

Fernando Zumbado, Former Housing Minister, Provides Key Statements About Costa Rica Corruption for CAFTA Case.

"The complexity of the permitting process creates opportunities for corrupt individuals to seek to extract bribes from unwitting developers. Fernando Zumbado"

LOS ANGELES, CA, UNITED STATES, January 10, 2018 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Corruption has been going on in Costa Rica for years. Former Costa Rica Presidents have been charged with Crimes and sent to Prison.

Former Costa Rican president Rafael Angel Calderon was sent to prison for nine months in 2001 for corruption. Former Costa Rican President Miguel Angel Rodriguez, was put under house arrest for bribery involving a \$550,000 bribe for telecommunications contract.



Fernando Zumbado Former Housing Minister

A recently scandal was the BCR bank robbery were corrupt officials made unsecured loans for 30 plus million-dollars to buy cement from China that was never purchased. Many were arrested and fired, but none sent to prison.

“

If this kind of criminal behavior is not eliminated, then it will give Costa Rica a bad name and is liable to discourage future foreign investment.”

Fernando Zumbado, Former Housing Minister

According to David Aven CAFTA testimony, Mr. Luis Martinez was a criminal prosecutor that went rouge. He refused to comply with SETENA resolutions and Government reports all stating there was no wetland on the Las Olas site. Mr. Martinez refused to accept objective evidence from Government, instead he told Mr. Aven he didn't believe those reports.

Mr. Aven told the arbitration panel that Mr. Martinez corruption was responsible for the destruction of the US Investment in the Las Olas project. Mr. Aven also stated that another corrupt Government official responsible for that destruction of their Investment was Mr. Luis Picardo, director of the MINAE who was accused of conspiring with Mr. Martinez to illegally shut down the project. According to submissions statements, the project was shut down because the US Investors wouldn't pay a bribe to MINAE. According to Mr. Aven, he gave a copy of the recording of an attempted bribery to Mr. Zumbado and he heard it.

Mr. Fernando Zumbado, former Costa Rica Housing Minister, was falsely charged with a crime in 2008, to keep him running for President. Mr. Zumbado was a career public servant, two-time housing minister, Costa Rica's UN Representative, Costa Rica's Ambassador to the US, and Assistant Secretary General for the United Nations. He said the following in his witness statement prepared for the CAFTA Case. His statement is posted on our website.

EXCERPTS OF MR. ZAMBADO WITNESS-STATEMENT

"By way of background, in 2008 I was falsely accused of misusing donated funds and perpetrating fraud against the government during my time as Housing Minister by acting in favor of a third party."

"their actions resulted in the total destruction of my career and reputation at a time when I was in line to run for President."

"At my first trial in January 2014, I was sentenced to three years in prison, and banned from holding a public office for five years. However, the Court of Appeals in San Jose, acquitted me of all charges on May 11, 2015, on the basis that there was no evidence that I had done anything unlawful."

"As a result of my own experience, my impression of the criminal justice system is one of subjectivity and mediocrity. It's a system in which I no longer have any confidence".

"Normally, one would expect the authorities to pursue a civil claim against anyone accused of breaching environmental laws, not a criminal one. But in Mr. Aven's case, the prosecutor seems to have been determined to pursue Mr. Aven personally in the criminal courts for what's, in reality, a civil issue."

I first became aware of the Las Olas project and Mr. Aven through a mutual good friend of mine in 2005, before I was appointed housing minister in 2006.

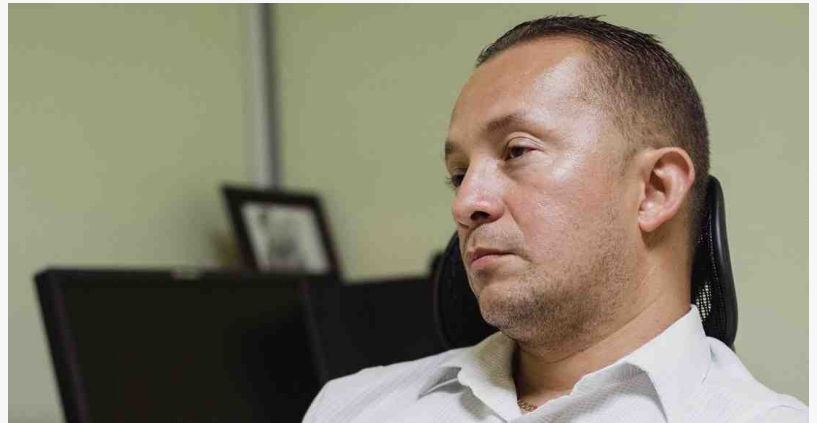
"Mr. Aven initially talked to me in 2007 about the possibility of building some affordable social housing, alongside the private development that was proposed at Las Olas.

"Mr. Aven suggested that he could purchase several hectares of land and donate it to the government and the government would in turn build affordable social housing on that land. I was keen to explore the possibility with Mr. Aven so I met with him in order to discuss it."

"Because of my forced resignation as Housing Minister in 2008, the low-income housing project, Mr.



Eduardo Siqueros Questions David Aven



Luis Martinez, Costa Rica Criminal Prosecutor

Aven and I had been discussing, was stopped.”

“In 2009, Mr. Aven called me about a troubling meeting he had with some people in the Municipality of Parrita. Mr. Aven told me that he had been asked by an employee of the local municipality to pay a bribe of \$200,000 in cash to keep the project moving along.”

“This didn’t come as a surprise to me, as I had previously heard rumors of corruption in the coastal areas during the real estate boom.”

“Developers must be able to rely on the permits they have lawfully obtained. The way in which the Las Olas project has been dealt with by the Costa Rican authorities is both inexplicable and unacceptable.”

“it’s clearly in Costa Rica’s interest to ensure that foreign investors such as Mr. Aven are not abused by corrupt officials. If this kind of criminal behavior is not eliminated, then it will give Costa Rica a bad name and is liable to discourage future foreign investment.”

END OF MR. ZUMBADO’S STATEMENT.

Mr. Zumbado wasn't called for cross-examination by Costa Rica, and the US Investors were prohibited from calling him. However, his witness statement went without objection or contradicted by any Costa Rica Attorney, witnesses or in Costa Rica submissions. Therefore, all of Mr. Zumbado statements were accepted as true and correct.

Costa Rica failed to get witness statements from MINAE, SETENA, SINAC, TAA, MUNICIPALITY and INTA. All of those relevant agencies had direct dealings with the Las Olas development Project, yet none were called upon to provide evidence or testimony. That has to speak loud and clear to everyone! The old saying, "Actions speak louder than words", surely applies here! The only statements Costa Rica got were from low level Government bureaucrats that had little knowledge of the facts. "The one exception being Mr. Luis Martinez, who gave his witness statement and appeared for cross-examination at the CAFTA hearing".

[Click to see testimony video from the CAFTA hearing](#) at the World Bank. [See CAFTA submission filings on ITA Website](#). Watch for more corruption reports and visit our website at CRBUZZ.com.

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