

# [***Brazil s Dispute With Elon Musk: Here s What To Know As Judge Orders Investigation Into Billionaire***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BRY-6R41-DXVP-500Y-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Byline:** Zachary Folk, Forbes Staff

**Highlight:** Supreme Court Justice Alexandre de Moraes accused Musk of instigating disobedience and obstruction of justice after refusing to comply with an order to ban accounts in Brazil.

**Body**

**Topline**

Brazilian Supreme Court Justice Alexandre de Moraes ordered an investigation into Elon Musk, the billionaire owner of social media app X, formerly Twitter, as part of an escalating conflict between the company and the nation s government which accuses the platform of hosting influential accounts that spread fake news and misinformation.

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Supreme Court Justice Alexandre de Moraes accused Musk of instigating disobedience and obstruction of justice after refusing to comply with an order to ban accounts in Brazil.

Getty Images for The New York Times

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**Key Facts**

On Saturday,X s Global Government Affairsaccount confirmed that certain popular accounts in Brazil were blocked but noted that X was restricted from revealing which accounts were targeted and was not told which posts violated the law or the reason the blocking orders were issued.

However, Musk ordered the company to reinstate the accounts on Saturday night, claiming the order is unconstitutional and calling on De Moraes to resign or face impeachment.

In a court order issued on Sunday, De Moraes accused Musk of starting a disinformation campaign, instigating the disobedience and obstruction of justice, and declaring that the platform will terminate compliance with the orders issued by the Brazilian Court related to blocking profiles criminals and who spread fraudulent news.

De Moraes ordered an investigation into Musk s conduct to determine if he committed obstruction of justice, criminal organization and incitement to crime, and fined the company 100,000 reais ($19,762.85) per day if X disobeys previous court orders or reactivates any of the accounts that were previously ordered banned.

In apost on the app, Musk accused de Moraes of also threatening to arrest X employees in Brazil and cut off access to the app in Brazil restrictions that Musk claimed would force the company to close their Brazilian offices.

It is unclear if Brazil will actually cut off access to X, but Muskposted instructionsfor Brazilians on how to bypass regional restrictions by downloading and installing a virtual private network.

**Key Background**

After former President Jair Bolsonaro lost the 2022 general election to President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, supporters of the far-right Bolsonaro launched a protest that turned violent at Brazil s federal capital in Brasilia. The attack ultimately failed to instigate a military coup, and instead resulted in the arrests of over 400 rioters. In the aftermath of the attack, Alexandre de Moraes emerged as apolarizing figurein Brazilian ***politics*** as he launched far-reaching investigations and prosecutions of those responsible, including Bolsonaro himself. In February 2022, de Moraes began a probe into digital militias aligned with Bolsonaro and his allies. According to a police report obtained byReuters, evidence suggests these groups of online influencers conduct "orchestrated action" to spread fake news and election fraud conspiracies. Although Bolsonaro s allies have denounced de Moraes s efforts as politically motivated, members of Lula s inner circle have praised his efforts. It is urgent to regulate social networks, Brazil s Attorney General Jorge Messias said in apost on Xon Saturday. We cannot live in a society in which billionaires domiciled abroad have control of social networks and put themselves in a position to violate the rule of law, failing to comply with court orders and threatening our authorities. Social Peace is non-negotiable.

**Crucial Quote**

SOCIAL MEDIA IS NOT A LAWLESS LAND! SOCIAL MEDIA IS NOT NO MAN S LAND! de Moraes wrote in hisdecision. The dignity of the human person, the protection of the lives of children and adolescents and the maintenance of the Democratic Rule of Law are above the financial interests of social network providers and private messaging services.

**Forbes Valuation**

We estimateElon Musk s net worthat $192.5 billion, currently making him the third-wealthiest person in the world. Musk purchased Twitter for $44 billion in November 2022, and now owns about 74% of the company.

**Further Reading**

**Load-Date:** April 9, 2024

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