
Argentina: Critics Say Macri's Emergency Decree Could Endanger Civilians

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Argentine President Mauricio Macri's new measures purportedly designed to help fight drug trafficking in his country, but critics say the new emergency measures could curtail civilian rights.

The measures, announced Tuesday, come in the form of a decree declaring a nationwide public security emergency and allows for retired security personnel to be recalled to duty.

The decree states that the threat of drug trafficking is so severe that it merits "the adoption of measures that allow for use of state resources to their full extent."

The resolution includes, specifically, the "strong control of air space" by the ministries of security, defense, and transport, which would allow the armed forces to intervene in internal security matters.

It also allows for the purchase of "equipment essential for the increase of surveillance of the river borders, ports and maritime areas of national jurisdiction" without the approval of the country's Congress.

Macri's latest decree has been met with fierce opposition from progressive politicians inside Argentina.

Critics have taken to calling it the "Takedown Decree" due to its emphasis on control of airspace, which could result in the take down of planes deemed hostile.

Leftist lawmaker Myriam Bregman said the decree "implies the use of weapons of war in the case of mere suspicion that on a civilian airplane there could be people who intend to commit a crime."

Allowing security forces to take down a plane deemed hostile due to drug trafficking was first floated by right-wing lawmakers inside the Congress in 2013, but was never approved.

Agustin Rossi, then minister of defense, was opposed on the grounds that allowing a civilian plane to be shot down would essentially constitute "the death penalty without due process."

This latest decree is but the latest in a long series issued by Macri since taking office in December 2015.

Macri's leapfrogging over the country's Congress, controlled by opponents of the president, provoked consternation among lawmakers who have demanded an extraordinary session of Congress be called to review his decrees.
