

Media reports say Venezuelan president's visit to Brazil is blow to Washington

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Brasilia, May 30 (RHC)-- Venezuelan President Maduro has visited Brazil on a formal invitation to take part in a South American leaders' summit, marking a new thaw in bilateral ties despite persisting U.S. efforts to isolate the country. Maduro hailed a "new era" in relations between Brasilia and Caracas as he

met President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva on Monday ahead of the regional summit, saying: "Brazil and Venezuela must be united, from now on and always."

Maduro, in his first visit to Brasilia in years, also called for the establishment of a "multipolar" world rather than a global system dominated by Washington. For his part, Lula also lashed out at American policy towards Venezuela, insisting that "it is inexplicable for a country to have 900 sanctions placed on it, because another country doesn't like it."

Lula further vowed on Monday to boost business with Caracas and voiced his support for Venezuela's accession to a block of emerging-market nations, known as BRICs. He also hailed the "historic" restoration of ties between the two nations, emphasizing: "This is the start of Maduro's return, and (Tuesday's) meeting will be the return of South American integration."

Brazil had severed diplomatic relations with Maduro's government under Lula's far-right predecessor Jair Bolsonaro, who maintained close ties with Washington and backed its brutal bans against Venezuela.

The oil-rich Latin American nation began going through a downward spiral of economic troubles in 2018, when the West, led by the U.S., and its favored Venezuelan opposition contested Maduro's victory in the presidential election.

Following the election, Western countries began slapping Caracas with a slew of backbreaking sanctions, which have been responsible for spawning the dire economic situation in the country.

More than 7.1 million Venezuelans, as UN estimates show, have left their country and migrated to other Latin American countries or the United States amid Venezuela's high inflation as well as food and medicine shortages following Washington's crippling sanctions.

In recent years, Maduro's international travel has been curtailed due to the US-led sanctions, but last year's victory of independent candidates during elections in neighboring countries, including Brazil and Colombia, ushered in its return to the region's fold.

In September 2022, Colombia and Venezuela reopened their border that was closed for several years as Colombian leader Gustavo Petro took a major step towards normalizing ties with Caracas.

Most recently, Chilean President Gabriel Boric appointed a new ambassador to Venezuela last week, after five years without formal representation. Foreign Minister Alberto van Klaveren said on Monday that there's a need for building strong ties with Caracas given areas of common interest.

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