

# *Colombian Government suspends appointment of 17 notaries*

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**The Petro government has rescinded recent appointments made by Iván Duque as payment for political favors. | Photo: EFE**

Bogota, August 15 (RHC)-- Colombia's Justice Minister in charge, Roque Conrado Imitola, ordered the suspension of the appointment of at least 17 notaries that days earlier former President Iván Duque had appointed on an interim basis throughout the country.

According to a communiqué sent last August 11 to the Director of Notary Administration of the Superintendence of Notaries and Registry, "the procedures leading to the interim appointments in all notary offices in the country must be suspended."

At the end of his administration, former President Duque appointed at least 150 new notaries; however, last July he appointed eight interim notaries, and during the days prior to the inauguration of Gustavo Petro, he appointed five more and left another four on assignment.

Local media report that many of these appointments were made to pay political favors, and highlight the assignment of Elizabeth Zapata Mesa, the wife of the former president of the Senate Juan Diego Gómez,

as notary 17 of Medellín.

The Colombian press also highlights the appointment of Luz Karime Behaine as second notary of the Colombian department of Garzón, who is the wife of the mayor of the region, Leonardo Valenzuela, and political figure of former senator Ernesto Macías for the opposition Democratic Center party.

Although only Rafael Guarín, former Security Advisor of Duque's Executive, is known to have been sworn in as notary on August 1, all appointments made in recent weeks by the former Colombian Government have become null and void, after the announcement was made public.

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