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Brazil fuel protests: Drivers to clear roads over army threat

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Image copyright AFP/Getty

Image caption Highways around São Paulo have been blocked

One of the main groups behind a fuel strike paralysing Brazil has told truckers to clear roads after President Temer threatened to send in the army.

The Abcam drivers' association said the threat of force was "lamentable" and said it feared for its members' safety.

Earlier Mr Temer said a "radical minority" had rejected an agreement reached on Thursday and was holding the population hostage.

Diesel prices in Brazil have nearly doubled since 2016.

The strike has brought the country to a standstill, with queues at petrol stations, airports running out of fuel and supermarket shelves empty.

What did President Temer say?

He said he had authorised federal security forces to clear highways and told state governors to do the same.

A minority of drivers was preventing "many truckers from carrying out their wishes to serve the people and do their jobs", he said.

Image copyright Reuters

Image caption President Temer blames a radical minority of truckers for the disruption

They "did not have the right to paralyse the nation", he added.

How have drivers responded?

Abcam, which says it represents 600,000 drivers, told drivers to allow transportation to return to normal.

It said it still wanted drivers to protest, but said this should be done peacefully and without blocking roads.

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Abcam was the driving force behind the blockades, which began on Monday.

On Thursday the government said it had reached a deal to scrap fuel taxes and maintain a 10% reduction in pump prices for a month in return for the protests being suspended for 15 days.

But Abcam initially rejected the deal and told its members to stay "firm" in their protest until the fuel tax cuts were signed into law.

How widespread are the protests?

On Friday there were still blockades in all but two of the country's 26 states, federal highway police said.

Image copyright AFP/Getty

Image caption Highway blockades are in place in all but two Brazilian states. There were 74 alone in the southern state of Rio Grande do Sul, a major route for trade with Argentina.

Routes between cities such as São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and Belo Horizonte were also still blocked and there was very little activity at Santos, Latin America's biggest port, according to port operator Codesp.

What has been their effect?

Petrol stations have been left unable to offer fuel, supermarkets are short of goods, and rubbish collection and public transport services have been reduced in many areas.

Some firms told staff not to come to work on Friday.

French supermarket chain Carrefour has limited the number of items each consumer can buy.

Fears that the protest might continue for days has prompted consumers to stock up on staples such as bread, rice and mineral water.

Exports have also been affected, as the main highways remain blocked.

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Image copyright AFP/Getty

Image caption Truckers have been blocking a fuel distribution point in the capital Brasilia

Sugar stocks have been reduced to "near zero" in the main ports, according to industry group Unica. Brazil is the world's largest sugar producer.

All car manufacturing in Brazil has been halted, car makers association Anfavea said.

Fibra, the world's largest producer of eucalyptus pulp, said the protests were affecting production.

What is happening in São Paulo?

The city has declared a state of emergency, allowing it to seize fuel from petrol stations.

It also enables purchases to be made without going through normal budgeting and bidding procedures, the statement said.

The move reflects fears that vital services in the city such as bus transport, waste collection, food deliveries and health services could collapse by Monday, the Folha de São Paulo newspaper reported.

The city has suspended non-essential administrative services to save fuel.

Why have diesel prices risen?

The state-owned oil company Petrobras adopted a pro-market policy of tracking international oil prices after President Michel Temer took office following the impeachment of Dilma Rousseff in 2016.

That has seen prices almost double.

Shares in Petrobras rose 2% on Friday on news of the deal after dropping by 19% on Thursday.

World Petrol Prices:

Current Brazil price pr.l. R\$ 4.27 US\$ 1.17
Price well under World average

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PT says crisis could boost "authoritarian adventures" For the acronym, protest against the rise of fuels is "fair", but population needs to keep an eye on "attempts to manipulate the political paralysis" .

By Vera Rosa, from Estadão Content access_time 25 May 2018, 18h05 Brasilia.

The PT took advantage of the truck drivers strike to criticize the government of Michel Temer and defend the campaign of former president Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva to the Planalto Palace. In a statement, the party marks a position in the electoral game and says that the current crisis may become "fertile ground for authoritarian adventures" because the center political bloc - called in the text of the "coup plotters" - can not submit a viable candidacy .

The indirect reference to "authoritarian adventures" is to deputy Jair Bolsonaro, PSL chairman

On the 9th, the PT will promote a national act of launching the pre-candidacy of Lula, in Belo Horizonte.

"More loved every day. More candidate than ever, "says the event's slogan. Convicted in the second instance in the case of the triplex of Guarujá, for passive corruption and money laundering, Lula is serving a 12-year sentence and a month in prison, in Curitiba, since April 7. PT's strategy is to register its candidacy on August 15, even at the risk of being challenged by the Clean Sheet Act.

A leader in polls, the former president has had his name thrown at other times in regional acts. It is a movement to keep it in evidence. Now the party has taken a ride on the truck stoppage to defend its greatest leader. Signed by the president of the PT, Senator Gleisi Hoffmann (PR), and the leaders of the party in the House, Paulo Pimenta (RS), and the Senate, Lindbergh Farias (RJ), the note on the strike states that the policy adopted at Petrobras the company "as if it were a private bubble disconnected from the national interest".

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For the petistas, the protest against the rise of the fuels is "fair", but the population needs to keep an eye on "attempts of political manipulation of the shutdown of the transports and their consequences". The text does not mention the scandals at Petrobras.

It maintains, however, that there have been 229 adjustments in the price of diesel in the last two years, and "only 16" in the PT governments (Lula and Dilma Rousseff administrations). "The reversal of this process, for the benefit of the country and the people, will only be possible when we have a majority-elected government legitimately to face market pressures, instead of submitting to it like Michel Temer and Pedro Parente (president of Petrobras). This is yet another reason to fight for Lula's freedom and the right of the people to vote freely, "says an excerpt from the PT's note.



PT: "The reversion of this process, for the benefit of the country and the people, will only be possible when we have a government elected by the majority" (Partido dos Trabalhadores / Divulgação)

Here ´s the real reason, PT:

[A simple hyperlink.](#)