

Venezuela declares EU ambassador ‘persona non grata’

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Foreign Minister Jorge Arreaza of Venezuela, left, gives letter to European Union's ambassador to Caracas Isabel Brilhante after a meeting in Caracas on February 24, 2021. (Photo: AFP)

Caracas, February 24 (RHC)-- Venezuela has declared the European Union's ambassador to Caracas persona non grata, giving her 72 hours to leave. "Today, by decision of President Nicolas Maduro, we presented to Mrs Isabel Brilhante... her declaration as persona non grata," Foreign Minister Jorge Arreaza

told reporters in Caracas on Wednesday.

Venezuela's National Assembly called Tuesday for the expulsion of the EU's ambassador in response to the bloc's imposition of new sanctions against 19 officials in the Maduro administration. The EU foreign ministers agreed on Monday to impose sanctions on 19 Venezuelan officials for "undermining democracy."

The governor of Zulia State, the commander of the armed forces, and three members of the Electoral Council, including its president, were among the targeted officials. That would bring to 55 the total number of the members of the Venezuelan government hit with EU sanctions.

Arrazea said the European measures were illegal. "Hopefully there will be reflection in the European Union, hopefully we will be able to rebuild the bridges of understanding, of dialogue. Hopefully they will learn to respect."

Pedrosa had been declared persona non grata once before, when the EU imposed another round of sanctions on Venezuelan officials in July last year.

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