

Brazil suspends expulsion of Venezuelan diplomats



Brasilia, May 2 (RHC)-- Brazilian Minister Luís Roberto Barroso of the Supreme Federal Court (STF), suspended an order from Brazil's Ministry of Foreign Relations to expel the entire diplomatic corps of Venezuela accredited in the country.

Saturday would have been the deadline to leave Brazil, given by the Itamaraty Palace (seat of the Foreign Ministry) to the officials of the legitimate government of Venezuela, headed by the constitutionally elected president, Nicolás Maduro.

Such dismissal was communicated in a letter from the Foreign Affairs Cabinet sent on Wednesday, as a matter of urgency, to the Venezuelan Embassy in Brasilia.

Barroso's decision is valid for 10 days and determined that during this period President Jair Bolsonaro and the head of diplomacy will present explanations to the STF. Barroso responded to a request from Federal Congressman Paulo Pimenta, who filed a habeas corpus with the STF requesting a veto of the Itamaraty order.

According to Pimenta, forcing Venezuelans to move without the proper logistics, traditional legal procedures and responsibility, at a time of pandemic caused by a virus of global reach, means practicing acts of the utmost cruelty.

"Above all, it means putting at serious risk the right of patients and their families to life, the most fundamental of human rights," the parliamentarian wrote. Such guarantees, he noted, are protected by international conventions, "including the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, all of which have already been duly introduced into our domestic legal system."

The day before, Brazil's attorney general, Augusto Aras, also demanded that the foreign ministry suspend the order against the Venezuelan officials, which also extends to those providing support services and the families of those affected by the measure.

For Aras, the recommendation of the Attorney General's Office should last "as long as the context of the measure is clarified and elements are gathered to verify the possible risks of compliance," pointing out that the world is facing the COVID-19 pandemic that also affects health services in Venezuela.

This office also suggests that the Foreign Ministry take into account the humanitarian perspective, the context of the epidemic, and national and international human rights norms.

Because of this arbitrary measure, more than 20 political parties, associations and personalities from different sectors of Brazilian society have repudiated the foreign policy promoted by the Bolsonaro administration, which violates the Federal Constitution and the Vienna Convention.

In a manifesto, the signatories rejected the document from the Foreign Affairs Ministry that "does not respect the existing treaties in the Vienna Convention, since the Brazilian government's own statement does not present any reason or legal basis for the expulsion of the diplomats listed in the document."

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