

Mexican Attorney General Resigns Amid Corruption Allegations



Mexico City, October 18 (RHC)-- Mexican Attorney General Raul Cervantes has resigned, reporting that he has informed President Enrique Peña Nieto of his decision. The resignation comes amid nationwide political debate over the creation of a new autonomous anti-corruption institution that would replace his office altogether. It also comes as Cervantes faces corruption allegations over his luxury car registered under an unoccupied home, which critics claim helped him avoid paying large taxes.

Opposition lawmakers slammed the idea that Cervantes could be appointed to a new prosecutor general's office position that would last nine years, instead of the traditional system where the president nominates the attorney general. "In the coming days the Lower House will be discussing new initiatives related to the attorney general's office and in order to not further delay the laws that Mexico needs I've decided to send Enrique Peña Nieto and the Senate my irrevocable resignation," Cervantes said via Twitter.

The new anti-corruption system will replace the current attorney general's office and is expected to be independent. Mexicans Against Corruption and Impunity recently published a report in which they accused Cervantes of being involved in a fraud scandal.

Cervantes had a Ferrari vehicle valued at \$218,000 that was registered at an unoccupied house in the state of Morelos, which neighbors Mexico City. This is a known strategy for people looking to avoid paying large taxes for possessing luxury cars in the capital city. According to the report, the house had two other Ferraris and an Audi registered under the same address. Cervantes' lawyer said the registration of the Ferrari was an administrative error.

Cervantes' lawyer said the official bought a 2011 Ferrari with his earnings as a private lawyer before he entered public service, adding that the company that had imported the car was in charge of registering it. The report says 16 other luxury cars had been registered to only four homes on the same street, which is a low-cost neighborhood.

Peña Nieto's government and his Institutional Revolutionary Party, PRI, have been targeted by corruption allegations and conflict of interest scandals. Opposition politicians say Cervantes could protect members of the PRI party from corruption charges once he becomes the new prosecutor.

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