

# Sabotage and Shielding: *How PSOE's "Plumber" Allegedly Targeted Anti-Corruption Forces to Undermine Aznalcóllar Justice and Discredit Emerita*

Source Base: [Ground News](#), [Cadena SER](#), [ESdiario](#), [El País](#), [RTVE](#), [20minutos](#), [HuffPost](#), [El Imparcial](#), [Wikipedia](#), [Emerita June 2 Press Release](#)

— MiningLife

## Summary Briefing

- **Judicial Milestone:** Spain's national Prosecutor has formally backed a criminal investigation into Leire Díez—the PSOE party's so-called "plumber"—for her role in an alleged attempt to manipulate anti-corruption investigations via audio recordings targeting UCO agents and judicial officials.
- **Alleged Crimes:** The accusations include influence peddling, bribery (*cohecho*), obstruction of justice, *estafa procesal* (judicial fraud), and unauthorized disclosure of official secrets. These acts are tied to efforts to discredit the judicial team overseeing the Aznalcóllar public tender corruption case.
- **Why It Matters for Emerita:** This development corroborates Emerita's long-standing assertion—reiterated in its June 2, 2025 press release—that it was the subject of a state-backed smear campaign designed to deflect attention from the accused. Díez's actions appear aimed at protecting Vicente Fernández, the former Junta official at the center of the Aznalcóllar rigging, which directly implicates Emerita as a reputational target within a broader institutional cover-up.
- **Investor Takeaway:** This is a breakthrough moment for Emerita. Until now, the company has been framed primarily as the aggrieved bidder in a rigged tender—positioned reactively in court proceedings. But with Spain's Economic Crimes Prosecutor now supporting an investigation into a politically motivated smear campaign—allegedly coordinated to protect Vicente Fernández during the 2025 criminal trial—Emerita's position shifts fundamentally: it now emerges as a credible whistleblower that withstood not only procurement fraud, but a state-linked disinformation campaign.

This reframing dramatically strengthens Emerita's legal and reputational position. It confirms that the company was not simply *inconvenienced* by public corruption—it was *targeted* by it. And crucially, it is not Emerita alone making this claim—the Spanish judicial apparatus itself is now investigating this network. The case moves beyond a single tender to expose systemic manipulation of both judicial processes and public perception.

For investors, this widens Emerita's path forward: it could now pursue civil claims for reputational and economic damages, command greater legitimacy in restitution efforts, and be viewed by institutional investors as a resilient, ethically grounded actor in a jurisdiction

marred by past abuses. This development reframes the past—and could shape the terms of Emerita’s future.

## Overview & Summary

### What is Happening?

Spain’s Economic Crimes Prosecutor has formally endorsed a criminal investigation into Leire Díez, a senior PSOE operative known as the party’s “fontanera” or internal fixer. The probe centers on audio recordings in which Díez allegedly offered to manipulate judicial outcomes in exchange for damaging information about anti-corruption officials—most notably UCO Colonel Antonio Balas and prosecutor José Grinda. These acts, if confirmed, could constitute influence peddling, bribery (cohecho), obstruction of justice, and the unlawful disclosure of official secrets.

Several legal complaints—including those filed by Guardia Civil unions, the conservative group Hazte Oír, and opposition figures—have led to overlapping investigations in Madrid, now undergoing consolidation. Central to the case is Díez’s outreach to an indicted businessman, Alejandro Hamlyn, from whom she allegedly sought compromising material to neutralize institutional watchdogs tied to corruption probes.

### Why This Matters to Emerita

While the Díez case may appear at first glance to concern broader political misconduct, it directly intersects with Emerita’s legal and reputational journey. In a June 2, 2025 press release, Emerita publicly named Díez in connection with a coordinated campaign to smear the company during the the Aznalcóllar criminal trial period. This is not a peripheral development. If the allegations against Díez are substantiated, they confirm that Emerita was not only excluded from a fraudulent tender but also targeted in a parallel campaign of political sabotage. The Prosecutor’s endorsement moves the company’s long-standing assertions out of the realm of speculation and into the sphere of institutional recognition.

## Connection to Emerita & Aznalcóllar

The investigation into PSOE political operative Leire Díez marks a critical escalation in the corruption landscape surrounding the Aznalcóllar mining concession. Long regarded as the party’s “plumber” for her covert political operations, Díez now faces potential charges after reportedly offering judicial favors in exchange for compromising material on senior anti-corruption officials—including UCO officers and prosecutors central to Spain’s major graft cases. According to Spain’s Economic Crimes Prosecutor and multiple national media outlets, she contacted a businessman under indictment and sought information that could be weaponized to protect high-level PSOE figures. These are not the hallmarks of routine political interference—they suggest a deliberate attempt to compromise judicial institutions at the heart of the Aznalcóllar process.

