

# *Venezuelan foreign minister says EU sanctions based on false arguments*

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Venezuelan Foreign Minister Jorge Arreaza. (Photo: teleSUR)

Caracas, February 23 (RHC)-- Venezuela has condemned the European Union (EU) for imposing a new round of sanctions on more than a dozen senior officials, lawmakers and members of the security forces in the South American state, saying the measure is based on “false arguments about honorable citizens.”

Foreign Minister Jorge Arreaza said in a statement posted on Twitter that the sanctions are a sign that the EU is frustrated with the ineffectiveness of its earlier actions to force a change of government in Venezuela. He added: "Such unwise decisions also reveal the inability of the European Union to respect the will of the Venezuelan nation, and once again exposes its obsolete interventionist policy towards Venezuela."

Venezuela's top diplomat further called on the EU to cease its acts of systematic aggression against Venezuelans.

On Monday, the EU slapped sanctions on 19 Venezuelans over the legislative election last December, which the bloc alleged was rigged in favor of President Nicolas Maduro. Those sanctioned included Bernabe Gutierrez and Jose Brito, who are two lawmakers from the National Assembly and are recognized by Venezuela's government as leaders of two opposition parties.

The EU sanctions also targeted Omar Prieto, governor of the state of Zulia, Remigio Ceballos Icho, the armed forces operational commander, and three officials of the Electoral Council, including its president, Indira Maira Alfonzo Izaguirre.

A total of 256 of the National Assembly's 277 seats are now in the hands of Maduro's United Socialist Party and its allies following December elections, which were boycotted by the opposition, claiming fraud without providing any evidence.

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