

DR president accused of misusing public funds

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SANTO DOMINGO, Dominican Republic --

An opposition party has accused President Leonel Fernandez of misusing public funds and inappropriately creating new government positions to improve his chances of winning re-election next year.

The Dominican Revolutionary Party filed the complaint Monday with the Organization of American States, party spokesman Andres Matos said.

The complaint alleges Fernandez misused \$30,000 in government publicity by attaching his campaign slogan to official advertisements and appointed opposition members to government posts to win their support. A Fernandez spokeswoman declined to comment.

The party asked the OAS to open an investigation. A spokesman for the Washington-based organization could not be reached for comment.

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Fernandez, of the center-right Dominican Liberation Party, is in his second, nonconsecutive term. If he wins elections scheduled for May 16, he would be the first president to succeed himself since the late Joaquin Balaguer, who held power for 22 years until 1996.

Challenging Fernandez is Miguel Vargas Maldonado, a construction magnate and former public works minister with the center-left Revolutionary Party.