

# *Venezuelan president calls for national unity as Venezuela marks Independence Day*

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Caracas, July 6 (RHC)-- Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro, surrounded by top generals, addressed a military parade in Caracas Friday in commemoration of the country's declaration of Independence, where revolutionary forces led by Simon Bolivar expelled the Spanish empire 208 years ago.

"It was the Bolivarian Revolution and our Commander Hugo Chavez who rescued the original and real sense of this historical feat," said President Maduro, arguing that it was the revolution that recovered the country's sovereignty and carried through the legacy of Bolivar.

Other mobilizations took place in the country, including a Chavista march held in Caracas earlier in the morning led by Constituent Assembly chief Diosdado Cabello, while an opposition protest led by lawmaker Juan Guaido was taking place in the capital marching towards the headquarters of the military's counter-terrorism intelligence agency.

"For the battles that we are in there cannot be one second of rest. We are on the right side of the history and at the right time for the battle!" exclaimed the president as he announced fresh military exercises for the July 24, Simon Bolivar's birthday, whereby the army and navy will be mobilized to protect the country's

Caribbean coast and borders.

Maduro also stressed the need for peace and reconciliation, calling for national unity among all sectors of the population. The government has long sought a peaceful solution to the political conflicts in the country, arguing that threats of foreign intervention and coups from the U.S.-backed opposition are obstacles in the path to peace.

The government hopes that the ongoing peace negotiations being held in Norway could be a solution, though significant factions within the opposition oppose the talks. Long-time opposition leader Marina Corina Machado says talks are useless and instead calls for U.S. military intervention.

Earlier in the day, government supporters also took to the streets to celebrate the victory against the Spanish forces, the victory made Venezuela into the first colony of the Americas to overthrow European imperialism.

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