

# *OAS member states re-elect Luis Almagro as secretary with 23 votes*

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Washington, March 21 (RHC)-- In a favorable outcome for U.S. President Donald Trump's foreign policy towards Latin America, twenty-three countries of the Organization of American States (OAS) Friday re-elected Luis Almagro as the Secretary-General of this institution, a position that he will hold until 2025.

His opponent, the former President of the UN General Assembly Maria Fernanda Espinoza, who was foreign minister during the Rafael Correa administration in Ecuador, obtained 10 votes.

"The fight for the OAS throne has taken place at a time of division in the region... Almagro drags Nicolas Maduro's detractors, while Espinoza... aspired to capitalize on the weariness of some countries with the Secretary-General," the Uruguayan outlet Notimerica commented.

The vote of the countries took place in an extraordinary General Assembly marked by controversy. Previously, a group of countries, including Mexico and 13 members of the Caribbean Community (Caricom), asked the meeting be postponed due to difficulties caused by the CONVID-19 spread.

Almagro was re-elected with less support than he achieved five years ago when he received 33 out of 34 votes.

Although he promised that he would not run for reelection, he announced in December last year that he would run for a new mandate, a decision that the U.S. and its Latin American allies appreciated.

Over the past year, the Trump administration's support for Almagro has been evident, especially after the role that the OAS played in the coup against Bolivia's President Evo Morales last November.

In a speech to the OAS in January, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo campaigned for Almagro and exerted enormous pressure on the rest of the countries to capture votes in favor of his candidate.

Subsequently, he met in Jamaica with the foreign ministers of six Caribbean countries to ask them to support him.

Besides, the White House publicly urged Peru's ambassador Hugo De Zela to withdraw his candidacy for the OAS Secretariat arguing that he was "dividing" the hemispheric bloc. On Monday, De Zela announced that he was abandoning his claim to lead the OAS.???????

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