



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on July 30, 2025

U.S. Sanctions Rogue Brazilian Judge for Attacking Free-speech Rights

The U.S. Treasury Department has sanctioned a far-left judge in Brazil for his attacks on free speech and jailing political opponents.

Brazilian Supreme Federal Court Justice Alexandre de Moraes “has used his position to authorize arbitrary pre-trial detentions and suppress freedom of expression,” the [department said](#) today.

The move follows Secretary of State Marco Rubio’s revocation of the rogue judge’s visa.

In a related move today, President Trump nailed Brazil with higher tariffs due to de Moraes’ war against free speech.



AP Images
Alexandre de Moraes

Today, [@USTreasury](#) is sanctioning Brazilian Supreme Federal Court Justice Alexandre de Moraes, who has used his position to authorize arbitrary pre-trial detentions and suppress freedom of expression.

Alexandre de Moraes is responsible for an oppressive campaign of censorship,...

— Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent (@SecScottBessent) [July 30, 2025](#)

Arbitrary Detentions, Jailing Dissidents

The department’s indictment of de Moraes lays out just what a threat to basic rights judges can be. Since his appointment to the court in 2017, the department said, de Moraes

has investigated, prosecuted, and suppressed those who have engaged in speech that is protected under the U.S. Constitution, repeatedly subjecting victims to long preventive detentions without bringing charges.

He has “undermined” the free speech rights of Brazilians and Americans, and “in one notable instance, de Moraes arbitrarily detained a journalist for over a year in retaliation for exercising freedom of expression,” the department said.

Aside from attacking opposition politicians, “including former President Jair Bolsonaro,” the department said, he has “targeted journalists; newspapers; U.S. social media platforms; and other U.S. and international companies.”

Amazingly, he’s even stamped arrest warrants against U.S.-based journalists and social media users:



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He has also directly issued [orders to U.S. social media](#) companies to block or remove hundreds of accounts, often those of his critics and other critics of the Brazilian government, including U.S. persons. De Moraes has frozen assets and revoked passports of his critics; banned accounts from social media; and directed Brazil's federal police to raid his critics' homes, seize their belongings, and ensure their preventive detention.

"Alexandre de Moraes has taken it upon himself to be judge and jury in an unlawful witch hunt against U.S. and Brazilian citizens and companies," said Secretary of the Treasury Scott Bessent:

De Moraes is responsible for an oppressive campaign of censorship, arbitrary detentions that violate human rights, and politicized prosecutions — including against former President Jair Bolsonaro. Today's action makes clear that Treasury will continue to hold accountable those who threaten U.S. interests and the freedoms of our citizens.

On X, Rubio said de Moraes is guilty of "serious human rights abuses."

[.@POTUS](#) and [@USTreasury](#) have sanctioned Brazilian Supreme Court Justice Alexandre de Moraes under the Global Magnitsky sanctions program for serious human rights abuses. Let this be a warning to those who would trample on the fundamental rights of their countrymen—judicial robes...

— Secretary Marco Rubio (@SecRubio) [July 30, 2025](#)

Authority for Order

Managed by the Office of Foreign Assets Control, the sanctions freeze "all property and interests" that de Moraes owns in the United States. They also block those "in the possession or control of U.S. persons." Also blocked are "transactions by U.S. persons or within (or transiting) the United States that involve any" of de Moraes' property.

Trump's 2017 [executive order](#) "Blocking the Property of Persons Involved in Serious Human Rights Abuse or Corruption" enabled the sanctions. Trump declared that tyrants such as de Moraes are a national security threat to the United States. As such, their property "may not be transferred, paid, exported, withdrawn, or otherwise dealt."

The executive order, the department noted, builds upon the [Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act](#). It is named for Russian tax lawyer [Sergei Magnitsky](#), who died in prison after he was arrested for exposing what he alleged was the Russian government's corruption. The act permits the federal government to impose sanctions on corrupt foreign officials such as de Moraes.

On July 18, Rubio revoked the visas of de Moraes and anyone associated with him.

Trump "made clear that his administration will hold accountable foreign nationals who are responsible for censorship of protected expression in the United States," Rubio wrote on X:

Brazilian Supreme Federal Court Justice Alexandre de Moraes's political witch hunt against Jair Bolsonaro created a persecution and censorship complex so sweeping that it not only violates basic rights of Brazilians, but also extends beyond Brazil's shores to target



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Americans.

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— Secretary Marco Rubio (@SecRubio) [July 18, 2025](#)

Trump's EO

The executive order that Trump signed today echoes the sanctions order.

The judge has imposed fines on American companies or those headquartered in the United States, and threatened American executives or executives of U.S.-headquartered companies with criminal prosecution, [Trump wrote](#). Indeed, de Moraes “is currently overseeing the Government of Brazil’s criminal prosecution of a United States resident for speech he made on United States soil.”

Trump found that the Brazilian government’s “unprecedented actions” have violated free-speech rights of Americans and interfered with the American economy

by coercing United States and United States-headquartered companies to censor United States persons for speech protected by the First Amendment to the United States Constitution on pain of extraordinary fines, criminal prosecution, asset freezes, or complete exclusion from the Brazilian market, subverted the interest of the United States in protecting its citizens and companies, undermined the rule of law in Brazil, and jeopardized the orderly development of Brazil’s political, administrative, and economic institutions.

Thus did Trump clobber Brazil with a 40-percent tariff on its exports to the United States.



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