

Venezuelan top prosecutor opens probe into Guaido-led corruption



Caracas, June 20 (RHC)-- The corruption scheme led by opposition lawmaker Juan Guaido will be investigated by Venezuela's public ministry. The announcement was made after the country's communications minister Jorge Rodriguez revealed the details of the misuse of "aid" funds.

During a press conference in Caracas, Venezuelan Attorney General Tarek William Saab indicated that the investigation arises after a public complaint following a report by the PanAm Post online outlet, in which invoices, the theft of some funds that were directed to Venezuelans in the city of Cúcuta, in Colombia were revealed.

Saab said that those who carried out the corruption scheme were identified as Rosana Edith Barrera Castillo and Kevin Javier Rojas, who also committed unlawful actions for months. In addition, he reiterated that Juan Guaido, the boss of Barrera y Rojas, is considered to be the mastermind of the plan.

This investigation has now been commissioned to national prosecutors on corruption, who will take the necessary steps to gather evidence of these crimes, explained the country's top prosecutor. Saab pointed out that the funds are directed from Venezuela, therefore, it is up to his office to investigate the exact origin of these funds and their use.

Several examples of misuse of funds were revealed in connection to this ongoing investigation. For instance, the money raised by a Live Aid-style concert, organized by billionaire philanthropist Richard Branson in February, has disappeared and apparently channeled to Guaido's family and friends.

The leaked documents -- published by PanAm Post, an news outlet sympathetic to Guaido -- now reveal that the "interim president's" chief of staff Rossana Barrera spent hundreds of thousands of dollars in cash on fancy hotels, expensive clothes, booze, cars and other high-life items.

In one example, Rojas and Barrera claimed to have spent money on seven hotels to house over 1,400 military defectors, but Colombian authorities counted only half that number crossing the border, and only two hotels were actually paid for. Instead, receipts reveal that Barrera and Rojas blew over \$125,000 on luxuries for themselves, including \$40,000 in April alone. The following month, one of the hotels evicted 65 defectors and their families for not paying more than \$20,000 in unpaid bills.

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