

Panama Judge Asks Interpol to Help Catch Ex-President



Panama City, June 30 (RHC)-- A judge in Panama has asked Interpol to help arrest the country's ex-president Ricardo Martinelli over charges of embezzlement and illegal spying on political rivals, police said.

Judge Jerónimo Mejía asked the international police to launch a "red notice" against the ex-president, meaning a preventive arrest in the United States, where he is reportedly hiding from Panama's justice, in order to process to his extradition to Panama.

"The national police received the demand and it was immediately sent to the Interpol office" in France, where will be decided whether to accept the request or not, said the head of the force, Omar Pinzon. "They immediately began procedures according to international police norms."

Panama's Supreme Court ordered Martinelli's arrest in December after the former president, known to be hiding out in Miami, failed to show up to a Panamanian court for a much-anticipated hearing on his case.

He was declared in contempt, and judges called for his detention while investigations into charges of corruption and illegal espionage continued.



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