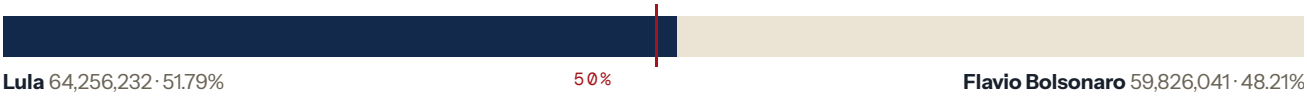
# Brazil, 25 October 2026: *the count, the extra two hours and the refusal*

How the presidential runoff worked as a democratic process, read against my July report on Brazil.

NEVO GOOR AS OF 26 OCTOBER 2026, MORNING UTC AN INDEPENDENT PROJECT BY NEVO GOOR

The count worked. In a note published at 00:18 on 26 October, Brasilia time, the electoral court reported the result: Lula re-elected with 51.79% of valid votes, 64,256,232 against 59,826,041 for Senator Flavio Bolsonaro. The losing candidate refused to concede and said he would ask for the election to be annulled. His objection rests mainly on one act: around the scheduled close, a single Supreme Court justice extended voting by two hours where polls were still open. So far the dispute is moving through words and lawyers. By the morning of 26 October I found no violence, no road blockades and no filing in court.

| 51.79% | 128.2M | 19.2% | 2 hours |
|---|---|---|---|
| Lula's share of valid votes (TSE) | voted, of more than 158 million eligible (TSE) | abstention, about; it was 21.08% in the first round (TSE) | of extra voting, ordered by one Supreme Court justice (AP) |




**Lula** 64,256,232 · 51.79% **Flavio Bolsonaro** 59,826,041 · 48.21%

Runoff of 25 October 2026, valid votes. Electoral court note published at 00:18 on 26 October, Brasilia time (TSE).

> In July I wrote that Brazil was a democracy repairing itself, and that the question was not whether the system was failing but whether the repair would hold. A runoff night is a small test of that. It is not yet the answer.

## 01 What happened on the day

The first round, on 4 October, put Flavio Bolsonaro ahead: 47.03% of valid votes against 45.16% for President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, with 99.99% of ballot boxes counted (electoral court, TSE). Flavio Bolsonaro is a senator and the son of former president Jair Bolsonaro (AP), whom a Supreme Court panel convicted in

September 2025 of attempting a coup (AP; International IDEA).

The runoff was held on Sunday 25 October. Polls were due to close at 17:00 Brasilia time. In the afternoon both campaigns asked for more time, each with its own reason. Lula's side pointed to missing buses in Salvador and São Paulo; Flavio Bolsonaro's side pointed to heavy rain in the south (AP). Brazilian reports give the order of the requests: Lula's coalition first asked the electoral court for more time in several states, then asked the Supreme Court for a nationwide extension; Flavio Bolsonaro's campaign asked the electoral court for more time in municipalities of southern and south-eastern states (CNN Brasil; Metrópoles).

Justice Cristiano Zanin of the Supreme Court extended voting by two hours, to 19:00 (AP). AP places his ruling three minutes before the scheduled close; the electoral court says it came after 17:00, when thousands of voting machines had already closed and could not be reopened (TSE). The court's note that evening said that voting continued only in places where it had not closed by 17:00 (TSE note, 18:44). How many people voted in those two hours, I did not find.

SUNDAY 25 OCTOBER, BRASILIA TIME

- **17:00** — Polls due to close.
- **around 17:00** — Justice Cristiano Zanin extends voting by two hours. AP places the ruling three minutes before the close; the electoral court says after it, with thousands of machines already closed (AP; TSE).
- **18:44** — Electoral court note: voting continues only where it had not closed by 17:00 (TSE).
- **19:00** — Extended voting ends.
- **00:18, 26 Oct** — The court publishes its note on the result. The losing candidate has already refused to concede (TSE; AP; Reuters).

The buses had a court of their own. In Bahia the electoral justice ordered the arrest of Salvador's mobility secretary, Pablo Souza, over the cut in the city's bus fleet on voting day (AP; Poder360). A state electoral judge said at least 75 buses were kept in municipal garages (AP). The mayor, Bruno Reis, whom AP describes as a Bolsonaro ally, blamed trade unionists for illegally putting Workers' Party material on buses (AP). Whether the arrest was carried out, I did not find.

In an early-afternoon briefing the president of the electoral court, Justice Kassio Nunes Marques, reported 138 incidents up to then, among them attempts to break the secrecy of the vote, illegal campaigning and vote buying (TSE). By the end of the day the court counted 1,551 of 499,248 voting machines replaced, 0.31% (TSE).

