

Brazil's Chamber of Deputies Sets up Committee to Probe Petrobras



Brasilia, February 6 (RHC-Xinhua) -- Eduardo Cunha, president of Brazil's Chamber of Deputies, or lower house of parliament, Thursday approved the creation of a new Parliamentary Investigative Committee (CPI) to probe corruption at state oil giant Petrobras.

Political parties are now expected to propose their candidates to sit on the committee, which is set to begin working at the end of February. The leader of the opposition Social Democratic party (PSDB), Carlos Sampaio, proposed setting up the committee and gathered more than the 171 signatures needed to create a CPI.

The leader of the ruling Workers' Party (PT) within the chamber, Siba Machado, said his party will seek to chair the committee.

On Wednesday, the CEO and five other top executives of the scandal-hit oil giant stepped down to make way for a new leadership.

Petrobras has been rocked by a corruption scandal since investigators revealed late last year that construction and supply firms had been paying high-level executives kickbacks in exchange for major contracts.

On Thursday, former Petrobras executive Pedro Barusco, now a protected witness, accused the PT of illegally receiving up to 200 million dollars as part of the kickback scheme through the party's treasurer, authorities said.

Also Thursday, police investigated the seized documents, made arrests and called potential witnesses in for questioning in different parts of Brazil.

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