

Impeachment Process of VP Glas Authorized by Ecuador's Assembly

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Jorge Glas has been sentenced to six years in prison for corruption linked to the sprawling Odebrecht case in what his supporters are calling a 'political witch-hunt.'

A body within the Ecuadorian National Assembly has given the greenlight for an impeachment trial to take place against former Vice-President Jorge Glas after he was sentenced to six years in prison for corruption.

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Four of the seven lawmakers that make up the Legislative Administration Council voted in favor late Tuesday of the motion to authorize the prosecution commission within parliament to begin the impeachment process against Glas.

The news comes just days after the Constitutional Court unanimously endorsed the launch of impeachment proceedings against the suspended official. The council had previously failed to pass the motion three times because of a lack of support in the top court.

Glas, who was also the vice-president under former president Rafael Correa, now has five days to present his defence against the impeachment to the assembly. He can delegate a lawmaker to carry out his defence, which is likely to be the

case given that he is already being held in preventive detention.

Roberto Gomez, from the right-wing opposition CREO movement leading the case against Glas, also has five days to present his own arguments for impeachment, which will be analyzed to consider whether it meets the parameters established in the constitution.

Glas has been in detention since October, when charges were brought against him over receiving bribes from Brazilian construction company Odebrecht in return for awarding the scandal-ridden firm lucrative state contracts.

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Glas was elected vice-president in the second electoral round last April, with President Lenin Moreno as leader of the left-wing Alianza Pais. He served as vice president since 2013 under Correa, who has been critical of the trial against his ally, accusing the courts of many irregularities and saying that Glas is "innocent."

Lenin ran his presidential campaign under the leftist agenda of his predecessor but has largely broken from Correa and worked to appease right-wing political and economic actors in the country.

Correa and his supporters have accused the new president of "betraying" the ideals of the ruling party AP, which was founded by Correa more than a decade ago and argue that prosecuting Glas is a entirely political.

Odebrecht allegedly paid US\$33.5 million in bribes to secure contracts in Ecuador. The opposition says that Correa's government was slow to investigate, although he rejects that.
