

Court rejects call to return Keiko Fujimori to jail for graft



The hearing of Fujimori represented a potential flashpoint at a moment of already high tension in the world's second largest copper producer following a very close presidential race [Angela Ponce/Reuters]

Lima, June 22 (RHC)-- A Peruvian judge has declined a prosecutor's request to return presidential election candidate Keiko Fujimori to remand prison for allegedly failing to comply with her bail conditions for the charges of money laundering and corruption that she faces.

Fujimori, the eldest daughter of the imprisoned former president Alberto Fujimori, is facing trial over claims she received \$1.2m from Brazilian construction company Odebrecht to fund previous presidential campaigns in 2011 and 2016.

Prosecutor José Domingo Pérez told Judge Víctor Zúñiga on Monday that Fujimori breached bail restrictions by having contact with a witness in the case. However, the judge found the claim was “without foundation” since she had not been given a warning, and extended Fujimori’s bail.

For her part, Fujimori said the prosecutor’s request was “arbitrary, disproportionate and unjust,” as dozens of her supporters demonstrated outside. Fujimori has already spent 16 months in pre-trial detention. She has denied the charges against her.

Fujimori was conditionally freed in May last year due to the coronavirus outbreak, and was barred from leaving Peru or communicating with co-defendants or witnesses in the case. Prosecutors have said they would seek a 30-year jail term for the 46-year-old daughter of the corruption-convicted ex-president.

The hearing represented a potential flashpoint at a moment of already high tension in the country following the second round of the presidential vote on June 6th. Pedro Castillo has declared himself the winner after emerging with 44,058 more votes with more than 17.5 million votes tallied.

However, Fujimori has refused to admit defeat and has sought the disqualification of up to 200,000 votes on the grounds of fraud, a claim for which she has provided no public evidence.

If Fujimori were to win the election, the criminal process against her would be halted until the end of her administration.

Pollster Ipsos Peru has said a statistical analysis of the ballots revealed no evidence of abnormal voting patterns favouring any one candidate.

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