

Uncertainty in Guatemala over the future of the new Supreme Court

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Guatemala's new Supreme Court

by María Josefina Arce

The 13 judges who will make up the Supreme Court of Justice for the 2024-2029 term were sworn in in Guatemala last Sunday amid great skepticism.

The Central American country is entering a period of uncertainty, as some of those chosen by the opposition-majority Congress have been linked to acts of corruption.

The entire process has already been questioned by various sectors, which have denounced the lack of transparency and the fact that no interviews were carried out to draw up the list presented to the legislative body, nor were the candidates' integrity taken into account.

For constitutional law expert Edgar Ortiz, it remains to be seen how the judges will behave. They are expected to put an end to the tendency to criminalize those who denounce corruption, such as judges and journalists who were harassed during the term of outgoing President Alejandro Gianmattei.

However, analysts say that the new group of judges shows political tendencies and alliances that could influence their decisions to the detriment of justice.

For the time being, Dimas Jiménez, an ally of Consuelo Porras, Guatemala's attorney general, who has led a political persecution of President Bernardo Arévalo and his Seed Movement, has been removed from the court.

It should be recalled that after Arévalo and his party's surprise victory in last year's elections, Porras set about the task of trying to prevent his victory and subsequently his inauguration last January as the new president of the Central American country.

This Sunday's elections were marked by the arrest of a former official of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal, who was to become a magistrate of the Appeals Chamber and is being investigated by the Attorney General's Office for alleged irregularities in the registration of a political party.

During the current process, Congress also elected the more than 170 members and substitutes of the Appeals Chambers, from which the questioned prosecutor Rafael Curruchiche, who was also an ally of Porras in his attempts to stop Arévalo's inauguration, was excluded.

A period of uncertainty is opening up in Guatemala, and it remains to be seen whether the elected magistrates demonstrate the commitment to justice that should characterize them and carry out their work impartially, or whether the country's judicial system continues to be mired in impunity and corruption.

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