

Venezuelan Foreign Minister Calls for Peace Talks



Caracas, March 29 (RHC) -- Venezuelan Foreign Minister Elias Jaua on Friday called on all political parties to condemn violent protests and join a national dialogue for peace.

All parties should condemn the protests launched by radical right-wing opposition groups seeking to topple the socialist government of President Nicolas Maduro, and promote dialogue, Jaua said in an interview aired via the TeleSUR news network.

"Dialogue is something that has characterized us (the government), because we are the ones who called for national dialogue" from the beginning, Jaua said.

After a two-day visit, foreign ministers from eight member countries of the Union of South American Nations (Unasur), a bloc to which Venezuela belongs, condemned the violence and acknowledged the Venezuelan government's willingness to facilitate a dialogue with all sectors, said Jaua. "Unasur recognized the peaceful initiatives we are promoting."

Groups promoting violent protests should "join the dialogue with honesty and commitment" to promote issues important to the Venezuelan society, said Jaua.

At least 37 people have been killed and 559 others injured in waves of violent anti-government protests across Venezuela organized by U.S.-backed opposition groups in a bid to destabilize the constitutional

government.

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