

Former vice president of Odebrecht found dead in Rio apartment



Rio de Janeiro, September 19 (RHC)-- A former Odebrecht top executive was found dead in his Rio de Janeiro apartment Tuesday night after cutting a deal with state prosecutors to provide confessions and accomplices of the company's systemic corruption to buy out politicians in return for public works projects.

The former vice president of the Brazil-based multinational construction conglomerate, Henrique Valladares, was one of the main informants of the company's corruption scandals that amounted to hundreds of millions of dollars in kickbacks to high-ranking elected officials in several Latin American countries. He signed with the state prosecutor's office to confess his and the company's wrong doings, in exchange for a reduced sentence. He was found dead at his residence in Rio de Janeiro Tuesday night by relatives.

Medical officials performed an autopsy on the body of Valladares, but failed to establish his mode of death, which was pronounced as "indeterminate." According to the police, his body is now with family members.

Valladares was one of the main executives, among about 100, to collaborate with the Brazilian judicial department. Their agreement meant the former top business partner would provide critical information about the multitude of bribes paid to Brazilian officials in exchange for their unfairly contracting Odebrecht.

Among other confessions, Valladares said he approved the illegal contribution of 50 million Brazilian reais (about \$12.5 million USD) in foreign accounts to then Senator Aécio Neves, who was defeated by Dilma Rousseff in the second round of the 2014 presidential elections.

The deceased vice president also accused the former Minister of Mines and Energy, Edison Lobao, of accepting bribes in exchange for public contracts in the energy sector. According to Valladares, Lobao demanded a bribe from the company to construct the Belo Monte hydroelectric plant. He also confessed that Odebrecht paid off Indigenous and unions in the region to refrain from protesting power plants in the Amazon.

So far, it's known that the construction company also paid out millions of dollars in Peru, Colombia, Dominican Republic, and Panama, as well as to officials in African countries. State prosecutors in Peru recently revealed that Odebrecht gave out over \$60 million in bribes to Peruvian officials, including four former presidents.

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