Ecuador Suspends Participation in UNASUR, To Formally Withdraw

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The organization, meant to integrate South American countries as a counter to U.S. hegemony, has five remaning members.

In a letter addressed to the Secretariat of the Union of South American Nations (Unasur) Pro Tempore Monday the Ecuadorean government formalized the decision to suspend its participation and withdraw from the Constitutional Treaty of Unasur thereby leaving the bloc.

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"Ecuador will stop participating in all activities and commitments of the organization and initiate internal procedures for the retraction of the treaty," said the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Human Mobility of Ecuador, Jose Valencia, to his Bolivian counterpart, Diego Pary, whose country is in charge of the Pro Tempore Secretariat.

The government of Lenin Moreno is now the second to formalize its abandonment of the treaty, joining Colombian President Ivan Duque, who on Aug, 27, 2018 made a similar decision. Since April 2018, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Peru suspended their participation, leaving Venezuela, Bolivia, Guyana, Suriname and Uruguay as active members.

The decision comes six months after the Ecuadorean foreign minister publicly ruled out that his country would leave the organization during a press conference where, instead announcing withdrawal from the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America, the Trade Treaty of the

American Peoples (ALBA-TCP).

Former President Rafael Correa, expressed via Twitter that this decision is "a death sentence for the organization." This possible dissolution occurs at a time of ascension for right-wing governments in the region, with Chilean President Sebastian Piñera proposing a new regional bloc called Prosur.

However, Ecuador's withdrawal will not be immediate. According to article 24 of the Constitutional Treaty of Unasur, the pullout will take effect after six months from the date the notification was received by the body. The Ecuadorean constitution of 2008 itself states that leaving international treaties are required to pass through the countyr's National Assembly.

Once the retreat becomes official, it's headquarters, located in Quito, and whose property was donated by the government of Rafael Correa, will return to state hands, leaving the body without any building. In July 2018, Lenin Moreno announced his plans for the building, where he hopes to create an intercultural university.

Unasur has promoted regional integration since its creation in Brasilia on May 23, 2008, under the leadership of the Bolivarian revolutionary, Hugo Chávez.