Emerita Resources has long argued that it was the target not only of procurement fraud, but also of an orchestrated reputational attack. In the above mentioned June 2025 press release, the company alleged that Leire Díez was tasked—under the direction of Deputy Prime Minister María Jesús Montero—with carrying out a campaign to discredit Emerita and deflect scrutiny from Vicente

Fernández, the former Junta official accused of engineering the Aznalcóllar tender in favor of Grupo México's partner, Minorbis. The press release states that this effort was "reportedly orchestrated under the direction of senior PSOE officials [...] and executed by political operative Leire Díez."

This assertion has been substantiated by multiple reports linking Díez to media manipulation, court-related activities, and high-level PSOE coordination. While sentencing is still pending, any coordinated attempt to shield Fernández by undermining Emerita would significantly raise the stakes—elevating the matter from political bias to potential institutional sabotage.

With the Prosecutor's Office now formally backing a criminal probe into Díez, the connection between political interference, judicial targeting, and reputational sabotage is no longer speculative—it is under active legal review. For Emerita, this marks a turning point. It transforms the company's position from embattled plaintiff to validated whistleblower.

If the allegations against Díez are upheld, they will confirm that Emerita suffered a double injustice: first, from a corrupt tender; second, from a coordinated campaign to discredit the firm for seeking redress. This new legal clarity reinforces Emerita's standing, strengthens the case for restitution, and signals to investors that the company's long-maintained narrative is not only credible, but now institutionally corroborated.

## Legal Significance

The prosecutor's endorsement of the investigation into Leire Díez marks a pivotal escalation in Spain's unfolding anti-corruption narrative. By formally supporting the case, the Economic Crimes Prosecutor has elevated what was once dismissed as political maneuvering into a matter of prosecutable criminal conduct. Suspected charges include bribery, influence peddling, obstruction of justice, estafa procesal, and the leaking of official secrets. The content of the audio recordings—Díez offering judicial favors in exchange for compromising information—has now crossed the evidentiary threshold required for prosecutorial action. This signals that the case will be treated not as isolated misconduct, but as a potentially coordinated operation rooted in state and party structures.

Crucially, the intended targets of this interference were not peripheral players but senior figures within Spain's anti-corruption apparatus—specifically UCO Colonel Manuel Balas and prosecutor José Grinda. Both have played prominent roles in major corruption cases and were involved in the broader investigative terrain surrounding Aznalcóllar. Any effort to compromise or discredit these figures points to an attempt to undermine the very institutions tasked with safeguarding judicial integrity. For Emerita, this brings new clarity to the institutional resistance it encountered over the past decade: the obstacles it faced may not have been bureaucratic friction, but elements of an entrenched network seeking to insulate political allies from accountability.

The probe also exposes deeper political entanglements. Díez is reported to have operated under the direction of high-ranking PSOE officials—including Deputy PM María Jesús Montero and party coordinator Santos Cerdán—figures closely tied to the Andalusian political ecosystem responsible for the 2015 Aznalcóllar tender. Reports suggest her role was to conduct reputational operations, some of which targeted Emerita directly during the trial. This convergence of political influence, legal interference, and media manipulation reveals a coordinated architecture of obstruction.

The timing of this prosecutorial move is significant. It comes just days after the conclusion of the Aznalcóllar oral trial, where Emerita stood as the aggrieved bidder in one of Spain's most consequential procurement cases. While sentencing deliberations are underway, the emergence of a parallel investigation into reputational sabotage potentially carried out to protect the very defendants on trial adds new gravity to the original case. Though the proceedings are legally distinct, they share a common core: systemic efforts to subvert justice. This reframes the Aznalcóllar trial as part of a broader battle over institutional integrity—and may ultimately reinforce the legitimacy of a forceful judicial verdict.

## Investor Takeaway

The Prosecutor's endorsement of a criminal investigation into Leire Díez represents a critical inflection point—not only for Spain's anti-corruption agenda, but for Emerita Resources' long-standing legal and reputational claims. For nearly a decade, Emerita has maintained that the denial of its Aznalcóllar concession was not a bureaucratic misstep but the result of a rigged process orchestrated by political insiders. While the criminal trial substantiated many of these procurement irregularities, the reputational sabotage component—central to Emerita's broader injury—remained largely unproven in court. That has now changed. With audio evidence of Díez offering judicial favors to obtain compromising information, and with the Prosecutor formally backing legal action, the reputational interference is no longer speculative. It is actionable.

