

Venezuela bars Juan Guaido from holding public office for 15 years



Caracas, March 29 (RHC)-- The Venezuelan government has barred the U.S.-backed so-called "president" Juan Guaido from holding public office for 15 years over irregularities in financial records. The move was announced by state comptroller Elvis Amoroso on Thursday. The 15-year-ban -- the longest possible -- comes as a result of an audit launched into Guaido's finances back in February.

The self-proclaimed "interim president" has been accused of lying on his personal financial disclosures and receiving funds from irregular sources. Guaido had ultimately failed to explain the origins of funds he spent on travelling abroad since joining the National Assembly, according to Amoroso.

The US-backed opposition leader was not, however, intimidated by the lengthy ban, calling his supporters to stage more protests. "We're going to continue in the streets," Guaido said soon after Amoroso's speech was aired on state TV.

The exchange comes ahead of mass rallies -- both for and against the legitimate government of President Maduro -- scheduled for Saturday. The country is now recovering from a second major blackout in less than a month, with the government and opposition trading accusations about what's behind it.

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