

Venezuelan President Calls for Peace Amid Coup Attempt



Caracas, February 24 (RHC) -- Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro Sunday evening called for peace and coexistence in his country amid a coup attempt carried out by the opposition.

Maduro said in a television interview that the hardline opposition in Venezuela, supported by the United States, tried to take his country down the path of civil war.

He called on all political, cultural, economic, religious and social groups to attend a national conference for peace on Wednesday at the Miraflores Presidential Palace in order to stop the violence.

The top Venezuelan leader added that security forces have slowly stopped violent protests held by the opposition, saying that the unrest have affected only eight percent of the national territory.

The South American country has been beset with social turmoil since February 12th and the violence in Caracas have left at least nine people dead and 137 others injured.

He recalled the situation of the presidential elections in April 2013 after the death of President Hugo Chavez, saying that at that time the opposition also "tried to burn down the country, but failed and soon were neutralized."

Maduro also said that a visitor to the far-right opposition leader Leopoldo Lopez, who was arrested on February 18th on four charges including inciting violence, was found with maps of Venezuelan oil fields, which could help the opposition build up a plan to attack the country's major source of income.

Also on Sunday, Maduro tweeted a video showing violent individuals taking part in acts of vandalism and social disobedience in the capital. The video shows young men, some wearing hoods or gas masks and black gloves, setting up road blocks along main avenues in a district known as Chacao and defacing an image of late President Hugo Chavez. In one scene, a young man in jeans and a blue sweater, carrying a bright green bag, sets fire to a barricade at a city plaza.

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