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Ecuador: Prosecutors Request

Preventive Detention of Former President Lenín Moreno

[251 words]

Ecuador's attorney general's office, on April 19, requested the preventive detention of former president Lenín Moreno after he failed to appear before the court as mandated in the Sinohydro case. Moreno is accused of receiving bribes for the construction of the country's largest hydroelectric plant. The attorney general's office also requested the pretrial arrest of eight other defendants, including Moreno's wife Rocío González and their daughter Irina Moreno González.

On March 6, during a hearing for the formulation of charges, Judge Adrián Rojas ordered all 37 accused to appear biweekly before the National Court of Justice (CNJ) in Quito to ensure their presence in a possible trial for the crime of bribery.

From the beginning, Moreno, who currently resides in Paraguay and serves as commissioner of the Organization of American States (OAS) for Disability Affairs, had rejected because of his physical condition the obligation established by the judge that forced him to travel to Ecuador every two weeks. He tried to revoke it through two appeals, including a request to appear at the Embassy of Ecuador in Asunción, Paraguay, instead. However, the court rejected both of the preventive habeas corpus actions filed by the former president's defense.

Initially, the attorney general's office had requested the provisional detention of all defendants except Moreno and 12 others aged over 65. The former head of state's failure to appear periodically led the attorney general's office to seek his preventive imprisonment, along with others. The hearing to review the request will be held next week.