How does the Brazilian judicial system work on the federal level?

**Federal Court**
Preserves the constitution and rules on issues related to the union, constitutionality, and foreign disputes.

**Labor Court**
Responsible for judging individual and collective conflicts that arise between workers and employers.

**Electoral Court**
Regulates electoral procedures, guarantees the right to direct, confidential voting, and carries out elections.

**Military Court**
Decides on military officials’ crimes, except for those committed against civilians, which go to state justice.

**State Court**
Prosecutes and adjudicates any case not under the jurisdiction of another court (e.g., federal, labor), which encompasses the largest portion of litigation in Brazil.

**Higher Courts**
- Supreme Federal Court
- Superior Labor Court
- Superior Electoral Court
- Superior Military Court
- Superior Court of Justice

**Instances**
1. 1st Instance: a court in which legal proceedings are begun or first heard.
2. 2nd Instance: courts dedicated to the judgment of appeals.
3. 3rd Instance: higher courts and the STF, appeals of the second

**Foro Privilegiado**
In Brazil, high-level officials (e.g., president, members of the cabinet, and congress) have the right to what is known as a “privileged forum.” They are entitled to have their cases heard in the first instance by the Supreme Court, instead of starting in a lower court and appealing upwards. This entitlement is highly contested, especially by critics who claim it promotes impunity.

**Supreme Federal Court (STF)**
- Composed of 11 ministers appointed by the President
- Ability to challenge the constitutionality of a federal or state law or act
- Considers extradition requests from foreign countries and habeas corpus requests from any Brazilian citizen

**Federal Court**
- Total Expenses: R$ 9,977,720,623
- Average time in 1st instance litigation: 3 years and 11 months

*Note that in Brazil, the word “tribunal” is used in lieu of “court” (e.g., Federal Supreme Court is Supremo Tribunal Federal)*

Sources: Centro Universitário Franciscano, STF, Portal Brasil, Tribunal Regional do Brasil, Conselho Nacional de Justiça, The Free Dictionary
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