

Giammattei's questioned mandate comes to an end

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By María Josefina Arce

Guatemala lived a tense day this Sunday, last minute destabilizing maneuvers delayed the investiture of Bernardo Arévalo, but finally the mandate of Alejandro Giammattei, one of the worst rated Latin American presidents during his four years in office, came to its conclusion. He concluded with less than 10% approval among the citizens of the Central American nation.

His presidency is linked to mismanagement of COVID 19, increased poverty, weakening of democracy and deepening of corruption, one of the evils he pledged to fight in his election campaign.

However, in 2022 his government was rated as one of the four most corrupt in the Americas, according to the Transparency International Organization, based in Berlin, Germany.

Giammattei, who before 2020 had three failed attempts to become president, favored his close associates. He did not hesitate, according to the allegations, to use public money to strengthen his

position and that of his allies.

Under his mandate, dozens of journalists, prosecutors and judges who had investigated corruption plots were forced to leave the country, while about 8 anti-corruption prosecutors have ended up in jail.

Moreover, he did not disassociate himself from the criticized Public Prosecutor's Office. On the contrary, he kept Consuelo Porras, highly questioned for the persecution against Bernardo Arévalo, who until the last moment faced maneuvers against him, as Attorney General, but finally took office this Sunday as the new president of Guatemala, after winning the general elections of last year with almost 60% of the votes.

In addition to the deterioration of the institutional framework in the Central American nation, there is an increase in poverty rates. Currently, six out of every 10 Guatemalans live in poverty.

One of the country's main problems, child malnutrition, was relegated to the background. Giammatei froze spending by the Secretary of Food Security. According to official data, one out of every two children under five years of age suffers from malnutrition.

Another failed area is security. In 2022, the homicide rate increased to 17 per 100,000 citizens, the highest figure in the last 15 years.

Giammatei leaves the country worse off than four years ago. Arévalo faces this panorama, who in addition to governing with a Congress with a right-wing majority, will have to deal with the controversial Attorney General, one of the architects of the persecution against him and his Seed Movement.

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