

Demand for transparency on use of public funds in Panama



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Panama City, June 25 (RHC) New voices in Panama demanded on Sunday that the General Comptroller's Office be held accountable for the \$202 million of so-called parallel decentralization delivered to 747 community boards.

According to lawyer Ernesto Cedeño, one of the complainants, these funds ended up in localities, mostly dominated by the ruling Democratic Revolutionary Party, without knowing how they have been invested.

The lawyer explained to the TVN news channel that the work that the National Assembly (Parliament) is going to adopt in the coming days is important - ordinary sessions begin on July 1st - because it should demand that Comptroller Gerardo Solís provide the reports.

In his opinion, the supervisory work of the Legislature allows a person who has remained silent in the face of the alleged waste of state resources to appear.

On the other hand, he indicated, the Attorney General, Javier Caraballo, should instruct judges to demand compliance with embezzlement sentences against officials who, despite this, continue to manage state funds.

Another controlling entity is the President of the Republic, Laurentino Cortizo, who could force the director of the National Decentralization Authority, Edward Mosley, to report on this process, but does nothing, he stressed.

Recently, Mosley himself told the press that there is no parallel decentralization, "all the funds that are managed are regulated by law," he said.

He also indicated that when a fiscal year ends, local authorities make an account rendering to the communities, in addition to citizen consultations.

Complaints about this issue have been joined by a group of independent deputies, leaders of the Vamos Coalition and the Other Way Movement, who are requesting an investigation into the diversion of funds from parallel decentralization.

For its part, the General Accounting Office reported that since 2020, it has requested 40 reports from the General Comptroller's Office and to date, has only received one report.

In this regard, they pointed out that the regulations do not establish a specific time for the Comptroller's Office to carry out the audit, while that entity stated that it does not have the necessary resources to do its job. (Source: PL)

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