

Former president of Guatemala denied house arrest request



Guatemala City, March 9 (RHC)-- Former Guatemalan President Otto Perez Molina has been remanded following an appearance in court on charges related to corruption.

Perez has been in custody since September 3, 2015. The ex-leader was denied a move to house arrest after unsuccessfully arguing that he suffers from a heart condition. The ex-president alleged that he is at risk of suffering a “sudden death” and requested the transfer on humanitarian grounds.

“The condition that I have remains and that condition can generate a malignant ventricular fibrillation at any time,” Perez said. According to a doctor who testified for the defense, Perez suffers from ventricular tachycardia.

Special Prosecutor's Office Against Impunity (FECI) representative, Juan Francisco Sandoval, argued that measures can be put in place for Perez to receive frequent medical checks to determine any advancement in his condition. Sandoval said “a defibrillator device” had been installed to regulate the heart rate of the former head of state adding that “is more sophisticated than a pacemaker.”

The prosecutor presented his argument using evidence provided by experts from the National Institute of Forensic Sciences (Inacif). Perez, his former ministers and ex-vice President Roxana Baldetti are all facing corruption charges.

Perez was arrested after the International Commission Against Corruption in Guatemala (CICIG) accused him of customs fraud. Perez then resigned after Congress voted to rescind his immunity and was promptly arrested.

The former Guatemalan president is currently detained at a military prison.

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