

Guatemalan Ex-Dictator's Daughter Cleared to Run for President



Guatemala City, July 23 (teleSUR-RHC)-- Guatemala's Supreme Court has cleared the way for Zury Rios Sosa, daughter of former dictator Efraim Rios Montt, to run for president in the country's upcoming general elections in September.

The decision from Guatemala's highest court on Wednesday will allow Rios Sosa to register with the Supreme Electoral Tribunal as a candidate for her father's Christian conservative Vision with Values party, known as VIVA, after the elections body rejected her candidacy.

According to Guatemala's constitution, relatives of dictators or de facto coup leaders are barred from running for president. The article has been invoked to reject Rios Sosa's candidacy three times on the basis of her being the daughter of a former dictator and convicted war criminal Rios Montt. Rios Sosa, a former member of Guatemalan Congress, sought a Supreme Court injunction on July 16 regarding her candidacy after her party appealed the rejection of her bid to run for president.

The Supreme Court decision must still be ratified. The military regime of Rios Sosa's father, Efraim Rios

Montt, which carried out a scorched earth campaign largely against the country's Indigenous population, marked one of the bloodiest periods of Guatemala's 36-year civil war. The former despot is accused of killing at least 1,771 Guatemalans, committing 1,400 human rights violations and displacing tens of thousands of Indigenous people.

Rios Montt was found guilty of genocide and crimes against humanity in May 2013, but the historic verdict and 80 year prison sentence was overturned just 10 days later, purportedly due to errors in process. During the trial, almost 100 witnesses testified over counts of rape, infanticide and the destruction of crops to induce starvation.

When Rios Sosa told the media in April about her aspirations to govern the country, she declined to comment on how her father's legal case could affect her electoral campaign. The election campaign in Guatemala for the Sept. 6 presidential election has kicked off amid deepening political turmoil, including a wave of massive corruption scandals embroiling the government, fraud probes into high-ranking officials, and popular calls for the resignation of President Otto Perez Molina.

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