

MOP funds transfer for Chiriquí road sparks row over contractor Bagatrac

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Summary

In the National Assembly Budget Committee on 6 October, deputies clashed with Public Works Minister José Luis Andrade over a \$5.8 million transfer that partly funds the La Nobleza-Playa La Barqueta road in Chiriquí, awarded to Bagatrac, whose main shareholder admitted paying bribes in the Blue Apple case.

Details (summary of the article)

La Prensa reports that a routine budget-transfer hearing in the National Assembly's Budget Committee on Tuesday 6 October turned into a heated argument. Public Works Minister José Luis Andrade was there to justify moving \$5.8 million among three infrastructure projects, one of them the construction of the La Nobleza-Playa La Barqueta road in Chiriquí, awarded to the firm Bagatrac. Vamos deputy Luis Duke asked what anti-bribery controls the ministry applies to contractors, noting that Bagatrac's main shareholder, Alberto Jurado Rosales, confessed to paying some \$3 million in bribes to MOP officials during the Martinelli government through the Blue Apple scheme, yet the company has never been barred from state contracting and took \$42.8 million in 14 MOP contracts in 2025 alone, including \$8.9 million awarded directly as an environmental emergency. Andrade replied angrily that he had brought honest officials to the ministry and that the money was for publicly tendered projects, demanding proof of any accusation. CD deputy Carlos 'Tito' Afú and PRD deputy Benicio Robinson interrupted colleagues who pressed on the contractors, and the committee's live social-media broadcast was cut during the shouting. Deputy Yamireliz Chong complained afterwards that such interruptions are a bad practice that derails questioning. A bill (No. 339) that would disqualify companies convicted in Panama from state contracts has been stalled in second debate since October 2025.

Original (es)

Bagatrac desata cuestionamientos a lo interno de la Comisión de Presupuesto y el ministro del MOP evita responder

La discusión de varios créditos y traslados de partida en la Asamblea Nacional estuvo marcada este martes 6 de octubre por llamados al orden para mantener el debate centrado en los temas de la sesión y por intercambios entre algunos diputados.