

Bolivia Says No Asylum for Disgraced Peruvian Businessman



La Paz, January 3 (teleSUR-RHC)-- Bolivian Foreign Minister David Choquehuanca denied that his country would grant asylum to a Peruvian businessman accused of corruption.

Martin Belaunde, who also led the National Anti-Corruption Commission (2001-2003), is accused of illicit association, money-laundering and misappropriation of public funds in his native Peru. A member of congress for the right-wing National Solidarity Party, he became President of the Commission of External Relations in the administration of Ollanta Humala.

While Belaunde's lawyer, Jose Urquizo, believed the request would be accepted because Belaunde's "judicial case turned into a political campaign against him," Choquehuanca rejected that his country would consider the request.

Choquehuanca, who had confirmed Belaunde's presence in Bolivia two days before, said that the National Commission of Refugees (Conare) would have to respond to Belaunde's request within 120 days, however.

"Conare must call him for an interview, something that has not been done so far in this particular case," explained the Bolivian official.

The Peruvian government asked Bolivia to reject Belaunde's request on Wednesday, and to deliver the businessman to Peruvian authorities.

Until the Bolivian statement, conservative media and politicians in Peru fomented allegations that Humala's government had helped Belaunde flee the country, and that Bolivia would grant the businessman protection.

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