

Brazil slams US after dozens of deportees arrive handcuffed

AFP- Brazil's government expressed outrage on Saturday after dozens of immigrants deported from the United States arrived by plane in handcuffs, calling it a "flagrant disregard" for their rights.

The foreign ministry said it would demand an explanation from Washington over the "degrading treatment of passengers on the flight".

The spat comes as Latin America grapples with US President Donald Trump's return to power bringing a hard-line anti-immigration agenda, promising crackdowns on irregular migration and mass deportations.

When the plane landed in the northern city of Manaus, Brazilian authorities ordered US officials to "immediately remove the handcuffs," the justice ministry said in a statement.

Justice Minister Ricardo Lewandowski told President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva of "the flagrant disregard for the fundamental rights of Brazilian citizens," the statement said.

Brazil will request "explanations from the US government about the degrading treatment of passengers" on the Friday night flight, the foreign ministry said on X.

The government said 88 Brazilians were aboard the aircraft.

Edgar Da Silva Moura, a 31-year-old computer technician, was on the flight, after seven months in detention in the United States.

“On the plane they didn’t give us water, we were tied hands and feet, they wouldn’t even let us go to the bathroom,” he told AFP.

“It was very hot, some people fainted.”

Luis Antonio Rodrigues Santos, a 21-year-old freelancer, recounted the “nightmare” of people with “respiratory problems” during “four hours without air conditioning” due to technical issues on the plane.

“Things have already changed (with Trump), immigrants are treated as criminals,” he said.

– Crackdown –

The flight was originally destined for the southeastern city of Belo Horizonte, but encountered a technical issue forcing it to land in Manaus.

A government source told AFP the deportation flight was not directly linked to any immigration orders issued by Trump upon taking office Monday, but rather stemmed from a 2017 bilateral agreement.

Brazil’s Minister of Human Rights, Macae Evaristo, told journalists that “children with autism ... who went through very serious experiences” were also on the flight.

Footage on Brazilian television showed some passengers descending from the civilian aircraft, with their hands handcuffed and their ankles shackled.

“Upon learning of the situation, President Lula ordered that a Brazilian Air Force (FAB) aircraft be mobilized to transport the Brazilians to their final destination, in order to ensure that they could complete their journey with dignity and safety,” the justice ministry said.

Trump promised a crackdown on illegal immigration during the

election campaign and began his second term with a flurry of executive actions aimed at overhauling entry to the United States.

On his first day in office he signed orders declaring a "national emergency" at the southern US border and announced the deployment of more troops to the area while vowing to deport "criminal aliens."

Several deportation flights since Monday have garnered public and media attention, though such actions were also common under previous US presidents.

In a break with prior practice, however, the Trump administration has begun using military aircraft for repatriation flights, with at least one landing in Guatemala this week.

The plane which landed in Manaus was not a military aircraft, AFP journalists in the city confirmed.

A Brazilian government source said that the deportees who arrived in Manaus traveled "with their documents", which shows that they agreed to return home.

There are an estimated 11 million undocumented migrants in the United States, according to the Department of Homeland Security statistics.

The United States also expelled 265 migrants to Guatemala on Friday.

AFP