

New Fraud Arrests as Guatemalan President Perez Molina Closer to Losing Immunity



Guatemala City, June 25 (teleSUR-RHC)-- Guatemala's Constitutional Court has approved public hearings to receive arguments for and against the immunity-stripping process against President Perez Molina, Guatemala's *Prensa Libre* reported on Wednesday.

If his presidential immunity is removed, Perez Molina could be tried for corruption. The hearings will aim to help judges reach a decision, after the head of the Constitutional Court called for charges against the president to be defined within eight days.

The Constitutional Court suspended the congressional investigation, ordered by the Supreme Court, into President Perez Molina over alleged corruption last week, granting temporary protections to Perez Molina requested by a third party.

The news comes a day after at least 11 people, including several former national police and government officials, were detained for links to a fraud network scandal in the country's Ministry of the Interior and police force. The arrests are part of an ongoing effort led by the attorney general and U.N. accountability body, the CICIG, to root out corruption.

Detainees were charged with illicit association, illicit enrichment, money laundering, and fraud related to the diversion of \$6.7 million from the Ministry of the Interior.

Among those arrested were former head of the Ministry of the Interior, Mauricio Lopez, who resigned last month, and former Deputy Director of logistical support of the national police force, Hector Rodriguez.

Preliminary investigation into the newly revealed fraud network suggests millions of dollars were diverted from the national police budget and to personal accounts and a company in Panama created by the corruption ring to receive embezzled funds.

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