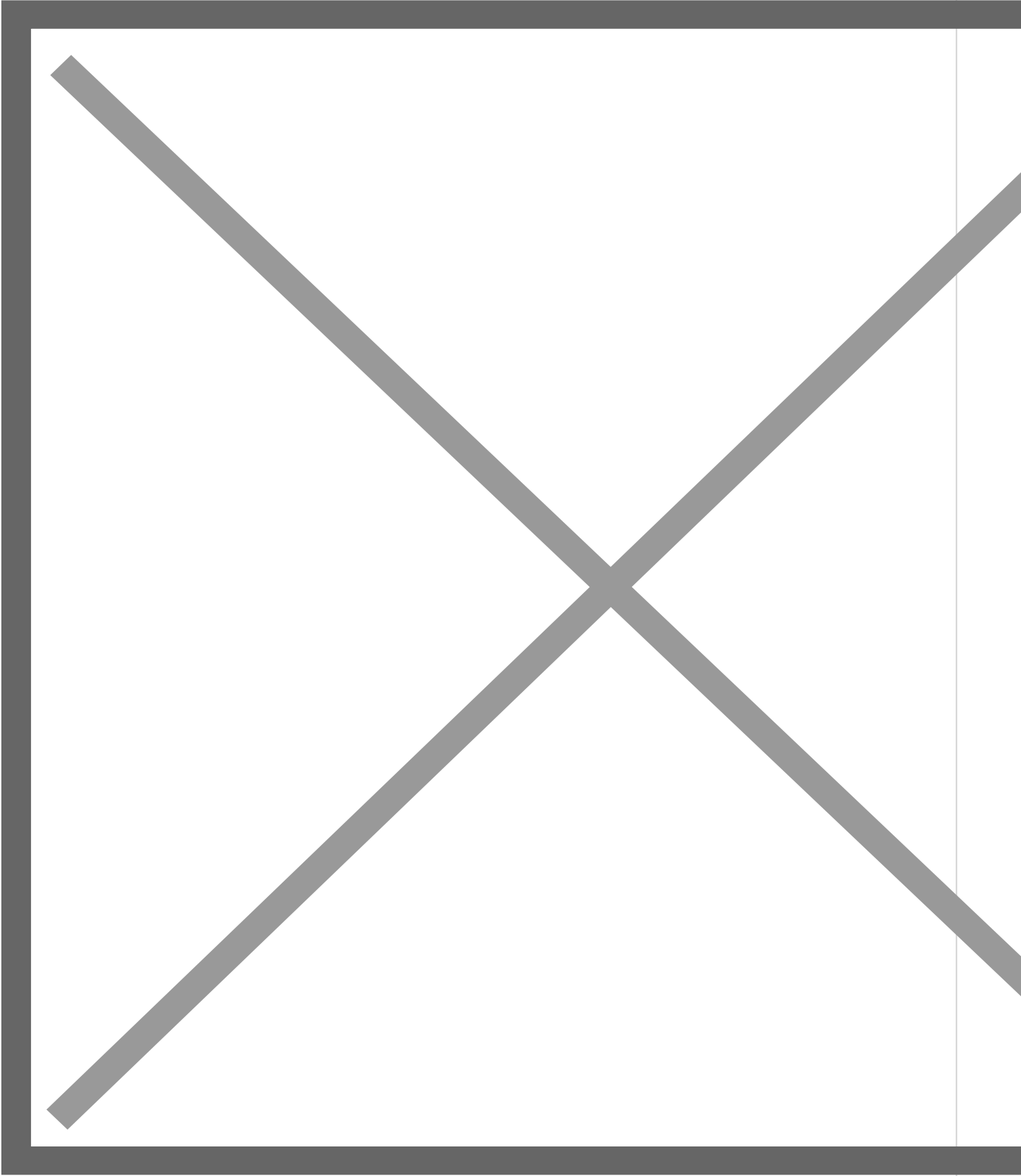


Alarm bells are ringing again in Guatemala

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By María Josefina Arce

The Supreme Electoral Tribunal of Guatemala concluded this October 31 the electoral process, and although it ratified the results of the elections, alarms were once again raised in the country, for the future of the Semilla movement, of the elected president, Bernardo Arévalo, who won the ballot last August with almost 61% of the votes.

With this decision, the electoral body dismissed the request of political and social organizations to extend the process until January 15, one day after Arevalo's inauguration, in order to guarantee that the authorities elected on June 25 and August 20 could take office.

The verbal and written requests were made by the 48 Cantons of Totonicapán, Alianza por las Reformas, Convergencia Nacional de Resistencia, among other groups.

Now the question arises as to what will happen with Semilla. The movement had been suspended by the Registry of Citizens last August 28, the same day that Arévalo's triumph was ratified at the polls.

The decision of this entity of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal revived an order issued three weeks after the first electoral round by Judge Freddy Orellana, in response to a petition of the Attorney General's Office, arguing alleged irregularities in the registration process of the party.

However, the maneuver promoted by the Prosecutor's Office did not prosper, since the Supreme Electoral Tribunal left the decision without effect, since the process, in force until October 31, had not been concluded.

Since he surprisingly made it to the second round of elections, Arevalo and his Semilla party have been besieged by a Public Prosecutor's Office and a judicial system accused of widespread corruption.

The president-elect, also the target of threats, had even denounced that a coup d'état was underway.

The maneuvers against Arevalo and the Semilla movement brought Guatemalans to the streets to demand respect for the popular will expressed at the polls and the resignation of Attorney General Consuelo Porras, accused of complicity with the power elite.

It remains to be seen now what happens with Semilla, since with the conclusion of the electoral process, the suspension of the political party of the president elect could be reactivated. Undoubtedly, a new period of uncertainty is opening in Guatemala.

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