

Attacks against Guatemalan president-elect persist

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By María Josefina Arce

The situation in Guatemala has not stabilized in the face of new maneuvers by the Public Prosecutor's Office. Almost a month before Bernardo Arévalo takes office as the new president, attacks continue in an attempt to delegitimize his undisputed victory in this year's general elections.

Now the Attorney General's Office has questioned the validity of the elections, in which in the second round last August the candidate of the Seed Movement won with nearly 58% of the votes.

It is requesting the annulment of the general elections, due to alleged irregularities in the processing of the results.

The new maneuver against Arevalo has immediately raised a great rejection.

Blanca Alfaro, president of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal, affirmed that the results are validated, officialized and unalterable. She pointed out that if the elected authorities do not take office as stipulated, there would be a constitutional breach.

Even the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Türk, stated that the Public Ministry of Guatemala is persistently and systematically trying to undermine the results of the general elections, ignoring the will of the voters.

Arevalo, for his part, described the new accusations as absurd and ridiculous, while emphasizing that he will be sworn in on January 14.

Hours before the controversial declarations of the Public Ministry, thousands of people marched through the streets of Guatemala City against corruption and demanding the resignation of Attorney General Consuelo Porras, who is leading an offensive against the president-elect and his Seed Movement.

Since his surprise victory in the second round of elections, Arevalo and his party have been besieged by a Public Prosecutor's Office and a judicial system accused of widespread corruption.

Despite the fact that the law does not allow it to interfere in the election results, the Public Prosecutor's Office has taken all kinds of actions to prevent Arevalo's inauguration. Thus, it has made two requests to remove the immunity of the elected president to investigate him for alleged money laundering and falsification of his party's constitution.

In addition, he managed to have Semilla disqualified for alleged irregularities in the registration of affiliates in 2017.

Likewise, he carried out raids to Arévalo's and the Supreme Electoral Tribunal's offices, in his attempt to distort the electoral process. It has even requested the lifting of the immunity of deputies close to the president-elect.

Guatemala is living tense moments. As January 14 approaches, uncertainty and fear of preventing the inauguration of Arevalo, whose unquestionable electoral victory awakened the fears of the political elite of the Central American nation, is growing.

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