

# *Venezuela to seek 'other markets' if U.S. declares oil embargo*

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Caracas, Feb 16 (RHC)-- Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro said that his country will seek other buyers for its oil if the United States approves an oil embargo on Venezuela. At a news conference on Thursday, the Venezuelan president said: "If the U.S. puts an oil embargo on us, we will take our boat and go somewhere else. If they take measures against Venezuelan oil like those demanded by (opposition leader) Julio Borges, we will take the appropriate measures."

The statement comes following U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson's tour throughout Latin America to seek support for Washington's aggressive positions towards Venezuela. During his stop in Argentina, Tillerson and his Argentinean counterpart said they were studying an embargo of Venezuelan oil.

"The oil embargo announced by the United States media and suggested by U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson is an illegal measure according to international law," added Maduro. The president said the embargo would be inconvenient both for the United States and Venezuela, and would be one of Trump's biggest political mistakes. "I don't know if he has an analyst that could make him understand this."

Asked about Venezuela's oil production, Maduro blamed corruption and bad administration, claiming that recently charged former executives of the state oil company Pdvsa were responsible, but maintained that production is already recovering. "I broke the straitjacket and created new conditions so both the national and international private investment can flow in."

Maduro also spoke about Venezuela's upcoming presidential elections scheduled for April 22nd, confirming that the Venezuelan consulate in Miami will open so Venezuelans abroad can vote. "We have enough structural, political and spiritual strength to hold a good, peaceful election process," said Maduro.

The Venezuelan president also spoke about the recent sanctions the United States and the European Union have imposed on Venezuela, arguing the restrictions harm not only the government, but common citizens. "Even business people are struggling to buy airplane tickets to fly from New York to Miami.

They pay with a credit card and their payment gets rejected. That's affecting entrepreneurs, not members of the United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV), but entrepreneurs."

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