

Former El Salvador president faces trial for embezzlement



San Salvador, May 18 (RHC)-- A former president of El Salvador will go on trial on charges of embezzlement and money laundering involving more than \$300 million, a tribunal in the Central American nation has decided.

A San Salvador judge has ruled that Antonio Saca, who was president from 2004 to 2009, and six other former high-level public officials would face trial for the charges. If convicted, they face up to 25 years in jail.

Saca and the other defendants are accused of diverting funds from the treasury to personal bank accounts to benefit individuals, companies connected to the former president and advertising for his Nationalist Republican Alliance (Arena) party.

Saca, 53, says he is innocent. His lawyer, Mario Machado, said they are studying the tribunal's decision. Saca was detained in October 2016 during one of his son's weddings.

The judge will keep Saca and the other accused people detained, said a prosecutor, who asked Reuters not to be identified because of safety concerns .

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