

Brazil's most-wanted fugitive arrested by Thailand officials

■ Former aide Paulo Cesar Farias is linked to a corruption scandal that brought about the resignation of President Fernando Collor de Mello.

Associated Press

BRASILIA, Brazil — Brazil's most-wanted fugitive, a former presidential aide charged in a corruption scandal, has been arrested in Thailand.

The government said Monday it was sending three officials to Bangkok to arrange the expulsion of Paulo Cesar Farias back to Brazil.

Justice Minister Mauricio Correa said Farias was arrested at the Sheraton Hotel in Bangkok after a Brazilian spotted him and told the embassy. Brazilian diplomats discovered Farias had registered under his mother's maiden name.

Thai immigration authorities arrested Farias when they discovered that his visa had expired. The date of his arrest was not announced.

The government initially said it would ask Thailand to extradite Farias, but that process could take months. Since his visa has expired, it is much simpler for him to be expelled.

Farias is at the center of a scandal that led to the impeachment and resignation of President Fernando Collor de Mello last December.

Farias was Collor's 1989 campaign treasurer and the alleged mastermind of an influence peddling scheme that reportedly skimmed millions of dollars from state public works projects and businessmen.

He has been charged with 18 counts of corruption, fraud, graft, embezzlement, extortion and tax evasion.