

Guatemalan Court Denies Legal Protection to President Perez Molina



Guatemala City, July 1 (teleSUR-RHC)-- The Constitutional Court of Guatemala denied on late Tuesday the legal immunity requested by President Otto Perez Molina that would have protected him from prosecution as he is the target of a corruption probe.

The decision follows last week's ruling by the Supreme Court of Justice which ordered the investigation against Perez Molina and asked the country's lawmakers to lift his presidential immunity.

The investigation has been promoted by opposition lawmaker Amilcar Pop, who accuses the president of being part of a corruption scandal known as "La Linea" (the line), which involves numerous public service officials, including former Vice President Roxana Baldetti.

Baldetti stepped down last May after a series of mass protests across the country. She is also being investigated after it was revealed that her former private secretary, Juan Carlos Monzo, was the leader of the corruption network that committed a \$130 million fraud. He remains a fugitive on the run. Several other officials were either fired by Perez Molina, or resigned from their posts.

However, civil society is demanding the president's resignation, since he is also linked to another scandal where kickbacks were allegedly given in exchange for preferred and overpriced contracts from the country's Social Security Institute.

Now Guatemala ranks among one of the most corrupt countries in the world according to the 2014 Corruption Perceptions Index by Transparency International.

A recent investigation revealed that salaries of private security guards contracted by Congress were never received by the workers and instead were funneled into the pockets of former president of Congress and ruling party lawmaker Pedro Muadi, a close ally to the president.

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