

# *Former Brazilian President Lula da Silva Says Trump's Threats Against Venezuela Unacceptable*

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Brasilia, August 22 (RHC)-- Former Brazilian President Lula da Silva said that Venezuela's institutional crisis should be overcome "through dialogue and political negotiation."

Still on the first leg of his "Caravan of Hope" tour, which will take him through nine Brazilian states in the northeast of the country, Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva has denounced military threats made by U.S. President Donald Trump against Venezuela.

In defense of Venezuela's sovereignty and the right of its people to determine their country's fate, Lula stated: "It's unacceptable that Donald Trump makes military threats against Venezuela or any country, anywhere in the world," according to Brasil de Fato. He added that if the country finds itself amid an "institutional crisis, they should seek to overcome it through dialogue and political negotiation, always respecting the officials who were elected by popular vote, within democratic rules, as was the case of President Hugo Chavez and President Nicolas Maduro."

Lula recalled similar incidents in Venezuela in 2003, during his first term as president of Brazil. To help resolve the crisis, Lula proposed the formation of a group of countries that held the best interest of

Venezuela's sovereignty to help negotiate a peaceful solution.

However, the former head of state admitted that, as of today, Brazil is in no moral position to offer any such assistance to Venezuela's internal affairs. "How ridiculous it is for an illegitimate coup government, enemy of its own people, to want to school Venezuela on the terms of democracy," Lula said, referring to the unelected government of Michel Temer.

He said that only when Brazil itself, with democratic participation from all sectors of society, elects a president will it be able to collaborate with countries such as Venezuela to help restore peace and stability.

Meanwhile, Temer has met with Paraguayan President Horacio Cartes and both men have reaffirmed that they do not recognize the ANC in Venezuela, which was elected by over eight million Venezuelans on July 30 as a means to achieving peace in the country and intensifying citizen participation.

In a joint communique issued after their meeting, Temer and Cartes also reiterated their support for both the decision of the Mercosur trade bloc to suspend Venezuela and the so-called "Lima Declaration" that twelve regional countries signed on August 8th, condemning what they called "the rupture of the Venezuelan democratic order." These are the same right-wing countries that, led by the United States, were unable to have Venezuela censured in the Organization of American States.

According to Folha de Sao Paulo, Temer's administration was considering sanctions on the import of Venezuelan oil derivatives of over \$220 million, which constituted more than half of Brazilian imports from Venezuela in 2016. However, the idea has been scrapped due to worries of the adverse effects it will have on the population.

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