

# *Venezuela Rejects Criticism from German Government*

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Caracas, August 18 (RHC)-- Venezuela's Minister of Foreign Affairs Jorge Arreaza has rejected criticism from the office of the German Chancellor Angela Merkel, describing the comments as "interventionist." In a press conference, Arreaza said that he had handed a formal protest to the German ambassador to Venezuela, Stefan Andreas Herzberg, denouncing the intervention in Venezuelan affairs.

The protest comes after German Press Secretary Steffen Seiber said earlier that Venezuela "must stop arbitrary detention and the excessive use of force against opponents of the regime, as well as guarantee the protection of former Attorney General Luisa Ortega Diaz and free all political prisoners."

Seiber announced that Merkel would adhere to the Lima Declaration, signed on August 8th by 11 countries, which refuses to recognize the legitimacy of Venezuela's Constituent Assembly. The declaration outlines 16 measures to increase pressure against President Maduro. These include: qualifying Maduro as a "dictator," rejecting the Constituent Assembly and refusing to acknowledge any legal action that does not come from the opposition-controlled National Assembly.

In response to Germany's criticism, Arreaza said that no country could interfere with the internal affairs in Venezuela.

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