

Argentina Slams U.S. Diplomat for Default Comment



Buenos Aires, September 17 (Xinhua-RHC) -- Argentinian Foreign Minister Hector Timerman on Tuesday summoned the top U.S. diplomat in the South American nation to rebuke him for using the word "default" to describe Argentina's failure to pay off its foreign debt.

Kevin Sullivan, the U.S. charge d'affaires and the top ranking diplomat at the U.S. Embassy in Buenos Aires, was called to the office of Foreign Minister Hector Timerman. The Argentinian official expressed his government's "profound unease" at assertions Sullivan had made about the country's defaulting on debt during an interview with local media and called the statements "inappropriate."

Timerman told Sullivan that "Argentina has met all of its commitments as scheduled," referring to Argentina's debt service payments to creditors.

Part of Argentina's debt payments, deposited in a U.S. bank, have been frozen at the ruling given by a federal judge in New York due to an ongoing financial dispute between a minority group of Argentine debt bond holders in the United States and the Argentine government.

In an interview carried by Argentina's Clarin daily Monday, Sullivan said: "It is important for Argentina to come out of default as soon as possible to be able to resume the path of sustainable economic growth and attract the investment it needs."

During his daily press briefing Tuesday, Argentinian Cabinet Chief Jorge Capitanich also spoke of the incident, calling Sullivan's remarks "incorrect, unfortunate and representing undue interference in the sovereignty of a country."

"Argentina is paying and meeting its obligations," said Capitanich. "The impediment to some creditors receiving their payments is not because of Argentina, it's because of a judge who is blocking the payment process. Argentina has deposited the funds... so Argentina has paid."

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