

Ecuadorian Vice President Sentenced to Six Years



Quito, December 14 (RHC-Agencies)-- Ecuador's suspended Vice President Jorge Glas has been sentenced to six years in prison for illicit association and receiving bribes in the corruption scandal involving Brazilian construction company Odebrecht, a move former president Rafael Correa denounced as condemning "an innocent."

Reacting on Twitter late Wednesday, Correa wrote: "A trial full of so many irregularities will have to go to the international bodies, but they already have their objective: to seize the vice presidency. The same script as with Dilma, Lula, Cristina. It's all a matter of time, our people will react."

Glas' defense counsel, Eduardo Franco Llor, announced after Wednesday's proceedings that he will appeal the sentence, which he described as "iniquitous" and "barbaric", and insisted that his client will not resign.

"The temporary suspension of the sentence will be requested immediately, as established by the regulations, so that the vice president can recover his freedom as

soon as possible," Llor said. "Of course, he will continue as vice president of the country."

The sentence was handed down by Edgar Flores Mier, who granted Attorney General Carlos Baca's requested six-year jail sentence. Baca argued that "the prosecution has presented the evidence with which it based its trial and now it is up to the judges to establish culpability or ratify innocence."

Glas and his uncle Ricardo Rivera were two of nine people accused of criminal conduct in connection with the sprawling Latin American corruption case. Odebrecht has admitted paying US\$788 million in bribes to officials in Panama, Colombia, Mexico, Brazil, Guatemala, Peru and the Dominican Republic.

Glas' defence denied the presence of "evidence to establish guilt in any crime." He rejected the validity of the testimony by Odebrecht's former director in Ecuador, Jose Conceicao Santos, pointing out Santos' central role in the scheme. "The reports by the Unit for Financial Analysis, the Internal Revenue Services, the whole network of companies around the world, not one of them are related to Jorge Glas," the

defendant said.

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