

Colombian president asks Trump for stronger sanctions against Venezuela



Washington, March 4 (RHC)-- Colombian President Ivan Duque made a one-day visit to the U.S. capital this week with a full agenda that included meeting with Donald Trump to request more attacks against Venezuela. He also announced the reinstatement of glyphosate fumigations, and topped it off with a keynote speech at the pro-Israeli lobby AIPAC conference.

During his meeting with Trump, Duque immediately began by attacking Venezuela as he reiterated that -- in his words -- "it's very important that we are stronger on sanctions" against the neighboring nation. The Colombian head of state even acknowledged that "Venezuela is running out of things" so they -- referring to the U.S. and Colombia -- "have to, in this year, work together jointly so there's a political and democratic transition that is effective in Venezuela."

Venezuelan Foreign Affairs Minister Jorge Arreaza responded that his country will ask the International Criminal Court (ICC) to investigate Duque for asking a foreign nation to impose more unilateral sanctions against Venezuela.

“This shameful request for ‘stronger sanctions’ that Duque makes to Trump will be taken to the International Criminal Court to investigate the criminal responsibility in the suffering these measures cause to the Venezuelan people,” Arreaza tweeted. According to the government and international NGOs, the unilateral coercive measures that the U.S. has imposed on the Latin American nation since 2014 have caused losses of \$120 billion and around 50,000 deaths.

Another issue that was addressed by Trump and Duque was drug production in the country, that despite U.S. presence for over two decades has continued to grow.

However, the conclusion was that the fumigation of illicit crops for the fight against drugs with the toxic glyphosate had to be reinstated, as Trump defended it and the Colombian president announced his hopes to resume it, despite the resistance made by farmers and human rights organizations.

In 2015, Colombia halted aerial fumigation due to the unintended contamination of legal crops and water sources. One year prior to this decision, the country’s Constitutional Court ruled that if there was evidence of negative consequences the government had to stop using that method to fight the illegal crops.

The visit was completed with a keynote speech at the 2020 pro-Israel lobby American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) annual conference.

Duque took to the stand to announce a Free Trade Agreement with Israel and stronger bilateral relations - especially in the defense sector - but also to denounce, without any proof, that Venezuela’s government "opened its doors" to Hezbollah for them to prepare attacks from Venezuela. The head of state then urged AIPAC to set their aim in Latin America under the justification of defending "democracy."

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