

EU ambassador leaves Venezuela after expulsion order



Venezuela's Foreign Minister Jorge Arreaza (left) presents an expulsion order to EU ambassador Isabel Brilhante Pedrosa on February 24, 2021 Yuri CORTEZ AFP

The European Union's ambassador to Venezuela left the South American country on Tuesday after she was expelled last week over a diplomatic spat related to new sanctions.

Isabel Brilhante Pedrosa, who is Portuguese, left Venezuela aboard a Turkish Airlines flight, an EU source told AFP.

The order to expel Brilhante Pedrosa came on February 24 in response to the EU imposing new sanctions on 19 high-ranking Venezuelan officials for "undermining democracy" and human rights abuses.

The expulsion order ran out on Saturday but was extended to Tuesday for logistical reasons.

"Today March 2 Caracas treated me to the most beautiful dawn with the Avila in

all its glory,” Brilhante Pedrosa wrote on Twitter alongside a panoramic photo of the Venezuelan capital with its imposing mountainous backdrop.

“Infinite thanks to all Venezuelans for your love, acknowledgment, and affection. I carry you all in many beautiful memories. My heart remains here. I love you Venezuela,” she added.

Amongst those sanctioned by the EU were Remigio Ceballos, one of the top military leaders, and Electoral Council president Indira Alfonzo.

The EU has now sanctioned 55 Venezuelan officials in total.

The latest sanctions, which include asset freezes and travel bans, came after the EU rejected December legislative elections boycotted by the main opposition parties and which allowed President Nicolas Maduro to take control of parliament.

Until then it had been the only branch of government not under his control.

The election results were not recognized by the EU, the United States or several Latin American countries.

Venezuela blasted the EU measures as “illegal” and “aggressions.”

The EU responded to Brilhante Pedrosa’s expulsion order by declaring Venezuela’s representative to the bloc, Claudia Salerno, a “persona non grata.”

In July, after a previous round of European sanctions, Maduro had also given Brilhante Pedrosa 72 hours to leave the country. When the deadline passed, however, the government-backed down.

Source:

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