

Beat: Music

Shakira will go to trial in Spain, accused of six tax crimes

The singer turned down a deal

Madrid, 27.09.2022, 18:29 Time

USPA NEWS - A judge in Esplugues de Llobregat, in the province of Barcelona, has issued an order to open an oral trial against the Colombian singer Shakira, accused of six tax offences. The judge recalls that "there is no appeal whatsoever" against this decision, so the next step will be to set a date for the oral trial. The competent Court to judge her will be the Barcelona Provincial Court, since the crimes exceed five years in prison. In the order, the judge decides to maintain Shakira's condition of provisional release and avoids the imposition of precautionary measures.

The Prosecutor's Office presented its conclusions on the process before the summer. They requests a sentence of eight years and two months for defrauding the Treasury of 14.5 million Euros between 2012 and 2014, by avoiding the payment of personal income tax and Heritage Tax. In addition to the prison sentence, which in case of conviction can mean the singer's imprisonment, the public ministry requests the payment of a fine of 23.7 million Euros. The Prosecutor's Office points out that the crimes are especially serious because the artist used companies in tax havens to hide her income, although she appreciates a mitigating circumstance that allows her to reduce the request for the penalty: the repair of the damage, since Shakira has made available of the Court more than 17 million to face eventual responsibilities.

The State Attorney's Office, which acts on behalf of the Tax Agency, has also presented its indictment for three tax crimes, while the regional government of Catalonia has done so for the other three crimes related to the Heritage Tax, which it collects.

The Barcelona Court validated the indications of tax fraud and said that the dispute should be resolved in the oral trial phase. From that moment, and with more intensity in recent months, the singer's lawyers approached the Prosecutor's Office to reach an agreement. In exchange for accepting the facts and returning the amounts, the public prosecution offered to reduce the prison sentences, so that the artist should never go to jail. But the negotiations failed and Shakira issued a harsh statement accusing the Prosecutor's Office of "intransigent" and resorting to "undue means to pressure."

The Colombian singer still to maintain that she did not reside in Spain for 183 days between 2011 and 2012 and affirms that, for this reason, she does not have to declare to the Treasury. However, the Prosecutor's Office has collected evidence to the contrary. At the moment, Shakira avoids the extrajudicial agreement to avoid imprisonment, although the former director of the Tax Agency, Ignacio Ruiz Jarabo, did not rule out this Tuesday, in statements to a Spanish television network, that at some point a rapprochement between the singer's lawyers and the accusations. "I would have to accept that she has committed an infraction," explained Ignacio Ruiz Jarabo, who assured that it is a "feasible" possibility when the affected party is playing for jail.

Article online:

<https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-21647/shakira-will-go-to-trial-in-spain-accused-of-six-tax-crimes.html>

Editorial office and responsibility:

V.i.S.d.P. & Sect. 6 MDSStV (German Interstate Media Services Agreement): Jose A. Martin

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Official Federal Reg. No. 7442619