

# *Colombian social leaders express solidarity with Venezuela*

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Bogota, February 15 (RHC)-- Colombian social leaders have organized mass demonstrations expressing solidarity with Venezuela against international pressure and giving support to President Nicolas Maduro. Demonstrators in the Colombian city of Cali expressed their support for the sovereignty of Venezuela and the Bolivarian Government, demanding respect for the "free self-determination of the Venezuelan people and their struggle to live in peace, rebuild their economy and continue to be an example of dignity for the whole world."

According to organizers from the Coordinator of Solidarity with the Peoples of Valle del Cauca, the Venezuelan people have been subject to "the most cruel economic war, to an international piracy against its natural resources and public goods, to an infamous media siege and to the imperialist aggression that threatens a bloodbath in the homeland of Simon Bolívar."

The political adviser of the Revolutionary Alternative Force (FARC) party in Cali, Juan Manuel Gomez, sent a message of goodwill, brotherhood and fraternity to Venezuela and President Nicolas Maduro.

Gomez rejected the interventionist attempts by international powers and called for Colombian officials to respect the "freedom of the sister countries" in order to bring to "America a just and peaceful continent that citizens deserve."

Colombian President Ivan Duque met with U.S. President Donald Trump in Washington on Wednesday.

The pair have both separately recognized the illegal claim made by Juan Guaidó as “interim president” following an attempted coup d'état on January 23rd. The heads of state were to discuss their plans for Venezuela, however, a statement from the Democratic chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee has vetoed Trump's proposal for military intervention.

Under the U.S. Constitution, Congress has to approve foreign military action. Representative Eliot Engel also warned about the possible effects on the Venezuelan people of U.S. sanctions on state oil company PDVSA. The United States in January imposed sanctions aimed at limiting Maduro's access to oil revenue.

When asked if he had a plan B, Trump told the press, "I always have a plan B, C, and D. I probably I will have more flexibility than any man in this position."

Maduro has repeatedly called for the restoration of talks between his government and the opposition in order to maintain peace and avoid a U.S.-backed coup. Guaidó and his allies Trump, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and his National Security advisor have so far responded to such calls by escalation and rejection of any dialogue.

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