Senate, *Congressional Record*, vol. 171, part 132 (July 31, 2025), p. S4962.

[146] For more on GSP, see CRS In Focus IF11232, *Generalized System of Preferences (GSP): FAQ*, by Liana Wong.

[147] U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau data, as made available by the U.S. International Trade Commission, "Interactive Tariff and Trade DataWeb," accessed in April 2022.

Defense

The United States and Brazil are both parties to the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance, a collective security pact signed in 1947, but bilateral defense cooperation has varied over time.[148] During the 1970s, for example, Brazil withdrew from a series of military agreements with the United States in response to U.S. criticism on human rights issues and U.S. opposition to a Brazilian nuclear agreement with West Germany. The countries did not conclude a new umbrella Defense Cooperation Agreement until 2010. That same year, Brazil and the United States signed a General Security of Military Information Agreement intended to facilitate the sharing of classified information. The Brazilian congress did not approve either of those agreements until 2015, due in part to a cooling of relations after press reports revealed that the U.S. National Security Agency had engaged in extensive electronic surveillance in Brazil.[149] These defense agreements, negotiated as executive agreements, did not require U.S. congressional approval.[150]

As noted previously, in 2019, President Trump designated Brazil as a major non-NATO ally for the purposes of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended (22 U.S.C. §§2151 et seq.), and the Arms Export Control Act (22 U.S.C. §§2751 et seq.).[151] That designation makes Brazil eligible for privileged access to the U.S. defense industry and increased joint military exchanges, exercises, and training, among other benefits. According to the U.S. Embassy in Brazil, a 2020 Research, Development, Test, and Evaluation Agreement enables bilateral collaboration on basic, exploratory, and advanced technologies at a "level enjoyed only by NATO allies and the closest strategic security partners of the United States."[152]

The Biden Administration sought to continue strengthening U.S.-Brazilian defense ties. During annual U.S.-Brazil Strategic Defense Talks, held in August 2024, U.S. and Brazilian officials reportedly discussed various global and hemispheric security issues and cooperation in emerging defense areas, including cyber, space, and special operations.[153] The countries' armed forces also engaged in several bilateral and multilateral joint exercises during the Biden Administration. In October 2024, for example, U.S. and Brazilian naval forces conducted joint training exercises intended to improve interoperability and readiness related to underwater and anti-submarine warfare.[154]

Brazil has received some U.S. military assistance. In FY2023 (most recent year for which data are available), the U.S. Departments of State and Defense provided nearly $1 million of military education and training to Brazil, using International Military Education and Training and Regional Defense Fellowship Program funds.[155] The U.S. Department of Defense has provided

[148] Notably, the countries forged close defense relations during World War II, when Brazil was the only Latin American country to deploy forces to Europe and the 25,000-strong Brazilian Expeditionary Force fought as a division within the United States Fifth Army in Italy.

[149] "Brazil President Postpones US Visit over Spying," *Voice of America*, September 17, 2013.

[150] For more information on executive agreements, see CRS Legal Sidebar LSB11048, *International Agreements (Part I): Overview and Agreement-Making Process*, by Steve P. Mulligan.

[151] White House, "Designation of the Federative Republic of Brazil as a Major Non-NATO Ally," Presidential Determination No. 2019-21 of July 31, 2019, 84 *Federal Register* 43035, August 19, 2019.

[152] U.S. Embassy & Consulates in Brazil, "Trade & Investment," fact sheet, February 10, 2023.

[153] U.S. Department of Defense, "Readout of 7th U.S.-Brazil Strategic Defense Talks," August 20, 2024.

[154] U.S. Embassy & Consulates in Brazil, "U.S.S. Hampton Submarine Participates in Joint Exercises with Brazilian Navy Submarine Humaitá," October 18, 2024.

[155] U.S. Department of Defense and U.S. Department State, *Foreign Military Training Report, Fiscal Years 2022 and 2023, Joint Report to Congress, Volume I – Section III – Part III-VI – Western Hemisphere*, March 13, 2025, p. 7.

some additional defense capacity building support to Brazil, using its authorities under 10 U.SC. §§332-333.[156] The Trump Administration has not requested any military assistance specifically for Brazil for FY2026.

