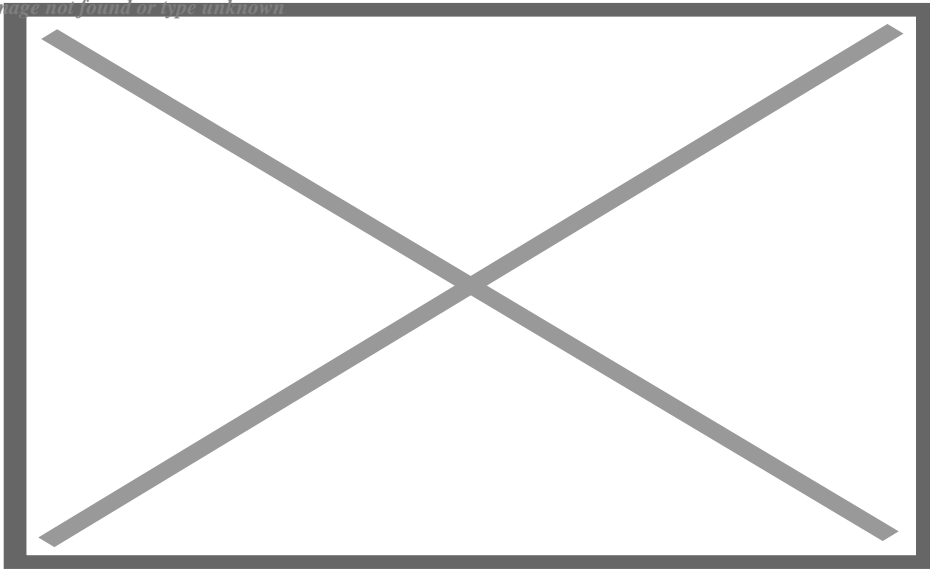


Colombia calls for an assembly to save the 2027 Games

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Havana, January 24 (RHC).- The 2027 Pan American Games in Colombia are getting farther and farther away, as circumstances continue to be known that do not confirm otherwise, unfortunately.

The latest news is that Neven Ilic himself, president of Panam Sports, gave a strict order to Colombia that almost sentences the future of the Games for the country.

ANOTHER DECISION

"We are no longer talking with Neven Ilic, but with the executive committee of Panam Sports. We spoke with the executive committee of the entity and concluded that we were going to send a letter to them to give explanations. We did so on January 14," said Ciro Solano, president of the Colombian Olympic Committee (COC).

And he added: "We requested an extraordinary assembly, because it was the one that ratified the venue for Barranquilla. The executive committee is not going to back down, because the letter is forceful. If they give us the opportunity to convene it is the last hope".

Once Panam Sports sent the letter, making the decision to take the venue away from Colombia in an indeclinable manner, the government headed by President Gustavo Petro decided to make a political advance in search of recovering the venue.

THE DETERMINATION

Foreign Minister Alvaro Leyva was committed to persuade other countries to advocate for Colombia, but that could not happen.

The idea did not go down well with Panam Sports, which once again slammed the door on the country by requesting that the government not interfere in trying to save the Games.

"These are Olympic rules, nothing is accepted from the government. Neven Ilic told us that he did not want any interference, but what the government did was to persuade the other governments. At no time did it interfere," Solano said. "Ilic told me that he did not agree with that, so I spoke with the Chancellor so that they would stop all this advance and they did", Solano told Blu Radio. For the moment, it is still pending to know if there will be an extraordinary assembly of Panam Sports so that the Colombian leaders can present the options they have to recover the venue of the Games.

However, this does not mean that President Gustavo Petro cannot meet with Ilic or with the people of Panam Sports, it is not interference at any time.

The Olympic Charter clearly states: "The National Olympic Committees (NOCs) must preserve their autonomy and resist all pressures, including but not limited to political, legal, religious and economic pressures, which could prevent them from complying with the Olympic Charter".

And it adds: "Governments and other public authorities shall not appoint any member of an NOC. However, NOCs may decide, at their discretion, to elect as members representatives of such authorities". It is clear that in this case there is no pressure on any member, what Colombia was doing was simply accompanying in the search to persuade the recovery of the headquarters.

The loss of the venue generated, at the beginning of the year, a political scandal that has the Minister of Sports, Astrid Bibiana Rodriguez, with a motion of censure on her head. The same crisis forced President Petro to take the lead in the efforts, so far unsuccessful, to try to regain the place for Barranquilla. Last week, Asuncion (Paraguay) and Lima (Peru) made official their intention to host the 2027 Pan American Games, further complicating the chances of the capital of the Atlantic

The country is awaiting the announced trip of the president to Chile, where he hopes to have the support of his counterpart Gabriel Boric to intercede with Panam Sports, whose president Neven Ilic is also Chilean. Ten days before the deadline expired on October 19, 2023, in the middle of the games in Chile, Minister Rodriguez, the former mayor of Barranquilla Jaime Pumarejo and the president of the Colombian Olympic Committee, Ciro Solano, met with Panam Sports and requested, and succeeded, in setting new deadlines.

The first four million dollars were to have been paid by December 30. The second amount due was to be paid on January 30, 2024. At that meeting in Santiago, the government of President Petro, through Minister Rodriguez, ratified its full commitment to the Games.

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