

# *El Salvador top court allows unconstitutionality claim against president*

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San Salvador, February 12 (RHC)-- The Constitutional Chamber of the Supreme Court of Justice (CSJ) in El Salvador admitted on Monday a lawsuit for unconstitutional behavior against the executive led by President Nayib Bukele.

As part of the lawsuit, the Chamber also accepted several precautionary measures, including ordering Bukele to refrain from using the armed forces in activities contrary to the established constitutional purposes and to jeopardize the form of government, particularly the separation of powers.

In addition, a statement released by the Legislative Assembly, energetically condemned the irruption of military personnel on Sunday into the legislative building under the orders of the president.

Seventy-one lawmakers approved the resolution rejecting as well the violation of the independence of the legislative body and made calls for solidarity from other parliamentary organizations around the world. Also for Bukele to stop his threats and abide by the resolution adopted by the Supreme Court of Justice.

El Salvador's main political parties have labeled the armed occupation of Congress ordered by Bukele as a coup. "Yesterday was a coup, yesterday became the darkest day for our democracy," Secretary-General of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) Oscar Ortiz commented at a press conference.

On the other side, legislator Carlos Reyes from the right-wing Nationalist Republican Alliance (ARENA), which has a majority in Congress, demanded the president to "immediately stop the ultimatum to the Legislative Assembly and the persecution of democratically elected deputies and their families."

He [Bukele] entered a militarized Blue Hall. He asked to pray. He said that God had revealed to him. He spoke of "constitutional contempt" and gave lawmakers another week to approve the loan for security. It is evident that he is an illiterate tyrant, clown and populist.

This comes as Bukele called for the lawmakers of the Legislative Assembly to gather in an extraordinary session on Saturday, February 9th to endorse a \$109 million loan for phase III of the Territorial Control Plan.

After the legislature rejected the order, the president threatened members of Congress to force the meeting, invoking article 167 of the Salvadoran constitution. "They are constitutionally required to attend the extraordinary session," Bukele tweeted on Friday.

But according to the Parliament's Speaker Mario Ponce, article 167 can only be used by the executive in case of "disasters or national emergencies due to natural disaster or invasion of the country. For that reason, the call for an extraordinary meeting was rejected by the legislators because there was no emergency to justify it other than the discussion for the approval of the funds.

Almost against the ropes, Bukele had invoked an "insurrection" against the Assembly and called for a citizens' rally for that date. Thus, in an unprecedented move, using the armed forces and the National Civil Police (PNC), the president entered Congress on Sunday afternoon.

Few were the lawmakers who responded to the Executive's call, who ended up retreating when they saw the presence of soldiers with assault weapons in the Blue Hall. From the plenary hall, Bukele warned the parliamentarians that if in a week they do not approve the credit that generated the conflict, he will give the power to the people to take the Assembly.

The crisis between state powers has generated the reaction of the international community that has disapproved of the government's actions in militarizing Parliament.

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