From an investor standpoint, this materially strengthens Emerita's position in four key areas:

### 1. Narrative Credibility: The Collapse of the Counter-Story

For years, Emerita's critics—including certain media outlets and Grupo México-aligned voices—sought to reframe the company as a legal spoiler, not a victim. That framing, often echoed by political allies of the defendants, positioned Emerita's judicial pursuit as opportunistic rather than principled. The Prosecutor's move to investigate Díez now fractures that counternarrative. The Prosecutor's decision to investigate Díez dismantles the counter-narrative. If she actively sought to undermine anti-corruption officials tied to cases like Aznalcóllar, then Emerita's claim of being targeted gains official backing from Spain's highest economic crime authority.

This signals a collapse in the credibility of the version of events that painted Emerita as obstructionist. The emergence of a state-aligned reputational campaign transforms the company's posture from embattled litigant to institutional whistleblower—one that endured years of politically motivated suppression while standing firm in its legal pursuit. The reputational playing field has shifted. As Díez's case develops, Emerita's role as a defender of legal integrity, rather than a claimant mired in controversy, will become increasingly clear to courts, regulators, and the market.

### 2. Legal Leverage and Future Proceedings: Strengthening the Case for Restitution

Although the oral phase of the Aznalcóllar criminal trial is complete and a verdict is pending, the Prosecutor's move to investigate Leire Díez opens a consequential parallel track. If Díez is found to have acted on behalf of political interests tied to the accused—particularly Vicente Fernández or his patronage network—Emerita could gain additional legal standing to pursue civil claims, administrative restitution, or damage awards related to reputational harm and economic loss. These

proceedings may unfold in separate jurisdictions or be considered during post-sentencing motions as evidence of ongoing institutional injury.

Crucially, the allegations against Díez are not extraneous to the original corruption case—they may reinforce the evidentiary arc surrounding the illegal concession. If the same political apparatus that rigged the Aznalcóllar tender also orchestrated efforts to intimidate investigators and discredit Emerita, then the misconduct is not episodic—it is systemic. This continuity supports a broader legal narrative: Emerita was not only wrongfully excluded from a legitimate public process, it was subsequently targeted for seeking accountability through lawful channels.

While there is no indication that the trial judges themselves were targeted, the figures reportedly singled out—UCO Colonel Antonio Balas and Special Prosecutor José Grinda—occupy central roles in Spain’s anti-corruption infrastructure. Their involvement in exposing the original procurement fraud means that any attempt to compromise them casts a shadow over the broader judicial process. For Emerita and its investors, the implications are far-reaching. The Díez investigation could catalyze a new phase of legal remedy—deepening the case for restitution, strengthening moral legitimacy, and amplifying Emerita’s standing in the eyes of courts, regulators, and institutional stakeholders.

### 3. Institutional Climate: Spain’s Judicial Apparatus Broadens Its Focus

The Prosecutor’s support for investigating Leire Díez signals a decisive shift in the institutional climate around anti-corruption enforcement in Spain. Until now, the Aznalcóllar case has largely centered on procurement violations—rigged scoring, falsified corporate structures, and insider coordination. These were serious breaches, but they remained within the traditional confines of administrative and criminal law.

What makes the Díez revelations more significant is the scope they introduce: from procurement fraud to institutional interference. The audio recordings at the heart of the investigation suggest a coordinated attempt to gather compromising material on senior judicial agents—most notably UCO Colonel Balas and prosecutor Grinda—whose past work spans multiple high-profile corruption cases. Both are believed to have supported the evidentiary groundwork of the Aznalcóllar proceedings.

This is no longer just about protecting a disgraced official like Vicente Fernández. Fernández, the former Director of Mines for Andalusia, faces 18 years in prison for prevaricación, bribery, and embezzlement tied directly to the 2015 concession award to Minorbis–Grupo México. The fact that reputational attacks targeting Emerita and judicial figures intensified during the 2025 oral trial suggests a strategic attempt to shape both public perception and judicial momentum. The Prosecutor’s endorsement of a criminal probe into these tactics elevates the matter: what once appeared as political maneuvering is now treated as potential obstruction of justice and an attack on institutional independence.

