

Guatemalan Students Protest Government Corruption



Guatemala City, August 3 (teleSUR-RHC)-- Hundreds of Guatemalan students gathered outside the country's Supreme Court (CSJ) building on Saturday demanding an end to government corruption.

Saturday's protests, organized by various student university groups, took place after the CSJ released a statement saying it would not tolerate any interference from either state or international organizations in fulfilling their duty to administer justice.

The statement is a likely response to the comments issued by the head of the UN International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG), Ivan Velasquez, who stated that the continuing efforts of the CICIG to curb corruption are useless if the judicial branch does not fulfill their responsibilities in the battle against impunity.

"Because of the widespread levels of theft and corruption in our government, we are relieved the CICIG is here," Hugo Berreondo told Guatemalan news agency *Prensa Libre*.

A CICIG report published last July regarding political party funding revealed the following:

- 25 percent comes from organized crime;
- 50 percent comes from construction firms involved in public works and other government suppliers;
and
- 25 percent comes from the business elite, including business associations and individual donors.

The report suggests the financing campaign involved the creation of networks of companies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) through which donations are allocated, and these networks exist at local, regional, and national levels.

Over the past nine weeks, thousands of people have met to demand the resignation due to allegations of corruption of President Otto Perez.

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