

# *Thousands march in solidarity with Venezuela at Sao Paulo Forum*

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Caracas, July 28 (RHC)-- Thousands marched through the streets of Caracas Saturday, defending the nation's right to peace and sovereignty against U.S. pressure to oust President Nicolas Maduro via harsh economic sanctions and the threat of military intervention.

Within the framework of the XXV Sao Paulo Forum, protesters rejected the economic, financial and commercial blockade imposed by Washington against Venezuela. Peaceful demonstrators who filled the streets of Caracas, where the forum is being held, also demanded the release of former Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva's release from his 8-year prison sentence. Marchers chanted for peace in Colombia, and overall regional integration.

"The Latin American left has to increase its power so that the people have more power in each country. ... Leaders have to include the demands of the people to generate the changes that the territories need," said Diosdado Cabello, march organizer and President of the Venezuelan National Constituent Assembly (ANC).

"From this crisis and from this war, we are going to get stronger because we are united. ... We are not willing to give up, whatever happens we will continue to raise the flags of socialism," said the vice president of the United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV).

"We are going to defend the country with our hearts and our lives, for each one of us who falls, thousands will rise," Diosdado concluded.

Bolivian President Evo Morales heartily supports the four-day meeting that he calls a space for anti-imperialist peoples and governments fighting for their liberation, ideals and identity to come together.

"From Bolivia , my respect and admiration, mainly, to the creators of this Sao Paulo Forum, for creating a meeting of leftist parties, of anti-imperialist governments that permanently promote the integration of the Latin American people, a people fighting for their liberation, for their ideals and identity," said the president through a video.

Under the slogan "Peace, Sovereignty and Prosperity of Peoples" the Sao Paulo Forum began July 25. Since then, over 120 Latin American social and political organizations have been debating ways to end the neoliberal offensive and its consequences, including worldwide increases in poverty and inequality.

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