



## **Court declares removal of Panama from Central American Parliament as unconstitutional.**



The Associated Press  
PANAMA –

The Supreme Court of Panama declared that the law impelled by the Panamanian government that untied the Country from the Central American Parliament (PARLACEN) was unconstitutional. The decision was taken unanimously during an extraordinary session of the full court, and was made just one year after Panama's withdraw from the regional forum.

The law, which abolished rules about international instruments about the membership of Panama in the Parlacen was declared “unconstitutional” by the presiding judge of the Supreme Court, Alejandro Moncada Luna. “Panama therefore will return to be part of the Central American Parliament again”, he pointed out.

The law was passed in November 2009 by the Legislative Assembly and established the repeal of the protocols and treaties signed by Panama to join the regional body, which is based in Guatemala.

During his presidential campaign, President Ricardo Martinelli promised to get Panama out of the Parlacen, because he considers the regional forum as inefficient and non-beneficial for Panama and the whole region.

Moncada Luna explained that the declaration of unconstitutionality would become effective immediately after signing the statement.

In October, the Central American Court of Justice had already decided that Panama did not have the right to withdraw from the forum unilaterally and hence must comply with the ruling. Yet, the Martinelli's government argued at the time, that Panama is not bound by its terms because it has not ratified the agreement as a member of the regional judicial body.

The Parlacen emodies 20 deputies, elected by each member, in addition to former presidents and vice presidents of those nations.