



Debating the Impeachment of Former Argentinean President

OE Watch Commentary: An Argentinean federal judge is ready to have former president Cristina Fernández de Kirchner (at times referred to in regional press either as Fernández or as Kirchner) arrested for crimes allegedly committed during her term in office. The judge delayed, however, until the former president was sworn in as a senator, an office she won in the last elections. Senators enjoy absolute immunity while in office, so the delay shifted some of the political burden to the Senate, which would have to impeach Fernández by a two-thirds vote in order to strip her of immunity and allow a prosecution to proceed. The charges are serious. They relate to a deal she is alleged to have made with the government of Iran to provide impunity to Iranian officials in the bombing of a Jewish center in Buenos Aires in 1994. The alleged cover-up may also have involved the murder of a federal investigator who was looking at the events. The party that nominated current Argentinean President Mauricio Macri (relatively conservative, anti-progressive) is pushing Kirchner’s impeachment, but does not have the votes to do so without votes from other parties. Meanwhile, a recent poll sponsored by the coalition of political parties aligned with the progressive former president indicates that many (but not a majority) of Argentineans think that she might actually end up in jail. **End OE Watch Commentary (Demarest)**



Then President Cristina Fernández at the CINAR naval complex, 2011. Behind her is the Republic of Argentina Navy Submarine ARA San Juan. Source: Casa Rosada (Argentina Presidency of the Nation) via Wikimedia, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Submarino_ARA_San_Juan.jpg, CC BY SA 2.0.

“An Argentinean judge asked for the preventive imprisonment of ex-president of Argentina, Cristina Fernández accused of ‘treason against the country’... Federal magistrate Claudio Bonadio also asked for her impeachment in order to arrest her, given that Fernández is a senator and has parliamentary immunity.”

Source: Editors, “Traición a la patria: La acusación contra Cristina Fernández (Treason against the country: The accusation against Cristina Fernández),” *El Comercio (Lima)* and *AFP*, 7 December 2017. <https://elcomercio.pe/mundo/latinoamerica/traicion-patria-denuncia-cristina-fernandez-noticia-479815>

“An Argentinean judge asked for the preventive imprisonment of ex-president of Argentina, Cristina Fernández accused of ‘treason against the country’ for orchestrating a plan to cover up for Iranians implicated in the 1994 attack against a Jewish center that left 85 dead. Federal magistrate Claudio Bonadio also asked for her impeachment in order to arrest her, given that Fernández is a senator and has parliamentary immunity.”

Source: Editors, “¿Cuántas causas judiciales tiene abiertas Cristina Fernández de Kirchner? (How many open legal actions does Cristina Fernández de Kirchner have [against her]?),” *ALD antilavadodenedinero* and *Clarín*, 12 December 2017. <http://www.antilavadodenedinero.com/antilavadodenedinero-noticias-articulo.php?id=20676&title=cuantas-causas-judiciales-tiene-abiertas-cristina-fernandez-de-kirchner>

“...directors of Unidad Ciudadana [pro Kirchner coalition, several parties of which belong to the Forum of Sao Paulo] contracted an opinion poll to measure the impact of the news. They did so with the consulting firm that surveyed for that entity during the last elections, Analogías. The work, that is much to do with the ex-executive, includes a disconcerting question, ‘Do people think she might end up in jail?’ ...with exactly 50% who think ‘no’, 27.6% think ‘yes’ and 22.4% don’t know.”

Source: Editors, “Cambiamos apura el debate por el desafuero de Cristina Kirchner (Cambiamos hurries the debate over the impeachment of Cristina Kirchner),” *Perfil*, 12 December 2017. <http://www.perfil.com/politica/cambiamos-apura-el-debate-por-el-desafuero-de-cristina-fernandez.phtml>

“The Senate has a period of 180 days to analyze the argument of Judge Bonadio in favor of the withdrawal of immunity and, finally, vote in chamber for or against the requested measure....The impeachment of a senator requires the approval of a two-thirds majority of those present in chamber, a number that Cambiamos cannot reach by itself.”