

Friends and Foes, 70% of Brazilians Think Lula Will Be Reelected

Contributed by Francesco Neves
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Close to 70% of Brazilians, including those who do not intend to vote for him, believe that President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva will win a second mandate in Brazil's October national elections. And over 47% of them think this is going to happen in the first round, on October 1st.

These are just two of the revelations of the latest poll conducted by the Sensus Institute with 2,000 interviewees in 195 municipalities. When asked "Who do you think will win the election?," 69.2% said Lula. Earlier this month, 59.3% expected Lula to win, in July there were 56.7% of them with this belief, compared to 49% in May.

As for Lula's opponent, Geraldo Alckmin, from the PSDB (Party of the Brazilian Social Democracy), the same party of former president Fernando Henrique Cardoso, less than 10% of Brazilians believe he will win the election.

While only 9.3% believe he will be the next president of Brazil in the latest Sensus poll, 13.7% trusted he would win back in May, 18.9% in July and 12.3% earlier this month.

2.7% believe senator Heloísa Helena, from the leftist party PSOL, will be elected for the presidency. This number was 3% at the start of August, 1.7% in July and 1.6% in May. 17% of the voters, however, didn't know or didn't want to answer the question.

When asked if the presidential election would be settled in the first round, 47.3% said yes, 42.5% responded that they expect there will be a second round and 10.2% did not know the answer.

The same Sensus poll shows that Lula has widened his lead over Alckmin. 51.4% of those polled say they will vote for the president, up from 47.9% in the beginning of this month. That would guarantee a first-round victory to Lula.

Support for Alckmin remained practically unchanged at 19.6%. It was 19.7 earlier this month. Helena's support fell to 8.6% from 9.3%.

"The election is practically decided," said sociologist Ricardo Guedes, director of the Sensus Institute. "Lula gets an effective endorsement from the population."

According to Guedes, "the voter decided to use economic criteria to make up his mind. The economic gains overcome ethical concerns."