

# *Reactionary U.S. Senator Investigated for Ties to Fugitive Bankers*

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Washington, January 25 (RHC)-- U.S. Senator Robert Menendez, the key architect of unilateral sanctions against Iran and supporter of Washington's blockade against Cuba, is under criminal investigation for his connection with two Florida businessmen who are fugitives from Ecuador.

According to reports issued in Washington, the U.S. Justice Department is investigating the reactionary senator's ties to brothers William and Roberto Isaias, who are wanted in Ecuador for embezzlement. The Isaias brothers, who ran Ecuador's largest bank, were convicted of embezzling more than \$660 million during Ecuador's banking crisis in 1999. They moved to the United States in 2000 to escape prosecution.

The U.S. Department of Justice is investigating whether Menendez, the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, intervened with Homeland Security and the State Department to help the duo escape extradition, the report said. The office of Senator Menendez has denied the report.

“Our office works each year with literally hundreds of individuals and families from across the country who are seeking help with the immigration process,” Menendez's communications director Tricia Enright told

reporters. “We review each and every request we receive, and if we feel any inquiry is appropriate, we make it.”

“In this particular case, Senator Menendez believed the Isaias family had been politically persecuted in Ecuador, including through the confiscation of media outlets they owned which were critical of the government. We are not aware of any inquiry into the Senator’s actions on this matter.”

The Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics (CREW), a watchdog group in Washington, has put Senator Menendez on the list of 13 most corrupt members of Congress. The watchdog added Menendez to the list last year because of accusations that he performed favors for a friend and campaign donor, Salomon Melgen, and accepted trips on his private plane without disclosure, as required by U.S. law.

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