



The Prime Minister
St. Vincent and the Grenadines
West Indies

December 09, 2023

Your Excellencies
Presidents Irfaan Ali and Nicolás Maduro
respectively of
The Cooperative Republic of Guyana
and
The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela

Dear Irfaan and Nicolás

**RE: PRESIDENTIAL MEETING TO BE HELD IN ST. VINCENT AND THE
GRENADINES UNDER THE AUSPICES OF CELAC AND CARICOM ON THURSDAY
DECEMBER 14, 2023 ON MATTERS CONSEQUENTIAL TO THE BORDER
CONTROVERSY BETWEEN GUYANA AND VENEZUELA**

The leaderships of the Community of States of Latin America and the Caribbean (CELAC) and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) consider that it is necessary and desirable to facilitate the convening of a meeting in St. Vincent and the Grenadines on Thursday, December 14, 2023, at 10:00 a.m., between the Presidents of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on matters consequential to the border controversy between these two great countries.

Both of you have agreed with me for such a meeting to be held under the auspices of CELAC of which St. Vincent and the Grenadines is the Pro-Tempore President and CARICOM of which the current Chairman is the Commonwealth of Dominica. Both of you have also requested the distinguished presence of the esteemed President of the Federative Republic of Brazil, His Excellency Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva. An invitation is accordingly being sent to our dear brother, Lula.

Given the recent events and circumstances attendant upon the border controversy, the leaderships of CELAC and CARICOM have assessed, in the interest of all concerned, including our Caribbean and Latin American civilisations, the urgent need to de-escalate the conflict and institute an appropriate dialogue, face-to-face, between the Presidents of Guyana and Venezuela. Both of you have concurred with this assessment in the quest of peaceful co-existence, the application and respect for international law, and the avoidance of the use or threats of force. Both of you are on public record of committing to the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace and the maintenance of international law.

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Experience has taught humanity that it is mature, wise, and preferable for leaders of nations which are in conflict, to speak to each other calmly, respectfully, and with patience, in order to avoid an escalation into threats or the use of force. To be sure, the resolution of old controversies in challenging contemporary times is never easy; for leaders it is strenuous, but a strenuous life pursued in peace is to be preferred to one of ignoble ease in perpetual conflict or violence endeavour.

We are all aware that the government of Guyana is seeking the resolution of the border controversy through the processes of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) which is currently seized of the matter. We are cognizant, too, that the government of Venezuela has rejected the path of the ICJ as the modality for resolution. The Parliament of Guyana has unanimously instructed the President of Guyana not to discuss the border controversy with the government of Venezuela. The people of Venezuela have advised, overwhelmingly, in a consultative referendum on December 3, 2023, their government not to accept the jurisdiction of the ICJ in the matter of border controversy. Clearly, each of you has to summon the proverbial wisdom of Solomon, the patience of Job, and the foresight of all the ancient prophets to engender good neighborliness in peace, justice, security, and prosperity for all concerned. There is thus much for each of you to raise and/or discuss on matters consequential to the border controversy even as you respect the advice, or more, of your respective peoples and Parliament/National Assembly.

Please be advised that each of you is free to suggest requisite modalities of the face-to-face dialogue, inclusive of the role of any named interlocutor(s). Both Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerrit, Chair of CARICOM, and I, as Pro-Tempore President of CELAC, are available to assist in whatever constructive way each of you may suggest or require.

The government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines is pleased to host each of you, Prime Minister Skerrit, President Lula, and any other recommended leader(s) of the region, and their respective delegations. Time is of the essence. Let us all resolve to make this historic gathering a successful one. So much is at stake for our Caribbean and Latin American civilisation.

All the best to both of you, your respective families, governments, and peoples.

Sincerely yours,



Dr. The Hon. Ralph E. Gonsalves
Prime Minister

Copy: President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva
Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerrit
Dr. Carla Barnett, Secretary General of CARICOM