

Prosecution Asks for Detention of Ex-President of El Salvador



San Salvador, November 5 (RHC)-- In El Salvador, the prosecution has requested that former Salvadorean President Tony Saca, along with six other ex-government officials arrested several days ago on corruption charges, be held in pre-trial detention out of concern the accused could flee the country.

The Office of the General Prosecutor of the Republic of El Salvador also requested to seizure of assets from the accused. Saca, the last person from the right-wing ARENA party to serve as president, is accused of allegedly funneling \$246 million USD in public money to private bank accounts.

The former president was arrested along with high-ranking former officials of his government, including ex-communications minister Julio Rank and youth minister Cesar Funes. Saca's former private secretary, Elmer Charlaix, later voluntarily surrendered to the police.

Authorities believe a complex network of Saca's public and personal business interests were used in the cover up. Businesses belonging to Saca were raided earlier this week.

Saca, along with Charlaix, Francisco Rodriguez and Pablo Gomez face charges of money laundering, misuse of public funds and unlawful association. Rank and Funes face charges of money laundering and unlawful association. Meanwhile, Alberto Herrera is charged with unlawful association.

The accused face sentences of three to 15 years should they be found guilty.

In March, El Salvador's Supreme Court ordered a civil trial of the former president, as well as his wife, Ana Ligia de Saca, because he could not explain how he acquired \$5 million at the end of his term. Saca's predecessor, former President Francisco Flores, also from the ARENA party, also went on trial for embezzling millions of dollars during his term, but died before the trial's conclusion.

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