
Paraguay's Ousted Leader to Run in 2018 Presidential Election

27/06/2016



The leftist candidate was endorsed by Indigenous and other grassroots organizations, during an event in the Paraguayan capital of Asuncion.

The Guasu Front, which is the main leftist electoral alliance in Paraguay, confirmed on Saturday that former president Fernando Lugo will run for the presidency in the 2018 general election.

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Lugo served as president of Paraguay from 2008 until June 22, 2012, when his tenure was prematurely cut short in what most leaders in the region branded a "parliamentary coup."

During an event in the Paraguayan capital in which Lugo addressed crowds, the leftist candidate was endorsed by social movements, Indigenous and grassroots organizations.

"The Front Guasu entered in the political arena to stay, we did not come to do a fashion show or exhibitionism in Paraguayan politics, we came to stay and transform our history," said Lugo.

When he became president of Paraguay, Lugo broke the six-decade rule of the right-wing Colorado Party and was seen as part of the progressive wave of leaders elected through Latin America, sometimes called the "Pink Tide."

But the former Catholic priest was removed from office by Congress in a trial that lasted just 24 hours.

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Dominated by the Colorado Party, the Senate voted to impeach Lugo using the "Massacre of Curuguaty" as a pretext, a tragedy that resulted in the death of 17 people: 11 campesinos and 6 police officers, and a further 80 people being wounded.

Evidence after Curuguaty points to the incident being used by the opposition to destabilize Lugo's administration. But on Sunday Lugo said his campaign is better prepared than it was in 2008, when he ended the Colorado Party's historic hegemony, also criticizing the current administration of Horacio Cartes as a neoliberal one in favor of the nation's rich minority.
