News

A person in shadow raises both fists below an illuminated crucifix

A person prays during a Mass to celebrate the feast of Our Lady of Aparecida at the Basilica of the National Shrine of Our Lady of Aparecida in São Paulo Oct. 12, 2021. She is the patron saint of Brazil. (CNS photo/Carla Carniel, Reuters)

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The National Conference of Brazilian Bishops said in a statement it was "perplexed by the serious and violent occurrences" that erupted Jan. 8 in Brasilia, the nation's capital.

Thousands of protesters invaded the country's Congress, Supreme Court building and the presidential palace, enraged about newly sworn-in president, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva.

The protesters are supporters of former president Jair Bolsonaro, who was defeated by Lula, as the new president is popularly known. They demand the removal of the new president, stating that the October elections were illegitimate and are asking Brazil's military to take over.

Bishops’ conference officials called for the immediate cessation of "criminal attacks on the democratic rule of law."

"These attacks must be immediately contained and their organizers and participants held accountable to the fullest extent of the law. Citizens and democracy must be protected," said the message in the conference’s social media accounts.

Cardinal Odilo Pedro Scherer of São Paulo also condemned the events stating that what happened in Brasília "was unacceptable."

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The Brazilian bishops' Indigenous Missionary Council, or CIMI, also spoke out against the invaders, condemning the criminal invasion and attacks on federal public buildings.

"Such acts confirm the legacy of destruction, fascism and authoritarianism that the government of former President of the Republic (Jair Bolsonaro) bequeathed to the country," CIMI said in a news release.

According to the council, in addition to a "devastated state, he promoted the division of families and communities and the manipulation of consciences, as well as the radicalization of an extreme right that defends dictatorship, violence and racism."

"We hope that all political, civil and criminal responsibilities are investigated and that the main perpetrators of these violent acts are severely punished," CIMI said.

Video footage from the country's leading TV stations Jan. 8 showed large crowds walking up the ramp to the congressional building, breaking windows and furniture inside the lawmakers’ chamber.

Other videos showed invaders ransacking Supreme Court justices’ offices and damaging artworks.