

Venezuelan National Assembly Head to Sue over False Drug Claims



Caracas, June 1 (teleSUR-RHC)-- The president of the Venezuelan National Assembly declared on Sunday that he plans to file lawsuits against U.S. and Spanish media outlets that have linked his name to drug trafficking.

Diosdado Cabello, head of the country's parliament and number two of the governing PSUV party, made the announcement two weeks after the Wall Street Journal published such claims. "I've already sued here in Venezuela, but I'm also going to sue in Spain, and I'm also going to sue in the United States," said Diosdado Cabello without referring explicitly to the Wall Street Journal during a TV interview broadcast.

Three Venezuelan media outlets have already been sued for reproducing the story of Spanish journal ABC, claiming Cabello's former security chief had fled for the United States and that Cabello was involved in drug trafficking.

As for the Wall Street Journal, it claimed in a report that federal prosecutors in New York and Miami and a Drug Enforcement Administration unit were gathering "evidence" from former cocaine traffickers, Venezuelan military defectors and people once close to top Venezuelan government officials.

The political opposition in Venezuela has regularly leveled similar accusations without ever providing any evidence. "It cannot be that in Spain the press can do this - smear someone without any type of proof. In the United States this cannot happen," he said, adding that "this man from ABC ... has gotten himself into a big mess, because I'm going to sue him over there in Spain."

Immediately after the WSJ report, Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro strongly backed the National Assembly chief, saying, "Whoever messes with Diosdado, messes with all of us, messes with me."

He added that by leveling these sorts of charges against Diosdado Cabello, the internal opposition and its foreign allies were rehashing old strategies of seeking to internationally discredit the elected government and that the government would confront these new smears just as they had done with the sanctions imposed by the U.S earlier this year.

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