

Criminal evasion

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Pandora Papers released by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists

By Guillermo Alvarado

Active or retired rulers, some monarchs, politicians, officials and show business people are the protagonists of the most recent financial scandal that is sweeping the world, linked to money laundering, corruption, tax evasion and other illegalities.

The scandal was uncovered by the team known as the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists, whose members scattered around the world brought to light an extensive list of multimillionaires who use fake companies and other schemes to hide part of their fortunes.

It is not the first, and surely will not be the last case of this nature, which is becoming endemic in the club of the powerful, who never have so much that they can't reach for more, even if it means twisting the laws, something that normal humans rarely manage to do.

The consortium gave its investigations the striking name of "Pandora's Papers" -- which are the result of the analysis of several million documents showing that despite the efforts of some institutions, tax havens continue to operate at their own free will.

This is not a technical matter, because it has a real impact on the capacity of the State to guarantee the welfare of the population.

When a group of individuals evade their taxes, they are offloading on the backs of the people the cost of public services, or preventing them from being performed, which particularly affects the poorest or most underprivileged.

To give you an idea of how much this affects, Pandora's Papers indicate that in Latin America and the Caribbean alone, taxes in the amount of 40 billion dollars were evaded which, if well administered, would have generated development and welfare, especially in these times of pandemic.

Among those who participated in this enormous swindle are three conservative presidents currently in office, Sebastián Piñera, of Chile; Guillermo Lasso, of Ecuador; and Luis Abinader, of the Dominican Republic, all with "off shore" companies.

In Brazil, Paulo Guedes, Minister of Economy and a close friend of Jair Bolsonaro, as well as the president of the Central Bank, Campos Neto, another man trusted by the executive, are also involved.

While guys like these get even richer, millions of Latin Americans are falling into the clutches of poverty and their families have to struggle every day to survive.

The full list of those involved has not yet been published, but there are names we will not forget, because money that was indispensable to alleviate the pains of millions of human beings went into their pockets.

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