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Former Minister Accused: Network Linked to Ángela Vivanco Faces Charges of Bribery and Money Laundering

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Today marks the formal charging of Gonzalo Migueles—the partner of former Supreme Court Minister Ángela Vivanco—alongside lawyers Mario Vargas and Eduardo Lagos, all detained as part of the "Muñeca Bielorrusa" case, which is linked to a network involved in influence peddling, money laundering, and bribery.

Original article: Exministra imputada: red ligada a Ángela Vivanco será formalizada por cohecho y lavado de activos

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On Wednesday, the Seventh Guarantee Court of Santiago will oversee the detention review and potential formal charges against businessman Gonzalo Migueles—the spouse of former Supreme Court Minister, Ángela Vivanco—former deputy and lawyer Eduardo Lagos, and his associate, lawyer Mario Vargas, who are currently in custody as part of the «Muñeca Bielorrusa» case.

This investigation, led by regional prosecutor Carmen Gloria Wittwer from Los Lagos, involves allegations of influence peddling, incompatible negotiation, money laundering, and bribery.

On Tuesday, the OS-7 unit of Carabineros executed search warrants at the homes of the three accused, all connected to the controversial case that led to the dismissal of a judge from Chile's highest court.

During the raids at the three properties, various electronic devices were seized, including computers and mobile phones, which are believed to be critical evidence in the investigation.

The operations, carried out in the eastern areas of Santiago, were executed under the directives of Prosecutor Wittwer as well as Los Lagos prosecutor Marco Muñoz Becker, alongside the asset investigation section of OS-7.

Simultaneously, arrest warrants were issued against Migueles, Lagos, and Vargas.

According to El Mostrador, all three individuals arrived voluntarily at the OS-7 headquarters.

«The last to surrender was Vargas Cociña, who approached the police unit around 11:00 PM. The other two suspects arrived at the facility around 9:00 PM,» stated the digital media outlet.

The three detainees will be formally charged in the Seventh Guarantee Court of Santiago with bribery and money laundering.

Migueles is under investigation for allegedly orchestrating efforts to secure judicial and real estate conservator appointments, as well as purported illicit payments in the «Muñeca Bielorrusa» case.

Meanwhile, lawyers Vargas and Lagos are also being investigated as representatives for the Belarusian consortium Belaz Movitec SpA (CBM).

The "Muñeca Bielorrusa" Case and Ángela Vivanco's Network

The «Muñeca Bielorrusa» case revolves around the legal conflict between the state-owned company Codelco and CBM. The origin of the lawsuit involved allegations of contract violations at Codelco's El Salvador division, where the copper producer accused the company of only completing 23% of the work, experiencing six months of delays, and being involved in a fatal accident. Following this, Codelco demanded payment on guarantees worth $17 billion (US$ 20 million) and retained the company's machinery, a move initially supported by the Court of Appeals of Copiapó.

However, the situation turned 180 degrees when the Supreme Court's Third Chamber, provisionally headed by Minister Ángela Vivanco, accepted a protection appeal filed by the Belaz Movitec consortium, ordering the state mining company to execute the «immediate restitution» of the equipment and guarantees. The ruling was handed down in just six days and without the case being formally scheduled. Subsequently, the same Chamber confirmed its decision and extended benefits to the consortium, forcing Codelco to pay an additional US$ 4 million for transportation and US$ 1 million for adjustments and VAT.

Vivanco was suspended from the Supreme Court in September 2024 after it was established that she maintained contacts with lawyer Luis Hermosilla, who has been charged with money laundering, bribery, and tax evasion as part of the so-called «Audio Case,» which involves numerous former government officials, politicians, and businesspeople.

WhatsApp conversations between Vivanco and the criminal lawyer, who is under house arrest, reportedly indicate her influence in ensuring her integration into the Supreme Court and subsequent interference in appointments and the provision of key information.

It should be noted that while the former minister is considered an accused party in the «Muñeca Bielorrusa» investigation, she could only be arrested if a detailed complaint is filed against her, given that she was a member of the highest court at the time of the incidents and therefore enjoyed immunity.

New Dimension: The Raids of October 23

The latest actions complement the raids that took place on October 23, when the Public Ministry and OS-7 simultaneously conducted operations at the offices of the Real Estate Conservators in Puente Alto and Chillán, within the scope of an avenue of investigation into money laundering and corruption offenses.

In Chillán, the operation—which lasted over four hours—targeted conservator Yamil Najle Alee, who, according to a report by LaBot, transferred $25 million to Gonzalo Migueles through a company he owned. The payments were made between July 17 and 19, 2024, just two months before Najle's appointment to the position.

Meanwhile, investigative outlets such as CIPER and La Discusión have revealed that this appointment was allegedly promoted by a group including lawyer Luis Hermosilla, Judge Antonio Ulloa, and Ángela Vivanco herself.

Additionally, the conservator of Puente Alto, Sergio Yáber Lozano, has been described as a friend of the couple Vivanco and Migueles.

«In 2021, Minister Vivanco purchased a Porsche Cayenne car that was sold to her by Yáber,» CIPER reported.

In his defense, Migueles has claimed he performed paid work for both Yáber and Najle, which he argues justifies the deposits that may have been made into his current account from companies linked to both conservators. However, from OS-7's perspective, these banking transactions could constitute money laundering.

Fuente: El Ciudadano