

Maduro's historic meeting with Lula in Brazil is a step forward for all of Latin America

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Photo: Marcelo Camargo/Agência Brasil

Yesterday, Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro and Brazilian leader Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva shook hands again after eight years since they last met. Maduro traveled to Brasilia after almost a decade; the last time was to attend the inauguration of former President Dilma Rousseff (2011-2016). His arrival marks the restart of a path of peace and understanding for both countries and Latin America, truncated during the of far-right administration of Jair Bolsonaro, Lula's predecessor.

"It is a pleasure to receive you again. It is difficult to conceive that so many years have passed without Brazil holding dialogues with the authority of an Amazonian and neighboring country, with whom we share an extensive border of 200 kilometers," Lula declared after welcoming the visitor at the Planalto Palace, headquarters of the Executive Power in Brasilia.

Lula and Maduro had a private meeting and were joined later by ministers from both governments. Subsequently, they appeared before the media.

"I confronted fellow European social democrats, governments, and U.S. authorities for accepting that Juan Guaido was 'Interim President' of Venezuela. Maduro was elected by the people and to say otherwise is absurd. That's how people who defend democracy think," Lula remarked. He also warned that prejudices around Venezuela persist and that his government suffered unfair criticism during his electoral campaign for being a friend of Maduro.

"Venezuela needs to tell its story to change people's opinion. Your narrative will be better than the one they have told against you," the president of the largest country in the Americas said and urged the cessation of unilateral measures against Venezuela. "It is inexplicable that one country has 900 sanctions because another doesn't like it."

Maduro referred to Brazil with the same endearing affection professed by Lula

towards his country. “We love the history of the Brazilian people and their strength and spiritual joy. Let no one else close the door. Brazil and Venezuela have to be united, from now on and forever,” the Bolivarian leader stressed.

“Today, a new era in relations between our countries, between our peoples, begins and in this new era, the building of a new map of cooperation and joint work must accompany it,” said Maduro before expressing Venezuela’s desire to apply for membership in the BRICS bloc.

The Brazilian president signaled his support for Venezuela’s entry into the development bloc comprised of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa. The alliance does not have a formal entry process but requires unanimous consent from existing members. While many countries have expressed interest, the last country to formally join was South Africa in 2010.

Relations between Venezuela and Brazil, which were suspended since 2019 with the arrival of Bolsonaro, were resumed with the return of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva to the presidency on January 1. Since then, officials from the two nations have held multiple meetings to rebuild bilateral cooperation.

Cubans are following the news coming from the south with special attention. For Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel, this news illuminates the political horizon of Our America. This right path will lead us toward the development and integration of our Great Homeland, Latin America.

“This reunion is historic, transcendental, and a victory for the dignity of our peoples. Congratulations!” Díaz-Canel concluded.

2023 South American Summit

The visit of the Venezuelan president coincides with his invitation to participate in the 2023 South American Summit, convened by Lula and will include 11 countries of

the region to participate in the summit: Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, Uruguay, and Venezuela. The thrust of the meeting is to reinvigorate Latin American unity.

The summit, scheduled for today, has four main priorities on its agenda: revitalization of South American integration, repositioning South America on the global stage, rethinking South America as a region of peace and cooperation, and the reactivation of UNASUR. The “main objective is to resume dialogue” between the countries of the region “that have not met for many years,” explained Gisela Padovan, secretary of Latin America and the Caribbean for the Brazilian Foreign Ministry.

The Brazilian government expects the summit to discuss the possibility of “returning to a South American integration mechanism” that will be “permanent, inclusive and modern” and that will include the 12 countries of the region, regardless of the political ideology of the government of any of the countries.

This reinforcement of Latin American integration and regional cooperation with its promising possibilities has to be making those that want to continue the tired old Monroe Doctrine road of colonialism squirm in their seats.

Source: [Resumen Latinoamericano - US](#)

