
Rousseff Denies Link to Education Minister Bribery Attempt

16/03/2016



The statement, released by the president's office, "vehemently repudiates ... the attempt to implicate (Rousseff's) name in the personal initiative (of Mercadante)," who had tried to buy the silence of Sen. Delcídio Amaral.

The lawmaker and former head of the governing Workers Party in the Senate, who is under arrest for corrupt acts in the Petrobras case, struck a cooperation agreement with the judiciary in exchange for information divulged on Tuesday and in which he accuses Mercadante of having tried to bribe him.

Amaral's accusation was backed up by an audio recording obtained by *Veja* magazine in which it is suggested that the minister wanted to prevent him from cooperating with the courts.

Meanwhile, the Brazilian Supreme Court justice on Tuesday accepted a plea bargain proposed by Amaral, who had implicated President Dilma Rousseff and predecessor Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva in the \$2 billion scandal.

The approval means that the statements Amaral has already given to the judiciary could be used by the police in the Petrobras investigation.

A portion of Amaral's testimony has already been published by *Istoe* magazine, which obtained certain documents according to which the senator said that Rousseff and Lula know about the corruption at Petrobras and tried to "manipulate" the courts to obstruct the investigation and have some of the accused parties released.

Supreme Court sources confirmed to EFE that the magistrate also decided that, as occurs in all cases in which a cooperation agreement is accepted, the statements Amaral has provided will be made public, possibly as early as Tuesday.

Amaral was jailed in November on accusations of obstructing justice by trying to buy the silence of certain people implicated in the corruption network.

A month ago, the high court authorized house arrest for Amaral.

According to Istoe, his release from jail came after the cooperation agreement, which the magazine called "the most explosive story about the largest corruption case uncovered in Brazil."

Both Rousseff and Lula have denied the allegations published by Istoe.

Amaral's plea deal was accepted amid the intensification of the political crisis besetting the Rousseff government, which is facing popular protests that last Sunday brought some 3.6 million people into the streets nationwide to demand her resignation.
