
Mercosur Hands Venezuela Ultimatum, Threatens Suspension

14/09/2016



The rift between continental trading partners reflects the broader dissension pitting Leftist governments against a resurgent Right-Wing.

In an rift between the continent's Left and Right governments, four of the five full member countries in the [South American sub-regional trading bloc Mercosur](#), Tuesday issued an ultimatum to Venezuela saying it must fulfill "its obligations" by Dec. 1 or face suspension from the organization.

ANALYSIS: [Mercosur: A Regional Bloc Fighting Off Imperialism](#)

The conservative governments of [Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay blocked Venezuela's](#) socialist government from assuming Mercosur's pro-tempore presidency on Aug. 1, after it was handed over by Uruguay, in a line of succession that has traditionally adhered to alphabetical order. But in assuming temporary control of Mercosur, the trio claimed that Venezuela's move to assume the role was "self-proclaimed."

Brazil's Foreign Minister Jose Serra said in a statement late Tuesday that Venezuela has missed its four-year timeframe to satisfy all of Mercosur protocols since joining the bloc in 2012, including the integration of the trading bloc's and principles into sovereign law. rules into national . – installed along with unelected President Michel Temer following upon the removal from office of ousted President Dilma Rousseff Aug. 31, The four founding member states will temporarily take up the presidency until a long-term solution is set. Uruguay attempted to mediate the disagreement that has laid bare the clear political divides in the regional bloc that has recently shifted to be dominated by right-wing governments.

In recent months, Paraguay's President Horacio Cartes has ratcheted up his opposition to Venezuela and called on the continental bloc to invoke the Democratic Charter against the country, which could lead to its suspension. Argentina's President [Mauricio Macri vowed to seek Venezuela's suspension from Mercosur](#) immediately after he was elected late last year, but later backtracked amid a lack of regional support from Uruguay and Brazil's President Dilma Rousseff, who was removed from office last month in what has widely been condemned as a coup.

ANALYSIS: [From Hugo Chavez to Mauricio Macri, Mercosur Shifts Right](#)

Her unelected successor, President Michel Temer, and his administration has been one of the driving forces behind blocking Venezuela's participation in Mercosur. Uruguayan Foreign Minister Rodolfo Novoa even accused his Brazilian counterparts of attempting to [sway Uruguay's position on Venezuela with a bribe](#).

In his statement, Brazil's Jose Serra justified the ultimatum against Venezuela claiming it aimed to "preserve and strengthen Mercosur."

Venezuela has had icy relations with Brazil since the removal of Rousseff from office, which the socialist nation and its allies in the region have condemned as a parliamentary coup. President Nicolas Maduro [recalled Venezuela's ambassador in Brasilia](#) upon Rousseff's impeachment, freezing bilateral ties with its neighbor.

Rising political tensions in Venezuela in recent months centered around opposition demands for a recall referendum against Maduro have sparked condemnation among the country's critics in the region.

Mercosur is made up of Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Venezuela as full members as well as five associate members, which are Bolivia, Chile, Peru, Colombia, Ecuador, and Suriname.
