Operação Lava Jato

Known as ‘Operation Car Wash’, Lava Jato is the largest corruption investigation ever conducted in Brazil. With 38 phases to date, it has uncovered bribery, money laundering and diversion of public funds throughout government and the private sector.

At First, A Money Laundering Scheme

Mar. 2014
Federal Police (PF) open investigations in six states and the federal district. Alberto Youssef, a Brazilian businessman, is arrested for money laundering.

Mar. 2014
Paulo Costa, former Petrobras director, is arrested in connection to Youssef.

Plea Bargains Implicate Private Corporations

June 2015
The presidents of Odebrecht and Andrade Gutierrez, two of the country’s largest construction firms, are arrested.

Over 20 arrest orders are issued for executives of seven large construction firms.

Nov. 2014
PF investigates whether the OAS engineering firm used a condominium in Guarujá—where former President Lula allegedly owned property—to pass along Petrobras bribes.

Over a dozen of Brazil’s largest construction firms are now under investigation.

Aug. 2016
Queiroz Galvão—a Brazilian industrial conglomerate—is accused of forming a cartel to fraudulently adjust bidding for Petrobras projects, with alleged bribes approaching R $10 million.

The Superior Electoral Court hears testimony from Odebrecht executives regarding financing of the 2014 presidential campaign.

Petrobras, Uncovered

Apr. 2014
PF conduct search and seizure operation at the headquarters of Petrobras, Brazil’s largest company.

Jan. 2015
Former Petrobras Director Nestor Cerveró is arrested.

Politicians Further Entangled

Mar. 2015
João Vaccari Neto, Treasurer of the Workers’ Party (PT), is arrested for allegedly receiving bribes for Petrobras projects and removed from his post.

Mar. 2017
João Santana, a publicist from former President Dilma’s presidential campaigns, is arrested.

Former President Lula is brought in to give testimony regarding claims he received bribes in the form of donations and home renovations.

Scandal Spreads to New Sectors

Sept. 2016
The investigation uncovers bribery in contracts surrounding the Angra 3 nuclear power plant and arrests the president of Eletronuclear.

FPB Bank of Panama is accused of working with Panamanian law firm Mossack Fonseca to operate illegally in Brazil.

Investigation expands to include crimes at state-owned bank Caixa Econômica Federal and the Ministry of Health.

Mar. 2016
Eduardo Cunha is removed from his position as Speaker of the House due to his investigation under Lava Jato.

Countless politicians from a variety of parties are currently under investigation for involvement with the scheme.

May 2016
Antonio Palocci, former Finance Minister for Lula and Chief of Staff for Dilma, is investigated for criminal connections to Odebrecht.

Apr. 2015
João Vaccari Neto, Treasurer of the Workers’ Party (PT), is arrested for allegedly receiving bribes for Petrobras projects and removed from his post.

Apr. 2015
Anthony Gaglio, a consultant for Petrobras, is arrested.

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Sources: A Folha de São Paulo, Ministério Público Federal
Edited by: Julia Decerega, Camila Velloso and Colton Wade, Brazil Institute