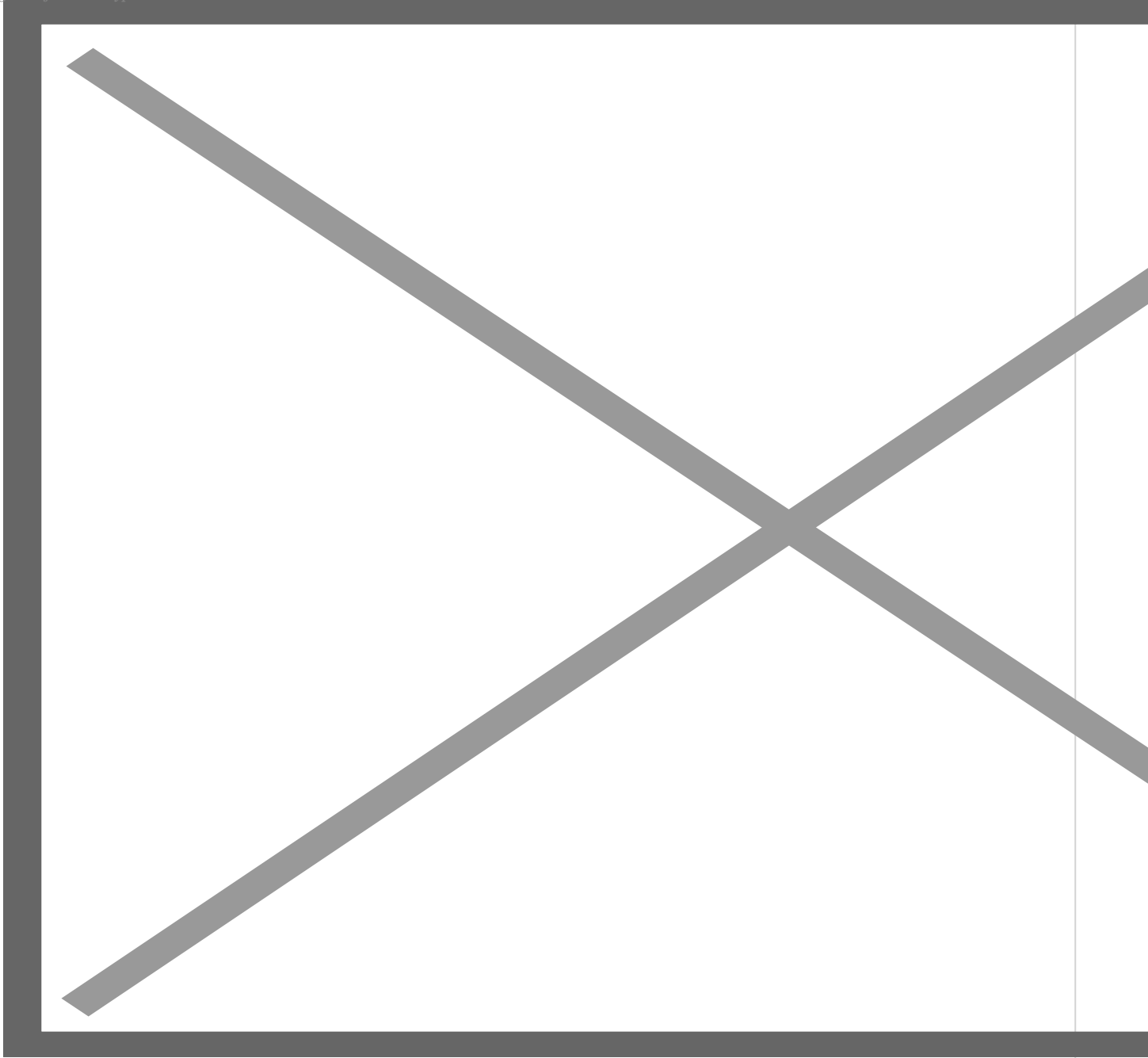


Stalker prosecutors

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Outgoing Attorney General of Colombia, Francisco Barbosa.

By Roberto Morejon

The election of Colombia's attorney general has generated controversy, inserted in the tendency of conservative segments to complicate the mandate of progressive president Gustavo Petro.

The replacement of the outgoing Attorney General of Colombia, Francisco Barbosa, due to the fulfillment of his mission, has not been of simple routine, as it has derived in a clash of positions and ideas between the magistrate and the Head of State.

The meeting convened at the Supreme Court of Justice to choose a new prosecutor, from a shortlist proposed by Petro, concluded without agreement, and in the end, Deputy Prosecutor Martha Mancera will replace Barbosa on an interim basis.

Although the Supreme Court of Justice will again consider the election of a definitive prosecutor, it was striking that this body did not reach the necessary votes to decide on the judges proposed by the President of the Republic.

The figure of Mancera is surrounded by controversy because the local press revealed an intelligence report that implicates her in a network to cover up an official of the Attorney General's Office who, according to indications, collaborated with drug traffickers.

Sectors of society and demonstrators in the streets urged the election of the next prosecutor at once and took note of Barbosa's stubborn performance.

Petro accused the outgoing prosecutor of trying to overthrow him through an investigation launched on donations made to his electoral campaign.

There are many who see in Mancera the continuity of the prosecutor who concludes his term, who they attribute to be stubborn in the investigations of people close to the government, and slow in those related to right-wing politicians.

Not by chance, legislators of the Historic Pact rejected what they qualify as persecution by the prosecutor's office against the nation's statesman. Civil society groups also show concern and that is why they went to a march to, as they affirmed, safeguard democracy and ensure the integrity of the Social Rule of Law. The controversy raised is far from indicating a simple difference of character between the prosecutor and the government.

This is underlined by those in Colombia who advocate for a democratic Public Prosecutor's Office, without deviating from legality and free from the influences of conservative parties. Colombia joins the list of Latin American countries where the right wing shields itself in magistrates and courts to prevent the rise of leftist figures or to attack them when they reach the presidency.

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