Brazil has the most advanced military manufacturing industry in Latin America. It also purchases some U.S. military equipment.[157] The Biden Administration approved several major arms sales to Brazil, including Javelin missiles, valued at $74 million, in 2022, and Black Hawk Helicopters, valued at $950 million, in 2024.[158] As of August 2024, the U.S. and Brazilian governments were discussing how to conclude negotiations over a reciprocal defense procurement agreement.[159] It is unclear if such negotiations are continuing under the second Trump Administration.

Counterterrorism

According to the State Department's most recent Country Reports on Terrorism, in 2023, "Brazil and the United States maintained strong counterterrorism cooperation" and the Brazilian Federal Police "worked closely with the United States' and other nations' law enforcement entities to assess and mitigate potential terrorist threats."[160] In November 2023, for example, the Brazilian Federal Police, reportedly acting on a tip from the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, arrested three Brazilians who allegedly were plotting potential attacks against Brazil's Jewish community as part of a Hezbollah cell.[161] In June 2024, the Brazilian Federal Police reportedly detained and deported a Palestinian man upon his arrival in São Paulo based on an alert from the U.S. State Department that alleged he was a "Hamas operative."[162]

The U.S. Department of the Treasury has imposed asset-blocking sanctions on some Brazilian individuals and entities linked to terrorism and/or terrorist financing, pursuant to Executive Order 13224, "Blocking Property and Prohibiting Transactions With Persons Who Commit, Threaten To Commit, or Support Terrorism." In 2010, for example, the U.S. Department of the Treasury designated Bilal Mohsen Wehbe for allegedly transferring funds collected in Brazil to Hezbollah in Lebanon. According to the Treasury Department, at the time of the designation, Wehbe served as Hezbollah's chief representative in South America, and had worked with an associate to raise more than $500,000 from Lebanese businessmen in the tri-border area of Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay.[163] More recently, in December 2021, the Treasury Department designated three Brazil-based individuals and two entities as Specially Designated Global Terrorists for allegedly providing support to al-Qa'ida.[164]

[156] Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) data, provided to CRS, 2020-2024.

[157] Janes Defense & Security Intelligence & Analysis, "Brazil – Market Report," February 16, 2024.

[158] DSCA, "Brazil – Javelin Missiles," Transmittal No. 21-68, August 9, 2022; and DSCA, "Brazil – UH-60M Black Hawk Helicopters," Transmittal No. 24-21, May 24, 2024.

[159] U.S. Department of Defense, "Readout of 7th U.S.-Brazil Strategic Defense Talks," August 20, 2024.

[160] U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Counterterrorism, *Country Reports on Terrorism 2023: Brazil*, December 12, 2024.

[161] Hezbollah is an Iran-backed Lebanese Shia militia that the United States has designated as a foreign terrorist organization. Reuters, "Brazilian Hezbollah Suspect Cased Out Synagogues in Brasilia, Documents Show," December 6, 2023.

[162] Hamas is a Palestinian Sunni Islamist military and sociopolitical movement that the United States has designated as a foreign terrorist organization. Reuters, "Brazil Deports Hamas 'Operative' and Family," June 24, 2024.

[163] U.S. Department of the Treasury, "Treasury Targets Hizballah Financial Network," December 9, 2010.

[164] U.S. Department of the Treasury, "Treasury Designates al-Qa'ida Support Network in Brazil," December 22, 2021.

Counternarcotics

Brazil is not a major drug-producing country. It is the world's second-largest consumer of cocaine (after the United States), and serves as a transit point for illicit drugs destined for Africa, Europe, and the United States, according to the U.S. State Department.[165] Several large, well-organized, and heavily armed criminal groups in Brazil—such as the First Capital Command (*Primeiro Comando da Capital*, or PCC) and the Red Command (*Comando Vermelho*, or CV)—are involved in transnational operations. Some analysts assess that violence in Brazil is closely correlated with battles among the PCC, CV, and their allies over emerging drug trafficking routes.[166] These groups are also reportedly involved in a variety of other illicit activities, including arms trafficking and illegal mining in the Amazon.[167]

