

October 6, 2026, LinkedIn post regarding firing of Ricardo Valencia

The dismissal of Ricardo Valencia as director of Colombia's national statistics agency, the Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística, known as DANE, by President Abelardo de la Espriella is a troubling development for the technical independence of official statistics in Colombia.

Valencia, who led DANE for fewer than three weeks, was removed after stating he had found no anomalies in labor market data compiled under the previous administration—a statement made, according to the presidency, before "in-depth audits" were completed.

Colombia's Law 2335 of 2023 enshrines the principles governing the production of official statistics, and Article 4.5 establishes DANE's technical and professional independence in producing, processing, and disseminating statistics. Valencia's removal, along with a new requirement that DANE should obtain presidential authorization before holding press conferences to release its data, raises serious questions about whether technical independence is being honored in practice.

The ASA firmly supports the principles of coherence, accuracy, and technical rigor set out in Colombia's statistical law. While agreeing that careful review of inherited data may be appropriate in some instances, we urge caution because threats to a statistical agency's technical independence and reputation carry consequences well beyond any single case.

As executive director of the American Statistical Association, I urge Colombian authorities to protect DANE's independence as stated in law and practice. I support further investigation into Valencia's dismissal and DANE's technical independence by the Colombian Constitutional Court, and I echo the concerns raised by SINTRADANE, the union representing DANE's employees. This is essential to maintaining domestic and international credibility in Colombia's official statistics.

To learn more, read what Piedad Urdinola, the former director of DANE before Valencia, has to say in *La República*: <https://www.larepublica.co/analisis/piedad-urdinola-3874408/el-increible-dane-4485809>.