

Name: Alert ID: TMML2024031272341 The Portuguese attorney's office has confirmed it conducted dozens of searches on Wednesday in connection with its investigation into tax evasion and money laundering at some of the country's biggest clubs, as well as the super-agent Jorge Mendes. The latest stage of Operation Fora de Jogo (Operation Offside) involved almost 300 tax and police inspectors from the public prosecutor's office conducting 76 searches, including the offices of the top division sides Porto, Benfica, Sporting, Braga, Guimarães, Marítimo, Estoril and Portimonense. "Sport Lisboa e Benfica – Futebol SAD and its chairman of the board of directors confirm the search this morning of their facilities, reaffirming their total availability, as always, to collaborate with the authorities in clarifying all issues that may arise. be raised under this or any other process," the league leaders Benfica said in a statement. The offices of Carlos Osório de Castro, Cristiano Ronaldo's lawyer, and the Gestifute agency in Porto and Lisbon – the Juventus forward's representative that was established by Mendes – were also targeted, as were two of the agent's homes in the Portuguese capital. "As part of an investigation conducted by the public ministry of the Central Department of Investigation and Penal Action (DCIAP) and whose investigation is in charge of the Tax and Customs Authority (AT), 76 searches are under way, including house searches, namely, in several football clubs, their societies and managers, law firms and intermediaries," the attorney's office said in a statement. "The investigation is likely to be part of the practice of crimes of qualified tax fraud and money laundering." The Portuguese magazine Sabado showed pictures of officials leaving Gestifute's headquarters with the Porto president, Jorge Nino Pinto da Costa, and the Benfica president, Luís Filipe Vieira, also said to be part of the investigation. Last month it was claimed authorities were looking into potential money laundering relating to the transfers of players including Radamel Falcao, James Rodríguez and Iker Casillas acting on information disclosed by Football Leaks, although Porto denied anyone at the club had been questioned. According to Sabado the homes of Casillas, Jackson Martínez, Maxi Pereira and Danilo Pereira were also searched. "The facts under investigation and which motivated the opening of the cases in question originated in several inspection procedures carried out since 2015 by the Tax and Customs Authority, and driven by it, based on the information available internally, within the scope of business related to the world of professional football," added a statement from the Portuguese tax authority. As well as Ronaldo, Gestifute represents José Mourinho and several members of the Wolves squad, where Mendes also acts as an adviser to the club and to its owner, the Chinese conglomerate Fosun. He has yet to comment on Wednesday's developments.