

# *Venezuelan President Says Only Electoral Body Can Organize Elections*

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Caracas, July 5 (RHC)-- Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro reiterated Tuesday that the only institution allowed to organize elections in Venezuela was the National Electoral Council.

The president was responding to calls for a symbolic referendum planned by opposition groups. "We are preparing ourselves for a constituent process that will be free, sovereign, constitutional and legal, organized by the only body that organizes any electoral process in the country," said Maduro to his ministers and governors during the Federal Council of Government in the presidential palace.

The president said that to call any kind of referendum it is necessary to meet constitutional requirements and mechanisms. "No one can decide to convene public consultations that are binding in violation of the Constitution, the rights established here or on their own."

The Venezuelan president said that a society must govern its destiny on the basis of respect for the laws, constitution, rules of play and the Public Powers. And he added: "No one can claim a parallel, illegal, unconstitutional, improvised state."

Opposition leaders have repeatedly rejected calls for dialogue and have threatened to disrupt the National Constituent Assembly. The electoral campaign for the assembly begins on July 9 and will run until July 27th.

Three days later, 545 members will be chosen in direct and secret elections that will determine who will sit on the body that will draft the constitutional text that will be put to a popular vote.

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