The U.S. State Department's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs has provided some capacity-building support to Brazilian law enforcement to help combat drug trafficking and other organized crime. In May 2024, U.S.-trained Brazilian Federal Police officers seized more than 2.2 metric tons of cocaine in the state of Amazonas—Brazil's largest ever bulk cocaine seizure in the Amazon region.[168] In April 2025, U.S. Homeland Security Investigations and the Brazilian Federal Police signed a memorandum of understanding to strengthen bilateral efforts to combat transnational crime, including by directly sharing criminal investigative intelligence.[169]

Nevertheless, the U.S. and Brazilian governments have disagreed on some policy matters. In May 2025, for example, the Brazilian government reportedly rejected a Trump Administration request to designate the PCC and CV as terrorist organizations, stating that they are criminal groups and would not qualify as terrorists under Brazilian law.[170] The PCC has been subject to U.S. asset-blocking sanctions since 2021, pursuant to Executive Order 14059, "Imposing Sanctions on Foreign Persons Involved in the Global Illicit Drug Trade."[171]

Options for Congress

Congress oversees bilateral security ties and authorizes and appropriates funding for security cooperation programs. Among other actions, Members could assess the current state of U.S.-Brazilian security relations, including the extent to which bilateral agreements approved over the past decade have enhanced bilateral ties, advanced U.S. security objectives, or both. Members also could examine how Brazil's relations with some U.S. adversaries have affected bilateral ties. For example, in the conference report accompanying the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2024 (H.Rept. 118-301 to P.L. 118-31), Congress directed the Secretary of Defense to

[165] U.S. Department of State, Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, *International Narcotics Control Strategy Report, Volume I: Drug and Chemical Control*, March 2025, p. 148.

[166] Marina Cavalari, "What a Decade of Data Tells Us About Organized Crime in Brazil," InSight Crime, July 1, 2024.

[167] See, for example, Ryan C. Berg, *Tussle for the Amazon: New Frontiers in Brazil's Organized Crime Landscape*, Florida International University, Jack D. Gordon Institute for Public Policy, October 2021.

[168] U.S. Department of State, Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, *International Narcotics Control Strategy Report, Volume I: Drug and Chemical Control*, March 2025, p. 148.

[169] U.S. Embassy & Consulates in Brazil, "United States and Brazil Expand Partnership to Combat Transnational Crime," April 28, 2025.

[170] "Brazil: Gov't Resists Pressure to Designate Gangs as Terrorists," *Latin American Security & Strategic Review*, June 2025. For more information on the designation of criminal organizations as terrorist groups, see CRS Insight IN11205, *Designating Cartels and Other Criminal Organizations as Foreign Terrorists: Recent Developments*, by Liana W. Rosen and Clare Ribando Seelke.

[171] U.S. Department of the Treasury, "U.S. Department of Treasury Targets Narcotics Traffickers and Their Supporters Using Enhanced Counter Narcotics Authorities," December 15, 2021.

produce a report assessing Iran's military ties to Brazil (as well as to Bolivia and Venezuela).[172] The provision was enacted after Brazil allowed two Iranian naval vessels subject to U.S. sanctions to dock in Rio de Janeiro in February 2023. The Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2026 (S. 2342), as reported in the Senate, would direct the Director of National Intelligence to produce a report assessing PRC investment in Brazil's agriculture sector.[173] During the FY2026 appropriations process, Congress could consider whether to appropriate military and/or law enforcement assistance specifically for Brazil or to leave such allocation decisions to the Trump Administration. The National Security, Department of State, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2026 (H.R. 4779/H.Rept. 119-217), as reported in July 2025, would not designate any security assistance specifically for Brazil.

