

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

May 6, 2026

The Honorable Marco Rubio  
Secretary of State  
2201 C Street, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Rubio,

We write with concern regarding reports that the Administration is considering designating Brazil's two largest criminal organizations, the First Capital Command (*Primeiro Comando da Capital*—PCC) and Red Command (*Comando Vermelho*—CV) as Foreign Terrorist Organizations. Such a move would be counterproductive and harmful to U.S.-Brazil relations.

We share your assessment that transnational criminal organizations, including the PCC and CV from Brazil, pose a serious threat to regional security, democratic governance, the environment, and human rights. PCC and CV have expanded over the last decade, including across borders into Colombia, Peru and Bolivia. They are implicated in environmental destruction within the Amazon rainforest and violence against local communities and social leaders.

That is why we are concerned the Trump Administration's overuse and weaponization of Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) designations without meeting the clear statutory threshold for terrorist activity could weaken efforts to thwart organized crime in our hemisphere. Moreover, given the Administration's use of terrorist designations as a justification to commit extrajudicial killings in the Caribbean and Eastern Pacific, we are concerned by how the Administration may use such a designation.

The Trump Administration has already used sanctions to interfere in Brazil's internal affairs by sanctioning Supreme Court justice Alexandre De Moraes after he upheld the rule of law by convicting former President Jair Bolsonaro for attempting to overturn the will of the Brazilian people and the 2022 elections. Though the sanctions on De Moraes were lifted after diplomatic mediation, we remain concerned about this Administration's posture toward Brazil, where national elections will be held in six months. We are concerned that the designation of criminal organizations as FTOs would be used to inappropriately influence elections toward an outcome that the Administration considers politically favorable. This concern is amplified by the long and troubling history of U.S. intervention in Brazil, including documented U.S. support for the military dictatorship after the 1964 coup.


We believe the Administration can most effectively reduce the impact of transnational crime on security in the Americas by using established diplomatic and law enforcement channels.


There is no dispute that the Brazilian government has a responsibility to guarantee the rights of its citizens to life, liberty, and security of person by taking meaningful action to confront organized crime. The Brazilian government should be encouraged to expand its efforts to fulfill this responsibility through border enforcement, financial investigations, and enhanced cooperation with international partners, including the United States and INTERPOL.


The Administration should also take steps to fully implement the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, to which both the United States and Brazil are state parties, by addressing the root causes that permit illicit economies to flourish. This should include domestic efforts to stem the flow of U.S. arms to Latin America, prevent human trafficking, and reduce demand for narcotics by investing in drug treatment and economic development. These efforts should be reinforced by reinvestment in programs to strengthen democratic institutions and combat corruption abroad.


We urge the Department of State to ensure that Foreign Terrorist Organization designations are used to keep the American people safe, not to influence elections or wage an illegal war against criminal organizations. We request the State Department provide Congress with all evidence regarding PCC and CV activities that would meet the threshold to name them Foreign Terrorist Organizations before the Department decides whether to do so. U.S. cooperation with Brazilian authorities, other regional governments, and international human rights bodies represents the most effective path to producing positive outcomes in combatting organized crime while respecting democratic principles, international law, and the integrity of counterterrorism authorities.


Sincerely,


  
James P. McGovern  
Member of Congress


  
Greg Casar  
Member of Congress

  
Sydney Kamlager-Dove  
Member of Congress

  
Jan Schakowsky  
Member of Congress

  
Nydia M. Velázquez  
Member of Congress

  
Delia C. Ramirez  
Member of Congress

  
Rashida Tlaib  
Member of Congress