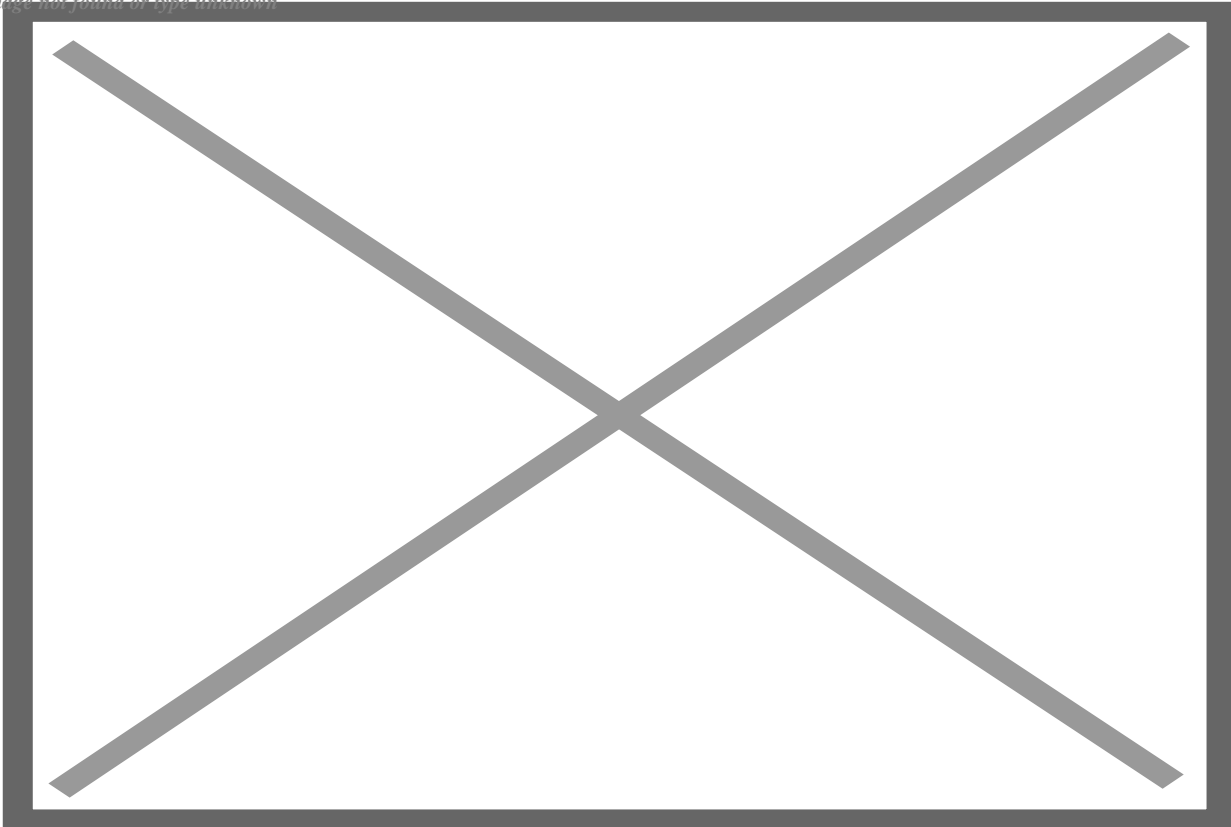


Uncertainty and confusion in Guatemala

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By María Josefina Arce

Guatemala is going through a political back-and-forth. The actions of the judicial and electoral authorities against President-elect Bernardo Arévalo and his party, the Seed Movement, have submerged the Central American country in uncertainty and confusion.

The question many are asking themselves is what will happen in the few months remaining until January 2024 when the new government, presided by Arevalo, who in the last days denounced that a coup d'état was underway, must take office.

In a press conference, the former diplomat pointed out with names and surnames those responsible for this plan which, he pointed out, is aimed at preventing his inauguration at the beginning of next year.

In fact, immediately after Arévalo's triumph in the ballot of last August 20 was certified, Semilla was temporarily suspended, paradoxically the winning party of the elections, an illegal and arbitrary decision.

Now, in the last hours, the plenary of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal stopped until the end of the electoral process, next October, the suspension of Semilla, adopted by the Registry of Citizens, belonging to the same entity, which at first had disassociated itself from this measure.

The questioned action of the Registry had led the Board of Directors of the Congress to disregard Arevalo's party, so that he could not preside over commissions, prepare the legislative agenda or have advisors.

But the threat against Semilla is still latent, the ruling of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal is effective until October, from that moment on, a period of uncertainty opens.

The uncertain situation and the attacks against the elected president, orchestrated from the power through judicial tools, have taken Guatemalans to the streets to demand respect for the popular will materialized in the ballot boxes last August 20.

On that day, Arevalo was the undisputed winner. He took an advantage of 21 percentage points over his opponent Sandra Torres, of the right-wing National Unity of Hope (Unidad Nacional de la Esperanza).

Arevalo's surprise passage to the second round put the power elite on alert, which even tried to disqualify his political movement through the judicial authorities, which was also the object of a raid on its headquarters in Guatemala City, the capital. His intentions to fight against impunity and corruption led the right wing to set in motion its plan to stop Arevalo's victory.

Guatemalans are demanding in the streets that democracy be respected and reject the interference of the judiciary in the electoral process. But we will have to wait and see what happens in the time remaining until Arevalo takes power.

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