Environmental Cooperation

Presidents Biden and Lula placed efforts to mitigate global climate change at the center of the U.S.-Brazil relationship. In addition to increasing diplomatic engagement on such issues, the Biden Administration sought to increase U.S. financial support for conservation in the Brazilian Amazon. In 2023, President Biden announced his intention to seek $500 million from Congress over five years for Brazil's Amazon Fund.[174] The Biden Administration asserted that such funding was "a top priority for—and consistent ask from—the Brazilian government" and "central to strengthening the U.S. partnership with Brazil."[175] The Biden Administration ultimately delivered $53.5 million to Brazil for the Amazon Fund between December 2023 and October 2024.[176]

Congress has not specifically appropriated any funding for the Amazon Fund but has designated some funding for U.S.-managed foreign assistance programs in the Brazilian Amazon in annual appropriations legislation. For example, the explanatory statement accompanying the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2024 (P.L. 118-47, Division F) designated $23.75 million for such activities.[177] The Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025 (P.L. 119-4) funds U.S. foreign assistance programs in Brazil at the same rate, and under the same conditions and authority, as FY2024. It is unclear if the Trump Administration intends to provide this assistance to Brazil. The Trump Administration's FY2026 foreign assistance budget request does not specifically request funding for the Brazilian Amazon.[178]

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has been the lead U.S. agency responsible for implementing environmental assistance programs in Brazil. From 2014 to 2024, USAID coordinated such activities under the U.S.-Brazil Partnership for the Conservation of Amazon Biodiversity. That partnership brought together the U.S. and Brazilian governments, the private sector, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and communities—including Indigenous

[172] H.Rept. 118-301, p. 1333.

[173] S. 2342, §514.

[174] White House, "Chair's Summary of the Major Economies Forum on Energy and Climate Held by President Joe Biden," April 21, 2023.

[175] U.S. Department of State, *Congressional Budget Justification, Foreign Operations, Appendix 2, Fiscal Year 2025*, April 2024, p. 313.

[176] Amazon Fund, "Donations," accessed May 28, 2025, https://www.amazonfund.gov.br/en/transparency/donations/.

[177] U.S. Congress, House Appropriations Committee, *Further Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024*, committee print, H.R. 2882/P.L. 118-47, Book 2, Divisions A-F, 118th Cong., 2nd sess. (Washington: GPO, 2024), p. 1199.

[178] U.S. Department of State, *Congressional Budget Justification, Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs, Fiscal Year 2026*, May 2025.

peoples and *Quilombolas*—with the stated purpose of strengthening protected area management and promoting sustainable economic activities.[179]

Other U.S. agencies also have been engaged in Brazil, some in collaboration with USAID. The U.S. Forest Service, for example, has provided technical assistance to the Brazilian government, NGOs, and cooperatives intended to improve protected area management, reduce the threat of fire, conserve migratory bird habitat, and facilitate the establishment of sustainable value chains for forest products. NASA has provided data and technical support to Brazil to help the country better monitor Amazon deforestation. Other agencies, such as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, have assisted Brazil in law enforcement to combat wildlife trafficking, illegal logging, and other conservation crimes. As of 2024, the U.S. State Department had identified Brazil as a "focus country" for anti-wildlife trafficking efforts, pursuant to the Eliminate, Neutralize, and Disrupt (END) Wildlife Trafficking Act of 2016, as amended (P.L. 114-231; 16 U.S.C. §§ 7601-7644).[180]

The Trump Administration's foreign assistance policies have affected environmental conservation activities in Brazil. On January 20, 2025, President Trump issued E.O. 14169, pausing U.S. foreign assistance for 90 days "pending reviews of such programs for programmatic efficiency and consistency with United States foreign policy."[181] The Administration subsequently announced plans to downsize and merge USAID into the State Department and reportedly terminated 86% of USAID programs worldwide, including all environmental programs in Brazil.[182] After losing U.S. funding, some Brazilian environmental NGOs reportedly scaled back their activities.[183] The Brazilian government reportedly asserted that the loss of U.S. technical support for activities like forest management and forest fire prevention would not affect its ability to continue carrying out such activities on its own.[184]

Lula administration officials have expressed greater concerns about how the Trump Administration's plans to once again withdraw the United States from the Paris Agreement and other U.S. policies may affect multilateral efforts to address climate change.[185] As noted above, Brazil is scheduled to host COP30 in November 2025. Among other initiatives, Brazilian officials are reportedly developing a tropical forest preservation plan and encouraging governments to

[179] *Quilombolas* are inhabitants of communities founded by individuals who escaped or were freed from slavery. U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), "Brazil: Bilateral Biodiversity Conservation," January 19, 2022, https://web.archive.org/web/20250117030251/https://www.usaid.gov/brazil/our-work/environmental-partnerships.

