

# *Unasur rejects U.S. meddling in Venezuela*

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CARACAS, March 6 (Xinhua-RHC) -- South American nations on Friday showed their support for Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro's government and criticized U.S. interference in Venezuelan affairs.

A delegation from the Union of South American Nations (Unasur), headed by its Secretary General Ernesto Samper, met with Venezuelan officials in Caracas to encourage the resumption of dialogue between the Venezuelan government and the political opposition.

The delegation, including the foreign ministers of Colombia, Brazil and Ecuador, met privately with Maduro at the foreign ministry's headquarters and firmly stated that Unasur rejects intervention in Venezuela's internal affairs.

"With the evidence of U.S. Meddling, presented to us by President Maduro we want to emphasize that all Unasur nations, without exception, reject any attempts, either internal or from abroad, to destabilize Venezuela's democracy," Samper told reporters.

Maduro has in the past few weeks denounced "intense U.S. ... meddling" in a foiled plot by the country's right-wing opposition to assassinate him and seize power.

The foreign ministers of the 12-nation Unasur bloc were also expected to meet with Venezuela's opposition coalition, saying the political differences between the ruling socialists and conservative opponents must be tackled by democratic means.

"With the upcoming parliamentary elections in Venezuela, we believe it is the best scenario for both political forces to express their political differences and sort out the controversies," said Samper.

Samper said he also planned to meet with civic groups, representatives of the justice and electoral systems, and political organizations.

A last Unasur delegation visit was paid in May, in an attempt to allay rising tensions between the administration and anti-government activists following weeks of violent street protests.

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