

Venezuela Rejects Chilean Offer to Broker Talks with Opposition



Caracas, January 14 (RHC-Xinhua) -- The Venezuelan government has turned down an offer from Chile to help resume talks between the ruling socialist party and the conservative opposition, whose ties were battered by last year's protests.

The offer by Chilean Foreign Minister Heraldo Muñoz was rejected as intervention in Venezuela's domestic affairs, Venezuela's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement.

The ministry called on Muñoz "to refrain from offering his opinions on Venezuela's internal affairs" and asked for an official explanation of the matter via Chile's embassy in Caracas.

On Monday, Muñoz said Chile was "very interested" in reactivating political dialogue between Venezuela's two camps.

Following violent anti-government protests at the beginning of 2014, Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro invited the opposition to various rounds of talks in April to help diffuse social tensions.

Right-wing leaders later suspended the talks, blaming the government for a lack of commitment. The ranks of the opposition were also splintered over whether to negotiate with authorities.

The three-month protests left 43 people dead and more than 800 people injured, and cost more than 10 billion U.S. dollars in economic losses, according to the Venezuelan government.

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