

# *Maduro Looks to Peacefully Resolve Border Dispute with Guyana*

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Caracas, July 07 (teleSUR-RHC) Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro denounced campaigns aimed at inciting conflict in the country by using its recent dispute with Guyana, saying that Venezuela wishes to resolve the conflict peacefully, despite provocations.

“There is a serious campaign, promoting hatred and distrust, which is promoting negative elements about Venezuela,” the president said on Monday, adding that non-state actors, such as Exxon Mobil Corp. and foreign oil lobbies, are provoking the situation and undermining solidarity between Latin American and Caribbean countries.

Despite a long-running border dispute, which dates back to the colonial period, Exxon Mobil reported a major oil discovery after the company received unilateral permission to explore the disputed territory of Esequibo through an agreement with Guyana.

Venezuela considered the agreement a violation and called for a dialogue between the two nations to settle the dispute.

However, Maduro said late Monday that recent statements by the new Guyanese president during the past weekend's Caricom meeting were "inciting and highly offensive" to Venezuelans. Guyana President David Granger recently said, "Guyana's border with Venezuela was fixed 116 years ago. Maps were drawn. Atlases were adjusted. Border markers were cast in stone," while referring to Venezuela as the "monkey on Guyana's back."

Maduro has ordered a thorough review of diplomatic relations with Guyana, warning that he will reduce the size of the Venezuelan Embassy in Guyana and recall the country's ambassador. "Venezuela must ... win back (Esequibo) via a peaceful path," said Maduro as he called for a national debate on the subject, urging Venezuelans to stand united. "We will not allow Exxon Mobil to place itself in territory that is currently under dispute," Maduro said, emphasizing that actions of Guyana's government violate international law. "Our goal has been for cooperation, peace, integration ... respect, and processing the conflicts through dialogue and the international way," he added.

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