

# *Venezuela Expels U.S. Diplomats for Inciting Protests*

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Caracas, February 18 (RHC)-- The Venezuelan government has ordered three U.S. diplomats to leave the country within two days. The three, accused of inciting violent protests that left three people dead and dozens injured, have been declared persona non-grata.

"All these diplomats are required to leave from our sovereign and independent homeland of Venezuela in the next 48 hours for actively being involved in the organization and promotion of these groups that now intend to generate violence in our country," Foreign Minister Elias Jaua said during a press conference.

Jaua informed that three U.S. consular officers had used the "cover" of granting visas to private university students to meet with them, and instigate protests and unrest in the country.

Violent protests in Caracas since February 12th have left three people dead and over 70 injured. The demonstrators demanded the ouster of President Nicolas Maduro and the release of jailed protesters.

Student demonstrators promised to stay in the street until Maduro resigned, to which the Venezuelan President energetically answered he would not give up even a "millimeter" of power.

"The independent Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela does not accept threats, blackmail, or conditions from any force in the world. We are committed to ensuring peace and stability of all Venezuelans," Jaua said.

Thanking other countries and political parties for the international solidarity they had expressed, the Venezuelan Foreign Minister indicated that he would inform all ambassadors in Venezuela of the details about the threats made by Washington to Caracas.

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