

Guatemalan President Fires Three Ministers amid Corruption Scandal



Tegucigalpa, May 22 (teleSUR-RHC)-- After weeks of mass protests demanding the dismissal of Guatemalan state officials suspected of being involved in a unprecedented corruption scandal, the president announced a major cabinet reshuffle on Thursday.

President Otto Perez Molina announced in a news conference that he had dismissed the interior, energy and environment ministers, along with the head of intelligence services, among other high-level officials. He told the media that his government will continue to investigate and root out corruption.

Perez Molina previously and unexpectedly extended the mandate of the U.N's anti-corruption body, the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala last month to the relief of the country's civil society groups.

According to a senior government official, speaking anonymously to Reuters, Perez had asked all the cabinet ministers linked to allegations of corruption to step down so the president could finish his four-year term, which ends in January 2016.

A businessman from Guatemalan City, Andres Toledo, told Reuters that the president's last-minute move will not calm down the social upheaval against corruption in the country. "These steps come very late and just try to gloss over a more serious problem that has been there since the start of the government," he said. "They aren't going to have the desired result, the people's clamor won't be silenced."

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