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## Colombia's Top Prosecutor Charges **Ecopetrol** President in Alleged Influence-peddling Case

Posted On March 14, 2026 By : Jadin Samit Vergara

### The charge adds to a separate investigation over alleged violations of campaign finance limits during President Gustavo Petro's 2022 presidential campaign

Colombia's Attorney General's Office (*Fiscalía General de la Nación – FGN*) charged the president of the country's state-controlled oil and energy company **Ecopetrol** (NYSE: EC', BVC: **ECOPETROL**), Ricardo Roa Barragán, with the alleged crime of influence peddling by a public official. The charge was formally presented on March 11 during a public hearing.

According to the prosecutors [press release](#), Roa "ordered that a specific person be assigned to a gasification project in exchange for a reduction in the price of an apartment" located in northern Bogotá. The Attorney General's Office said the alleged intervention was related to the executive's interest in acquiring the property below market value.

During the hearing, a prosecutor from the Specialized Anti-Corruption Directorate formally presented the charge. However, Roa did not accept the accusation.

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The newspaper [El Colombiano](#) explained that "the filing of charges is a formal act within the criminal process through which the person under investigation is officially notified of their link to a judicial case and the facts attributed to them. However, this step does not imply a conviction or a final decision and maintains the presumption of innocence that protects the executive."

After the judicial decision became public, [Ecopetrol's](#) Board of Directors said Roa will remain in his position as president of the company. In a [public statement](#), the company's highest governing body said it respects "Ricardo Roa's presumption of innocence and his right to due process." It also said it will continue acting according to the company's established protocols for evaluating this type of situation.

### Context: political, legal, and corporate challenges

[Ecopetrol](#) is currently facing several political and economic challenges. These include judicial and disciplinary proceedings involving its president, as well as questions about the company's institutional and financial stability.

*Roa pled innocent to the influence trafficking charges.*

For example, the company's [2025 annual report](#) sparked public debate after reporting the highest reserve replacement ratio in the last four years (121%). According to the document, "300 million barrels of oil equivalent (BOE) were added, guaranteeing an average reserve life of 7.8 years."

The report also said, "net proven reserves reached 1.944 billion barrels of oil equivalent." However, private firms such as the independent investment bank [BTG Pactual](#) questioned those figures due to a change in the methodology used to calculate them.

Another point of debate has been the presidency of the Board of Directors, currently headed by [Ángela María Robledo Gómez](#), a psychologist and former member of [Colombia's House of Representatives](#) for Bogotá. Robledo was a member of the Partido [Alianza Verde](#) between 2010 and 2018 and later ran as vice presidential candidate alongside [Gustavo Petro](#) in the 2018 elections.

Roa's legal situation is also linked to another investigation related to alleged irregularities in the financing of the [Pacto Histórico](#) presidential campaign in 2022, which he managed and which resulted in Petro becoming president.

In February, the [Attorney General's Office](#) said investigators had found evidence suggesting that the campaign exceeded the legal spending limits. A similar case had already been examined by Colombia's elections regulator [Consejo Nacional Electoral](#), which fined those responsible more than \$5 billion Colombian pesos (over \$1.4 million USD).

For his part, Colombian President Gustavo Petro has publicly defended Roa. During a public event broadcast by media outlets such as [Blue Radio](#), the president said the accusations are politically motivated. "We did not exceed spending limits; I have reviewed that accounting up and down," he said. He also argued that the opening of criminal proceedings could be interpreted as an attempt to politically target his government.

Headline photo\*: Colombian President Gustavo petro (left) with former campaign manager and current [Ecopetrol](#) CEO Ricardo Roa (photo courtesy [Ecopetrol](#)).

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About the Author

Jadin Samit Vergara is a Colombian journalist and communications strategist. He has over 12 years experience reporting on political and economic affairs, conflict, migration, and human rights. PhD candidate in Communication Studies.



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