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From: Jose Cardenas <JC@thecormacgroup.com>
Sent: Friday, May 31, 2024 5:07 PM
To: Erikson, Dan P. EOP/NSC
Subject: Oil executives imprisoned five years in Venezuela sue former employer Citgo for $400 million

The judge in Delaware has basically declared open season on Citgo…

Oil executives imprisoned five years in Venezuela sue former employer Citgo for $400 million

Updated 7:18 PM EDT, May 30, 2024

MIAMI (AP) — Two Citgo oil executives detained for nearly five years in Venezuela have sued their former employer for more than $400 million, alleging it conspired to lure them to the South American country under a false pretext and then abandoned them as they endured horrendous prison conditions for crimes they didn't commit.

Brothers Alirio and Jose Luis Zambrano were among six executives at Citgo who traveled to Venezuela right before Thanksgiving in 2017 to attend a meeting at the headquarters of the company's parent, the Venezuelan-run-oil giant known as PDVSA. Once there, they were hauled from a Caracas conference room by masked security agents.

A Venezuelan judge later convicted the so-called Citgo 6 to between 8 and 13 years in prison following a trial denounced by the U.S. State Department as marred by delays and irregularities. The charges: involvement in a never-executed debt financing deal that would've risked seeing the Houston-based company seized by Wall Street creditors.

The lawsuit filed Thursday in a state district court in Houston comes as a federal court in Delaware is overseeing the auction of Citgo to satisfy nearly $21 billion in claims by creditors

The Zambranos' complaint alleges that Citgo's top oil executives ordered the men to travel to Venezuela for what they were told was a mandatory meeting, knowing there was a strong chance they could be arrested. The Citgo and PDVSA bosses — all of them political heavyweights in Maduro's government — also allegedly supplied confidential financial documents to military intelligence officials that facilitated the men's arrest.

"Citgo knowingly and substantially assisted with and participated in their unlawful arrest," the lawsuit alleges. "Citgo knew the Zambranos were innocent from 'minute one' of these false charges — just as Citgo knew in the 2,556,000 minutes that followed."

https://apnews.com/article/citgo-venezuela-arrests-lawsuit-maduro-05cba74de04aa598bc315a9c9c8d90e4

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Best Regards,

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