Venezuela Opposition 'Escalates' Anti-Government Protests, Remains Silent on Right-Wing Violence

29/05/2017

President Nicolas Maduro has accused right-wing opposition leaders of being complicit in fatal violence with their silence.

Right-wing leaders in Venezuela have called for an escalation of protests as a fresh set of marches for and against the government are set to hit the streets Monday and political tensions continue to run high after nearly two months of opposition demonstrations aimed at forcing President Nicolas Maduro out of office.

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Opposition groups will march in Caracas towards the Ombudsman's office Monday, while government supporters will head toward the Miraflores Presidential Palace under the banner of "Peace, Life and Constituent Assembly."

Ahead of the latest round of opposing demonstrations, opposition leader and vice president of the National Assembly, Freddy Guevara, called on supporters to "get ready for an escalation," saying anti-government groups will "significantly" increase "pressure" in the streets against Maduro.

Meanwhile, opposition leader Henrique Capriles, head of the opposition Justice First party who lost the last two presidential elections while representing the opposition MUD coalition, stoked

the opposition protests — which have increasingly spilled over into violence — by accusing the government of being responsible for violence.

“The government’s hand is behind the burned buses, the barricades, the acts of vandalism,” Capriles said, according to Venezuela’s El Universal.

A total of 51 buses were burned last week in an attack on a transport company in Puerto Ordaz. Capriles took to Twitter after the incident to blame the government, writing, “They burn, loot, destroy everything to try to detract from the legitimate protest of the people.” On the other hand, the ruling socialist party governor in the state of Bolivar, Francisco Rangel, slammed as an opposition “terrorist act” on his Twitter account.

Maduro called on the opposition Sunday to condemn such “terrorist acts,” accusing right-wing leaders of generating violence.

“The opposition, by silence, is complicit in criminal terrorism that murders innocent people in the streets,” the president said in his weekly program, arguing that it has been already made clear that the opposition is to blame for violence. “The ultra-right is held hostage by terrorist groups that they themselves created.”

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More than 60 people have been killed in incidents linked to protests since the opposition launched an ongoing wave of anti-government demonstrations at the beginning of April, according to government officials. In the latest violent incident, a former member of the National Guard was beaten to death by an opposition mob Saturday in the state of Lara in what Maduro condemned as a “hate crime … by a group of criminals, murderers, violent protesters.”

Although the dozens of people killed amid protests have died from a range of different causes — including at least 18 shot by assailants during protests, 13 killed during looting, eight killed at violent barricades, and five killed by police — right-wing leaders have painted the death toll as the result of a violent crackdown on the opposition marches by government forces.

Monday’s opposition march claims to be in memory of those “fallen” in recent weeks of protests, but leaders have failed to condemn the violence that has repeatedly broken out in the ranks of its supporters during demonstrations.

“Today May 29 begins another stage of greater constitutional pressure,” Capriles wrote on his Twitter account. “We Venezuelans want answers and solutions to the crisis!”

The opposition has rejected Maduro’s national Constituent Assembly — called to initiate a democratic process to rewrite the country’s constitution and promote dialogue as solution to the intense political deadlock. Instead, right-wing leaders have called for an “escalation” of protests against the socialist government.

Maduro described the Constituent Assembly Sunday as a process of "revolutionary change" and a "great power" for a "new stage" in Venezuela.