

Santos and Maduro to Meet Next Week in Quito to Discuss Border Crisis

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Correa welcomed the meeting, which he too will attend along with Uruguayan President Tabare Vazquez as respective presidents of regional bodies, the Union of South American Nations, or UNASUR, and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, or CELAC.

Ecuadorean Foreign Minister Ricardo Patiño said the presidents will meet at the Carondelet Presidential Palace, the seat of the government, in Quito Monday afternoon.

The minister explained the meeting was fixed after a fresh round of talks between him and the presidents and foreign ministers of the two countries on Monday and Tuesday.

On Saturday, Patiño met foreign ministers of Colombia and Venezuela, Maria Angela Holguin and Delcy Rodriguez, respectively.

Patiño, however, declined to reveal details of the agenda of Monday's meeting while stressing the importance of regional organizations such as UNASUR and CELAC in promoting rapprochement and political dialogue between the two governments.

Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro applauded the announcement of the meeting but warned "it will not be easy."

He also expressed hope the meeting would result in "a historic pact of co-existence, respect and a relationship of brotherhood, cooperation and mutual benefit."

The Colombian government also confirmed Santos will attend the meeting and Holguin thanked the governments of Ecuador and Uruguay for “the effort they have made throughout this week and all these days” to mediate between Colombia and Venezuela on the border crisis.

“We have always been willing and open to dialogue,” she reiterated.

The border crisis broke out on Aug. 19 when Maduro ordered closure of the main border stretch between the Colombian city of Cucuta and the Venezuelan cities of San Antonio and Ureña that was later extended to border stretches between La Guajira, Colombia, and Zulia, Venezuela, and those between Arauca and Apure.

According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 1,482 Colombians have been deported from Venezuela and another 19,952 left by themselves since the beginning of the border crisis.

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