

# *Venezuelan Government, Opposition Meet to End Unrest*

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Caracas, Apr 11 (RHC), – Venezuelan President, Nicolas Maduro, and opposition leaders have held talks for the first time in a bid to end weeks of deadly unrest in the Latin American country.

Maduro and the opposition Democratic Unity coalition (MUD) held a televised meeting on Thursday in a possible first step towards defusing tensions that have escalated during two months of anti-government protests held by hard-line opposition factions in the country.

The meeting involved some 20 representatives from both sides. Opposition leader, Henrique Capriles, who lost the presidential election to Maduro last year, also took part in the negotiations.

Foreign ministers of Brazil, Colombia and Ecuador as well as the Vatican's ambassador to Venezuela, Archbishop Aldo Giordano, also attended the meeting, urging the two sides to find common ground.

“Let’s take the way of tolerance...Let’s look for a model of co-existence that permits Venezuelan democracy to become stronger,” Maduro said during the talks.

MUD, the major opposition umbrella organization agreed to the face-to-face meeting with the government of President Nicolas Maduro after the regional group of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) offered to mediate between the parties last month.

The violence marred anti-government protests organized by the Venezuelan opposition, with the support of the United States, have so far left 39 dead and scores of people injured.

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