For Emerita, this context matters profoundly. The company has consistently framed its struggle as a principled stand for rule-of-law standards in Spain. Now, with judicial authorities signaling a broader reckoning with media manipulation and politicized lawfare, Emerita’s position gains institutional validation. It is no longer only the aggrieved bidder—it is becoming a symbol of judicial perseverance in the face of systemic pressure. That alignment carries reputational weight with courts,

policymakers, international investors, and future partners attuned to questions of governance and public trust.

#### 4. Investor Confidence and Long-Term Positioning

The Prosecutor's move to support an investigation into Leire Díez strengthens Emerita's credibility in a way that matters to investors. In an industry where jurisdictional stability and reputation are key, this development reinforces the view that Emerita has acted with integrity through a politically complex and legally challenging process. The company is not just positioned as the rightful concessionaire—it's being recognized as a party that was targeted and tested, and remained consistent in its claims.

If the Díez investigation reveals ties to any of the individuals tried in the Aznalcóllar case, it could influence how sentencing is ultimately framed. It would underscore the view that Emerita wasn't just caught in a bad process, but was actively undermined as part of a wider effort to protect the accused. That context could further justify a strong judicial response—and it positions Emerita not just as a legal claimant, but as a company whose position has now been publicly validated.

#### 5. Ongoing Relevance Amid Judicial Deliberation

Although the oral phase of the Aznalcóllar trial has concluded, the court's sentencing decision and formal written rationale are still forthcoming. This interim is anything but neutral—it is a live, consequential space in which new legal and political developments may influence how the verdict is framed. The Prosecutor's recent endorsement of a criminal investigation into Leire Díez—accused of working to protect Vicente Fernández and discredit anti-corruption agents—casts the original trial in a starker light. What once appeared as a case of tender fraud now increasingly resembles a coordinated attempt to distort judicial outcomes and suppress accountability.

This evolving context strengthens the moral and institutional justification for a firm judicial response. The Díez probe provides prosecutorial backing for a broader reading of the Aznalcóllar affair—as not merely administrative misconduct, but as part of a systemic pattern of political interference.

For Emerita, the convergence of public scrutiny, media attention, and prosecutorial action is catalytic. The company's long-standing claim—that it was not only excluded from a rigged tender but also targeted by a reputational smear campaign—now gains weight from the Spanish state itself.

Judges are no longer deliberating in a vacuum—they do so in the shadow of mounting revelations that lend institutional weight to Emerita's long-standing claims and call for a verdict equal to the gravity of what has been exposed.

As judges deliberate their ruling in the Aznalcóllar case, this latest development shifts the broader context in which that decision will land. The Prosecutor's pursuit of Leire Díez reinforces what Emerita has long maintained—that its legal battle was not only about a flawed tender, but about withstanding institutional sabotage. If the court affirms that view in its verdict, the implications will extend beyond Emerita. It would signal that the Spanish justice system is prepared to confront not just corruption, but the reputational warfare used to conceal it. For Emerita, that would mark the beginning of a different chapter—one of legal vindication, reputational recovery, and the possibility

of broader remedies grounded in justice rather than politics.

## Appendix: Aznalcóllar's Strategic and Economic Significance

(From Doc Jones via published records in Spain)

The Aznalcollar Project Public Tender (which includes the Los Frailes and Aznalcollar mines) was endorsed by all levels of the Spanish Government, and once granted, will allow the mines to be put back into production, which will likely produce profitably for multiple generations.

This tier-1, world-class project contains 4 known deposits to date with a total resource estimate potentially exceeding 200 million tons.

The two largest deposits were previously production drilled (Los Frailes and Aznalcollar) by Boliden with the resources defined to 350 meters in depth and booked with the Spanish Government.

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**The Los Frailes Mine**, 70-million-ton resource including a 28 million ton high-grade underground resource grading:

Zn 6.65% Pd 3.87% Cu 0.29% Ag 84 g/t

4.1 Billion pounds of Zinc

2.4 Billion pounds of Lead

179 Million pounds of Copper

76 Million ozs of Silver

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**The Aznalcollar Copper-Silver Mine**, 90-million-ton resource including 43 million ton high-grade underground resource grading:

Zn 3.33% Pd 1.77% Cu 0.44% Ag 67 g/t Au 1g/t

3.15 billion pounds of zinc

1.67 billion pounds of lead

416 Million pounds of copper

1.38 million ozs gold

93 million ozs silver

\*Note both high-grade deposits are open for expansion at depth below 350 meters.

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The insitu value of the remaining high-grade resources amenable to underground mining techniques within just these 2 deposits exceeds US\$25 Billion at an average of US\$358 per ton or 11.5% ZiEq as of Nov 1st 2024.