

Bolivia says UNASUR still active despite attacks



La Paz, March 19 (RHC)-- Bolivian Foreign Minister Diego Pary says that the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) remains active with its members fully engaged, following the recent decision of Ecuador to leave the block and demand the return of the building that houses the General Secretariat in Quito.

"UNASUR has difficulties at the moment, there are six countries that several months ago decided to suspend their participation in the different activities and meetings, however, the block is still active," Pary commented on state television Bolivia TV.

On March 11, the Ecuadorean government formalized the decision to suspend its participation and withdraw from the Constitutional Treaty of UNASUR thereby leaving the bloc, joining Colombian President Ivan Duque, who on Aug 27, 2018, made a similar decision. Other nations such as Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, and Peru suspended their participation in April 2018.

At the moment, Venezuela, Bolivia, Guyana, Suriname, and Uruguay are its only active members. In order, to continue the work made by the South American integration body Pary said that in his capacity as president pro tempore of UNASUR, Bolivia is willing to offer the Parlasur building in Cochabamba, to house the new headquarters of the General Secretariat.

"The UNASUR parliament is prepared and has the necessary infrastructure to make it work (the General Secretariat) here in Bolivia if Ecuador decides to denounce the treaty," he added.

However, Ecuador's withdrawal will not be immediate. According to Article 24 of the Constitutional Treaty of Unasur, the pullout will take effect after six months from the date the notification was received by the body. The Ecuadorean constitution of 2008 itself states that leaving international treaties are required to pass through the country's National Assembly.

At the same time, the Ecuadorean Government has mentioned its intent to adhere to the proposal of a new "integration" project called Prosur, an idea from presidents Ivan Duque (Colombia) and Sebastian Piñera (Chile) with the main purpose of excluding Venezuela.

The Bolivian foreign minister noted that the creation of a new regional platform "has not even started," adding that even though "two meetings of regional coordinators have taken place, but we see there are difficulties in this new proposal put forward by some countries."

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