

Venezuela's Constituent Assembly strips opposition leader Juan Guaidó of immunity



Caracas, April 3 (RHC)-- Venezuela's National Constituent Assembly has supported a Supreme Court request to strip Juan Guaidó of his immunity, paving the way for possible legal proceedings against the U.S.-backed opposition leader calling for regime change.

The decision to revoke Guaidó's immunity -- which he has held as the head of the opposition-controlled National Assembly -- came one day after Venezuela's Supreme Court of Justice (TSJ) urged the ANC lawmakers to take action against the self-proclaimed 'interim' president, as he stands accused of inciting violence and engaging in an illicit financial activity.

"Justice is necessary for the guarantee of peace," the president of the assembly Diosdado Cabello stressed, adding that ANC approves the top court's request "so that there is justice in our country."

The unanimous decision now paves the way for legal proceedings against the 35-year-old politician. "Sometimes the law takes time, but let's not despair," Cabello said, referring to the criminal investigations against Guaidó currently being conducted by the Public Prosecutor's Office and the Supreme Court of Justice.

Meanwhile, Guaidó used his questionable powers to push through a 'law' to protect public employees, basically awarding himself immunity from prosecution. "This law will protect public employees. We'd like to tell public employees, 'Think freely, make your own decisions,'" he told his supporters.

Furthermore, the opposition body declared the Maduro government as a "state promoting terrorism" and urged the Organization of American States and the United Nations to follow suit -- and then to act against it accordingly.

The National Assembly has no real power in Venezuela since the Constituent Assembly was established after the 2017 elections. While the opposition-controlled unicameral body is still, on paper, functional, other government branches and institutions have refused to recognize its authority.

Guaidó's appointment to head the National Assembly was immediately annulled by the Venezuelan Supreme Court in January. That, however, did not stop the opposition leader from proclaiming himself the 'interim president' and seeking regime change with the help of the US and its allies. Despite the unprecedented level of western support, Guaido has failed to convince the military to switch sides and rebel against the government of President Nicolas Maduro.

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