
OAS 'Harass' and 'Delegitimize' Venezuela: Foreign Minister

23/06/2016



Venezuela requested to reject the day's agenda, supported by Bolivia, Ecuador and Nicaragua, but members voted in favor of moving forward with the debate.

The Permanent Council of the Organization of American States, or OAS, is debating whether to apply the so-called Democratic Charter to Venezuela Thursday, a move controversially [requested by](#) Secretary-General Luis Almagro.

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Venezuela requested to reject the vote, which was supported by Bolivia, Ecuador and Nicaragua, but members have voted in favor of moving forward with the debate.

The OAS is "using the body to harass and delegitimize the government of Venezuela," said Foreign Minister Delcy Rodríguez at the meeting. She said Almagro is directly attacking President Nicolas Maduro, clearly siding with the opposition.

The meeting could result in the formation of a "group of friends" in favor of suspending Venezuela which was proposed by Argentina Tuesday.

Almagro presented a 132-page report on the state of the Venezuela economy, politics and media at a special session. He said Thursday that democracy and human rights must not be defended when convenient, but when needed.

Facing a review of his actions as secretary-general following his call to have Venezuela suspended from the OAS, Almagro [changed his tune](#) Monday, saying he does not want to see the country suspended from the regional bloc.

"Our goal is not to castigate or sanction Venezuela," Almagro also said during Thursday's OAS meeting.

?A special session Tuesday [briefed members](#) on progress in the UNASUR-led dialogue between the Venezuelan government and opposition. Representatives overwhelmingly supported the negotiations over impinging on the country's sovereignty.

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"Help is given, it's offered, it doesn't need to be a confrontation," said the ambassador to Bolivia.

While Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro has [promoted talks](#) with the opposition coalition, right-wing leaders have refused to negotiate and did [not show up](#) to scheduled meetings.

Venezuelan ambassador Julio Cesar Pineda said Thursday's meeting will demonstrate Venezuela's power in managing diplomacy in the Americas.

Sergio Rodriguez, another Venezuelan ambassador, said that should the Democratic Charter be applied "political conditions for an intervention of any kind would be created."
