

Chavista lawmakers open to dialogue on National Assembly



Caracas, September 26 (RHC)-- As Chavista lawmakers return to their seats in the National Assembly, they have signaled that they are prepared to begin a dialogue for the reinstitutionalization of Venezuela's National Assembly. The Assembly is dominated by the opposition and was deemed to be no longer legitimate after breaking the law in 2017. The overtures by Chavista lawmakers is part of the ongoing peace talks between the government and some of the opposition.

On Tuesday, Francisco Torrealba, spokesperson for the Chavista 'Gran Polo Patriotico' (a coalition of pro-government Chavista parties), said that he is prepared to implement mechanisms for dialogue that would work towards the institutionalization of the National Assembly. He said to reporters: "We want to rescue respect, tolerance and willingness to dialogue. We know that the right wing is a majority, but that doesn't block the possibility that in this National Assembly we can dialogue with respect and tolerance."

The National Assembly, of which Guaido was appointed President under their rotation system, was ruled to be in 'in contempt' by Venezuela's Supreme Court in 2017. This was due to the fact that three opposition lawmakers were admitted into the Assembly despite being elected with serious voting irregularities in their district. The supreme court told the Assembly that they could continue to operate legally if they opened a new session without the three disputed deputies. Nevertheless, the Assembly again refused.

The entry of Chavista lawmakers and their work towards reinstitutionalization is part of the ongoing dialogue with some sections of the opposition, following calls by President Nicolas Maduro for peaceful solutions. The opposition parties that have taken part have agreed to join the government in calling on the U.S. to lift economic sanctions, meanwhile the government has agreed to release some prisoners, create a new electoral council, and set up 'dialogue tables' on a number of issues.

The "dialogue tables" have been formed to discuss eight topics, they include: 1. Electoral power and electoral guarantees, 2. Truth commission, 3. Sovereignty and territorial integrity, 4. National Economy, 5. Institutional and political balance; 6. Social rights; 7. Political parties; 8. Social movements.

However, only some opposition parties have joined the dialogue, more extremist factions around Juan Guaido have rejected the possibility of peace talks, and have instead worked with the U.S. to call for sanctions and intervention.

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