

Beat: Politics

Venezuela postpones presidential inauguration due to Chavez's health

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USPA News - Venezuela's National Assembly President, Diosdado Cabello, on Tuesday confirmed that Hugo Chavez will not be able to return to the country this week to attend his presidential inauguration, which was to be held in the capital on Thursday. Cabello read out a statement sent by Vice-President Nicolas Maduro, saying that medical personnel in Cuba have recommended that Chavez remains in the country in order for him to recover from surgery which was carried out on December 11. According to article 231 of the country's constitution, if the president is unable to assume his post at the National Assembly due a physical or mental issue, among others, the process would be decided at the Supreme Court.

It is unclear what the next steps will be, but it is certain to further anger the opposition. On Friday, Venezuela's Communication and Information Minister, Ernesto Villegas, said Chavez was suffering from a 'severe' lung infection after facing complications from the surgery that has caused a respiratory insufficiency. Constant rumors around Chavez's health condition have been circulating since June 2011, when the Venezuelan president first stated that he was recovering from an operation that removed an abscessed tumor with cancerous cells. He later declared in July 2012 that he had fully recovered from cancer, only three months before the country held presidential elections, which Chavez ultimately won on October 7, 2012. Chavez, 58, who first assumed office in 1999, is set to carry out his fourth presidential term, which is scheduled to begin on January 10 and end in 2019.

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