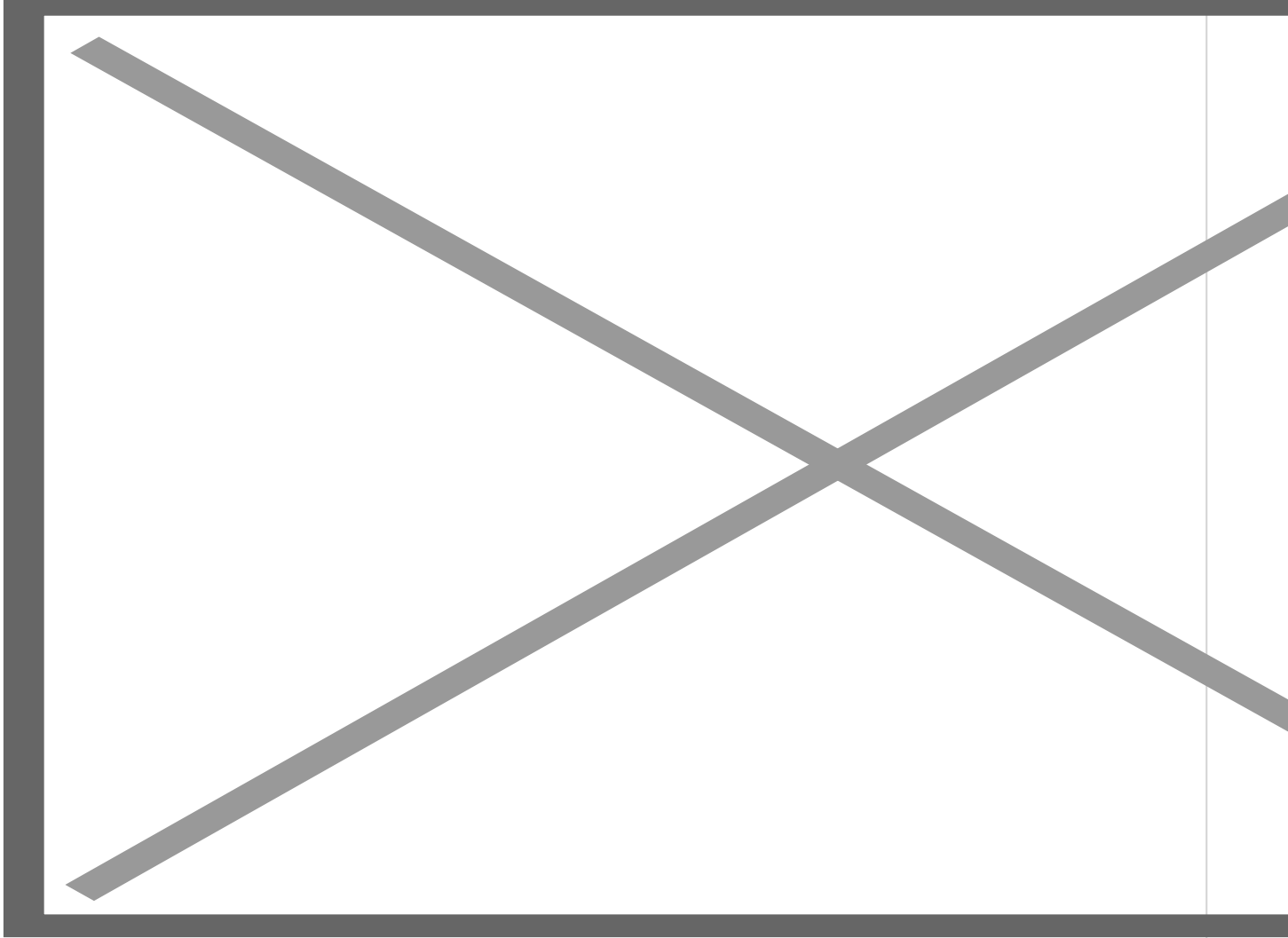


Panamanian Prosecutor's Office requests maximum penalty for former President Ricardo Martinelli

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According to the country's Penal Code, the penalties for the crime of money laundering range from six months to six years in prison. | Photo: EFE

Panama City, June 1 (RHC)-- Panama's Prosecutor's Office has requested the maximum penalty for the former president, Ricardo Martinelli, and 12 other people accused of the alleged crime of money laundering for considering that they incurred in a "continuous" violation and of which they are "perpetrators."

The prosecutor of the case, Emeldo Márquez, asked Judge Boloísa Marquínez for this measure as a solution to the case in which they are held responsible for the purchase, with alleged public funds, of Editorial Panamá América S.A. (Epasa) for almost 44 million dollars in December 2010.

According to the Penal Code of that country, the penalties for the crime of laundering range from six months to six years in prison, which can be increased "from a third to half of the penalty" for aggravating circumstances, as expressed by the prosecutor.

This Thursday began the plea phase of the defense of the accused, who already pleaded not guilty last May 23, at the beginning of this trial hearing that will end next Monday.

The investigation consists of 164 volumes and began in 2017, when the Public Prosecutor's Office became aware of the commission of the crime against the economic order for the irregular purchase of a media conglomerate.

According to the Prosecutor's Office, the disbursements in the New Business case were delivered by companies that in turn received contracts for different infrastructure works. All these actions were executed during Martinelli's 2009-2014 term in office.

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