

# President of Brazil's Senate resigns

The Miami Herald  
Dec. 04, 2007

RIO DE JANEIRO, Brazil --

The president of Brazil's Senate resigned Tuesday while fighting allegations of corruption.

Sen. Renan Calheiros, a key ally of President Luis Inacio Lula da Silva, retained his position as a senator but announced he was resigning the presidency in what analysts said was a gambit to avoid expulsion from the Senate.

A legislative commission voted 17-3 last week to recommend his expulsion after finding evidence that he used third parties to illegally acquire two radio stations and a newspaper.

He narrowly survived a similar Senate vote in September after the Ethics Committee accused him of taking some \$8,000 a month in bribes to help a construction company win government contracts.

Calheiros has denied all of those allegations.

Resignation from the post of Senate leader may help sway other lawmakers against expelling him completely.

"He evidently felt it was a more important to obtain the good will of the other senators," said political commentator Lucia Hippolito of the Globo TV network.

Calheiros has been on a leave of absence since October, when colleagues threatened to boycott sessions he presided over.

His replacement is not known, but the change was not expected to affect Silva's ability to push bills through the legislature.