

CARICOM Warns Venezuela, Condemns Dominican Immigration Law



Bridgetown, July 6 (EFE-RHC) The Caribbean Community ended its annual summit on the weekend with a warning to Venezuela that its claim on Guyana's Essequibo zone could "poison" relations with the region, and condemning the Dominican Republic's immigration policy, which includes deporting descendents of Haitians.

At a press conference after the close of the 36th annual CARICOM summit on Saturday, coinciding with the celebration of the organization's 42nd anniversary, its rotating president – Barbados President Freundel Stuart – acknowledged that the organization's leaders had not managed to agree on a candidate for Commonwealth secretary.

The CARICOM nations had discussed seeking strategies to take better advantage of their participation in international conferences, strengthen their educational systems and achieve social and economic recovery, said Stuart, adding that attention had focused on the territorial dispute between Guyana and Venezuela and the Dominican Republic's immigration policy.

Regional leaders agreed that the Venezuelan claim could poison relations with the international grouping and expressed their confidence that a peaceful solution could be found.

CARICOM very firmly supports Guyana, but it is also aware of the "good relations" Caracas has with the

region, said Stuart, adding that the organization is not on the verge of disrupting that relationship or harming it in any way.

Recently, ExxonMobil discovered a “significant” high-quality petroleum reserve in Essequibo, and Venezuela has demanded that Guyana halt exploration there, while Guyana is attempting to marshal international support to get Caracas to drop its territorial claim.

Regarding the Dominican Republic, Stuart said that the CARICOM leaders are very concerned over that government’s actions, which he said have caused a humanitarian crisis in the region.

He said that the regional leaders will soon issue a full statement on the matter, but St. Vincent and the Grenadines premier Ralph Gonsalves told reporters that CARICOM will keep up pressure on Santo Domingo to cancel its policy of deporting people to a country with which they have no ties.

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