## 02 The result, and the refusal

| ITEM | WHAT THE RECORD SHOWS, 26 OCTOBER MORNING UTC |
|---|---|
| **Winner** | Lula, a fourth term (TSE; AP; Reuters) |
| **Votes** | Lula 64,256,232 (51.79% of valid votes); Flavio Bolsonaro 59,826,041 (48.21%). Announced by the court's president in a note published at 00:18 Brasilia time on 26 October (TSE). |
| **Turnout** | 128.2 million voted out of more than 158 million eligible. Abstention about 19.2%, against 21.08% in the first round (TSE). |
| **Losing candidate** | Refused to concede; said he would seek annulment (AP; Reuters) |

| ITEM | WHAT THE RECORD SHOWS, 26 OCTOBER MORNING UTC |
|---|---|
| **Legal filing** | None found by the morning of 26 October |
| **Violence, road blockades, protests at army barracks** | None found in what I read. AP reports partisan taunts at polling sites and celebrations by Lula's supporters in São Paulo. |

Late on the evening of 25 October, in Brasilia, Flavio Bolsonaro refused to concede and said he would seek the annulment of the runoff (AP; Reuters). He said it was impossible to recognise the result in the context of what had happened, said the rules of the game had been changed in the middle of the game, and called the justice who ordered the extension Lula's former lawyer (AP). Brazilian outlets report that he also said his party's poll watchers had been removed from the room where the count is kept, and that he would never know how many votes he lost where polls did not reopen (Gazeta do Povo; Metrópoles; InfoMoney). These are my translations, given without quotation marks.

Part of this the court itself recorded: its own account says thousands of machines had closed before the order and could not be reopened (TSE). On the poll watchers I found no record either way. The court's president said the extra hours did not affect the result (AP), and said that extending an election is possible, but it has to be planned and structured (TSE, my translation).

On 28 August, in a TV Globo interview, the same candidate had said he would respect the electoral process and the result (Reuters; Poder360). Asked whether he would accept a defeat, he did not answer directly and said he would win in the first round (Poder360). He now says the rules changed after that promise. I put the two statements side by side and leave them there.

## 03 What the observers said

After the first round, the Organization of American States mission reported that voting day went normally overall, in a campaign of tension and strong polarisation. It also recorded something that now reads differently. Its main concern was single-judge decisions by justices of the Supreme Court and the electoral court, some of them contradictory or close to election day, and the uncertainty and confusion they created among those taking part in the electoral process (OAS preliminary report of 6 October, as compiled by the TSE; my translation).

On runoff day, international observers said earlier in the day that voting was peaceful and transparent (AP). In the evening the OAS mission said it was following complaints about public transport and would follow the electoral court's decisions (Exame). I have not seen an OAS preliminary report on the runoff, or any observer statement on the extension or on the result.

## 04 What the July report said would matter, and whether it showed

| JULY SAID | ON 25 OCTOBER |
|---|---|
| **Polarisation was running through the ballot box, not through insurrection** | So far, it held. The refusal came as a statement and an announced legal route. No violence or blockades found. |

| JULY SAID | ON 25 OCTOBER |
|---|---|
| **The electoral court was independent and assertive, and the courts were the anchor of the recovery** | Tested in a way July did not describe. The most contested act of the day came from one Supreme Court justice, and that act is now at the centre of the losing side's objection. The observers had named single-judge decisions as their main concern after the first round. |
| **The main risk was an amnesty bill after the election, tied to the October vote and the Congress it produced** | Not decided on the night. The runoff settles who holds the presidency, not how Congress votes. |
| **Signs of decline would include the electoral court losing its independence, or a Supreme Court whose rulings reliably follow the government's wishes** | The first did not show. Flavio Bolsonaro's objection points toward the second, about one ruling. One ruling cannot show a pattern, and I make no finding on it. |

One gap is mine. The July report did not ask whether the losing side would accept the result. It read courts, the press, emergency powers and corruption, and left the oldest test of an election outside the table. I note it here; I am not changing the July reading.

*On Sunday a court was both the anchor and the object of the dispute.*

SECTION 5

## 05 What I can and cannot conclude

I can say the votes were counted and the result announced within hours of the last vote. I can say the night ended with a winner and a loser who refused to accept it, and that the refusal took the form of words and a promised lawsuit, not roadblocks. I can say the dispute sits mainly on one decision, taken by one justice at the very end of voting, a kind of decision the observers had already named as their main concern.

I cannot say whether the extension changed the result, how many people voted in those two hours, or whether a court will hear a challenge and how. Those answers belong to the coming days and to the courts. I do not forecast them.

The repair I described in July was built on courts. On Sunday a court was both the anchor and the object of the dispute. Whether the repair holds is still open. Around the question, for now, a lot of silence.

# 06 Method and limits

I researched and wrote this alone, with AI research assistance, and checked it claim by claim. A fact needs a primary document or two independent sources; anything less is given with its source named. Several Brazilian outlets I used are not yet on my list of assessed sources, so I name them and use them only for what each one reports. Portuguese statements are my translations, given without quotation marks, because I worked from reports of the statement and not from its recording. Where AP and the electoral court differ, I give both. The framework behind this piece is not externally validated and makes no predictions. This is a structured analytical opinion.

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