



GUATEMALA

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS REJECT THE DISMISSAL OF THE PROSECUTOR JUAN FRANCISCO SANDOVAL

Guatemala City, San José, Mexico, Washington DC, Geneva and The Hague, July 24, 2021.

The undersigned international organizations that contribute to the promotion of the rule of law and human rights in Guatemala categorically reject the arbitrary decision of the Attorney General, María Consuelo Porras, to dismiss Prosecutor Juan Francisco Sandoval, Head of the Special Prosecutor's Office against Impunity (FECI). This represents a serious blow to the Public Prosecutor's Office and the fight against impunity in the country.

The Attorney General is violating the Organic Law of the Public Prosecutor's Office because in order to dismiss a career prosecutor, an internal disciplinary procedure must be followed and it must be proven that he or she has committed a serious offense, as established in Article 63 of said law. The dismissal also violates international law, since the Inter-American Court of Human Rights has been emphatic in pointing out that the removal of a prosecutor from office must be exclusively due to permissible causes, serious disciplinary faults or incompetence and that a prior fair, objective and impartial procedure is required in accordance with the Constitution or the law.

However, the Attorney General dismissed Prosecutor Juan Francisco Sandoval arbitrarily and without reasonable grounds, jeopardizing the continuity of the most serious corruption cases in the country.

Prosecutor Juan Francisco Sandoval is a career professional with more than 15 years of experience in the Public Prosecutor's Office and has been involved in the most important corruption cases in the country. He worked hand in hand with the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG) and has led the Special Prosecutor's Office against Impunity (FECI) with commitment, impartiality and courage. He has earned the respect of the citizenry and the international community, and it is unacceptable that he be removed arbitrarily.

The international community and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights have repeatedly expressed their concern about the harassment and attacks against Prosecutor Sandoval and FECI staff. In 2019 the Inter-American Court ordered cautionary measures to reinforce the security measures of Prosecutor Juan Francisco Sandoval and other prosecutors of the FECI due to the high risk posed by the cases they investigate, for which the State of Guatemala has the obligation to guarantee their integrity and security.

We call on the Attorney General to immediately reinstate Prosecutor Juan Francisco Sandoval and to respect the regulations and the institutionality of the Public Prosecutor's Office. It is important to guarantee the continuity of corruption cases and that the work of the FECI is not put at risk.