

Odebrecht acknowledges paying Peruvian ex-President Toledo \$32 million in bribes



Lima, June 28 (RHC)-- The Brazilian construction company Odebrecht has confessed to paying former Peruvian President Alejandro Toledo over \$32 million in personal bribes in exchange for state-funded infrastructure contracts. The neo-liberal ex-president governed from 2001 until 2006 and is currently in the United States after fleeing charges in Peru.

Josef Maiman, an Israeli businessman who worked for Odebrecht in Peru at the time gave evidence voluntarily on Toledo at the Peruvian consulate in Tel Aviv. He confessed to acting as an intermediary between company executives and the then president, organizing the channeling of personal bribes.

Maiman presented account details which revealed that Toledo received \$32 million, channeled via Maiman personally. Maiman also provided evidence of communications with Toledo, in which the ex-president demanded payments at various points throughout his presidency.

The bribes were made so that Odebrecht could secure contracts for the 2004 building of the "Interoceanic Highway," a huge road that connects Peru to Brazil. The project was worth around US\$1.3 billion and was controversial at the time for environmental reasons as it cut through much of Peru's Amazon region

causing huge deforestation.

Peru has been engulfed in a long political crisis, in which figures from all of the largest parties have been implicated in corruption scandals relating to Odebrecht.

Former President Pedro Pablo Kuczynski was forced to resign last year after it emerged that Odebrecht had financed his election campaign, while former President Alan Garcia recently committed suicide so as to not face trial for the same allegations that the Brazilian company funded his electoral campaigns in exchange for large public sector contracts.

Although Peru's crisis of corruption goes further than Odebrecht, currently all of Peru's living ex-presidents are either in jail on corruption charges, or have escaped justice by fleeing the country.

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