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**Seven FIFA Leaders Arrested in Switzerland on Charges of Corruption**

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A total of seven top leaders of the International Football Federation (FIFA) were arrested today in the city of Zurich on charges of fraud, blackmail, and money laundering, announced the Federal Office of Justice of the Swiss Confederation. Among those arrested are the Uruguayan Eugenio Figueredo, vice president of the South-American Soccer Confederation (Conmebol) and deputy minister of FIFA; and the Costa Rican Eduardo Li, head of the National Federation and official of the governing body of soccer in the world.

Furthermore, involved in this case are as well the Brazilian José Maria Marin, executive member of the Conmebol; the Nicaraguan Julio Rocha, former president of his country's Confederation; the British Jeffrey Webb, head of the Confederation of North America, Central America and the Caribbean; and the Venezuelan Rafael Esquivel, president of the National Federation.

The arrests were made at the request of the US Department of Justice, with the attribution of media rights and marketing rights and sponsorship of competitions organized in the United States and in South America weighing upon them.

The involved, nine FIFA leaders and five corporate business executives, received 47 accusations of racketeering, fraud, conspiracy, money laundering and corruption.

Seven of the 14 defendants were arrested abroad, while four FIFA officials and two corporate executives signed declarations of guilt.

Besides the Swiss prosecutor's office opened a criminal case in a different case, related to the ratings to designate the host city of the World Cups of Russia-2018 and Qatar-2022.

On Wednesday the Swiss authorities confiscated "electronic data and documents" at the headquarters of FIFA as part of its investigation, according to the prosecutor's office. Federal police said it would interrogate the 10

executive committee members who participated in the voting in December 2010.

However, the agency said that the presidential elections of the entity would be held on Friday as planned, with the Swiss Joseph Blatter as candidate for another term, not being charged in any of the two investigations.

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