Maduro on Merlano Case: Duque Does Not Want the Truth Out There

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The Venezuelan President said that the Government of Ivan Duque does not want to extradite the former congresswoman because "she knows many secrets about the Colombian political class."

The president of Venezuela, Nicolas Maduro, said Thursday that his Colombian counterpart, Iván Duque, has not followed the due process for the extradition of former congresswoman Aída Merlano. Merlano, who arrested last Monday in the city of Maracaibo, Zulia state, after running away from her country, seems not interested in knowing the truth, according to the head of state.

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During a nationwide broadcast, the president criticized Duque for using "a ridiculous, not credible, false justification" to refuse to reestablish consular relations and thus advance in various diplomatic aspects.

"We have in Venezuela the former-senator Aída Merlano, and she was captured by request from Interpol ... The Colombian government does not want her deported because they have not started the process" to do so, said the Executive.

Also, he regretted that Duque falls into ideological extremism and puts partisan interests above

the interest of the Colombian people, remembering that neighboring countries should maintain bilateral relations despite their political differences.

"The truth is that Duque does not want Aida Merlano to return to Colombia. This because she knows many secrets of the Colombian political class and that will be unbearable," said the president, adding that the former senator, accused of electoral crimes in her country, "wants to speak and she's telling everything. "

On the other hand, he reiterated that in the country, there are currently more than 30 Colombian citizens requested by the International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol). Still, they cannot deliver them to their respective government because if refuses to carry out the corresponding procedures to do so.

In this regard, the Venezuelan president questioned the real reasons why his Colombian counterpart did not fulfill his duty and ordered the extradition of these people, including members of the criminal gang "Los Rastrojos."