

PT Gets No Green Backing in São Paulo, Brazil

Contributed by Guy Burton
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They aren't very big, but the tucanos will be celebrating it as a coup over the PT. The Greens have given their support in the second round to José Serra (PSDB), despite the fact they are in the Lula government, with their most prominent member, the musician Gilberto Gil, currently occupying the culture portfolio.

The perks of being a candidate are about to roll around again this week. From Saturday candidates in the second round can only be arrested if they are caught in the act of committing a crime.

After yesterday's news, Paulo Maluf (PP) must be wishing that he was in the second round and relatively immune from the rough and tumble of investigations.

Maluf may be gone but he's certainly not forgotten. Having provided us with plenty of comedy Comical Paulo moments, the PT's national president, José Genoíno, seems keen to take on the mantle.

Like all people behind in the polls, he's urging 'caution, because polls can have many divergences and contradictions.'

Even if he is making a pitch for Maluf's mantle, he's still a little off. A little more certainty and conviction would be helpful. But as a first go, it's pretty good.

Meanwhile the Estadão analysis guru Fátima Pacheco Jordão reckons that the polls are pointing to a Serra win.

"Time is short for Marta [Suplicy – PT], but she still has a chance,' she says, 'because the candidates have ten minutes of TV time every day, when the candidates can make their arguments."

Sounds to me like she's trying to hype up this contest when most of the action is taking place around Maluf's difficulties and who the other unsuccessful candidates will support.

Jordão's comments came before the news that free TV and radio time is to start from Friday. But at least it won't be wall-to-wall as it was before the first round. And it's only three weeks till voting as well.

Speaking of Maluf, both he and his party colleague and councillor, Brasil Vita made statements to the police yesterday.

Vita claims that he knew he was being recorded during his meeting with former council president Armando Mellão over ways to blacken Serra's name during the election campaign and won't contest the tapes.

Meanwhile Maluf claims he had no knowledge of the meeting which took place between the two. Although it's not clear whether Vita is retracting a statement made on the tape that he had spoken to Maluf and negotiated a sum of money to Mellão to blackmail Serra. Needless to say, further investigation is expected to take place.

Later on, Maluf suggested that the whole thing was a tucano conspiracy against him.

For more information and analysis of the São Paulo and other local Brazilian results, visit the election blog being run by Guy Burton and Andrew Stevens at www.saopaulo2004.blogspot.com.