[180] A focus country is considered a major source of wildlife trafficking products or their derivatives, a major transit point of wildlife trafficking products or their derivatives, or a major consumer of wildlife trafficking products. U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, *Report to Congress on the Eliminate, Neutralize, and Disrupt Wildlife Trafficking Act,* P.L. 114-231*; 16 U.S.C. §§ 7601-7644,* August 6, 2024.

[181] Executive Order 14169 of January 20, 2025, "Reevaluating and Realigning United States Foreign Aid," 90 *Federal Register* 8619, January 30, 2025.

[182] Karoun Demirjian et al., "Final Cuts Will Eliminate U.S. Aid Agency in All but Name," *New York Times,* March 28, 2025; Elissa Miolene, Sara Jerving, and Adva Saldinger, "The USAID Awards the Trump Administration Killed – And Kept," *Devex,* March 27, 2025; and CRS communication with USAID, May 2025.

[183] Aimee Gabay, "Pause to USAID Already Having Impacts on Community Conservation in the Amazon," *Mongabay,* February 24, 2025; and "Cortes de Trump Ameaçam Ajuda a Refugiados e Conservação Ambiental no Brasil," *Folha de São Paulo*, February 28, 2025.

[184] Fabíola Sinimbú, "Combate a Incêndios no Brasil Não Será Afetado por Decisão dos EUA," Agência Brasil, February 11, 2025.

[185] Executive Order 14162 of January 20, 2025, "Putting America First in International Environmental Agreements," 90 *Federal Register* 8455, January 30, 2025; Reuters, "Brazil Warns Trump Effect Risks 'Triple Negative' for Climate," March 6, 2025; and Reuters, "US Exit from Paris Climate Deal Complicates Finance Targets, Says COP30 Head," January 23, 2025.

adopt more ambitious targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.[186] In the absence of U.S. federal government engagement on these issues, Brazilian officials reportedly intend to work with other sectors of U.S. society, such as states, universities, and businesses.[187]

Options for Congress

Congress may examine U.S.-Brazilian cooperation on environmental matters and whether and, if so, how to influence the trajectory of such cooperation. During the FY2026 appropriations process, Congress may assess whether or not to designate specific funding for environmental programs in the Brazilian Amazon, through U.S. agencies or a new U.S. Foundation for International Conservation.[188] The National Security, Department of State, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2026 (H.R. 4779/H.Rept. 119-217), as reported in July 2025, would not specifically appropriate any funds for the Brazilian Amazon but would designate "not less than" $100 million as a contribution to the U.S. Foundation for International Conservation. Congress also could examine whether and, if so, how the Trump Administration's foreign assistance policies have affected such programs and the Administration's compliance with funding directives in prior year appropriations legislation. Additionally, Congress could consider other legislative measures, such as the Strengthening the Rule of Law in the Brazilian Amazon Act (S. 2578), intended to strengthen U.S.-Brazilian cooperation in combatting environmental crimes and support sustainable economic opportunities in the Amazon region. Some Members of Congress have attended past UN climate conferences, and Members could engage with the Brazilian government on climate issues at COP30.

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[186] "Brazil Readying Tropical Forest Preservation Plan for COP30," *Valor International,* May 22, 2025; and Manuela Andreoni and Lisandra Paraguassu, "Brazil Urging Tougher Emissions Goals Ahead of Climate Summit, Sources Say," Reuters, April 23, 2025.

[187] "U.S. Exit from Paris Agreement Adds Challenge for COP30," *Valor International,* January 22, 2025.

[188] The United States Foundation for International Conservation Act of 2024 (Title LI, Subtitle A of P.L. 118-159) directed the Secretary of State to establish the United States Foundation for International Conservation as an independent, nonprofit corporation within 180 days of enactment. The legislation authorized appropriations of "not more than" $100 million for the foundation for each fiscal year between FY2026 and FY2034.

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