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## **Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Maria Zakharova's statement on the suspension of the Russian Federation's status as a permanent observer with the OAS**

On April 21, the Permanent Council of the Organisation of American States (OAS) made a decision to suspend Russia's status as a permanent observer.

We regret this decision, which was promoted by NATO-affiliated OAS members, the United States and Canada.

The purpose is to nudge the Latin American countries into NATO's unseemly anti-Russia ballyhoo and to disrupt these countries' historically good relations with Russia which are steeped in friendship, mutually respectful dialogue and mutually beneficial cooperation.

We are aware that the Latin American and Caribbean countries have been subjected to unprecedentedly heavy pressure and arm-twisting. The reluctance to hear the truth about the actual state of affairs and fear that this information could affect the vote prompted those behind this move to take our permanent observer at the OAS, Ambassador Anatoly Antonov, off the list of speakers.

Notably, despite Washington and Ottawa's machinations, this decision on Russia was not supported by the leading Latin American states, such as Argentina, Brazil and Mexico. Bolivia, Honduras and El Salvador, as well as the Caribbean nations of Saint Kitts and Nevis and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines joined them.

Russia's cooperation with this regional organisation spans 30 years. Since 1992, it has been developing in the format of mutually beneficial political relations and interaction within the specialised bodies of the inter-American system, such as the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) and the Inter-American Committee Against Terrorism (CICTE), to name a few.

However, the scope of interaction has contracted under current OAS Secretary General Luis Almagro, who has made anti-Russia remarks on many occasions. On his watch, the OAS began to regain the features of the notorious US Department for the Colonies, despite the Latin Americans' efforts to pursue an independent policy within the OAS that would meet the interests of the states south of the Rio Grande.

The OAS has long lost its status as a universal regional organisation for the Western Hemisphere countries. Cuba left it 1962 and didn't return to the OAS even after the ban imposed on it was lifted in 2009. Last year, Nicaragua initiated its withdrawal from the OAS. Venezuela's spot has been taken for over two years now by a representative of an impostor who proclaimed himself the president of that country, whereas the legitimate Venezuelan government left the OAS in 2019.

We are not holding on to the status of an OAS observer. The reasons and the goals of our special military operation in Ukraine are known and clear to our unbiased partners who are open to dialogue. We remain confident that history will set things straight.

We have no illusions whatsoever about US and Canadian policies. We hope that the Latin Americans will be able to clearly see what kind of a thoughtless anti-Russia game they have been drawn into as OAS members.

Our cooperation with our Latin American and Caribbean partners will continue to deepen, and we are convinced that this fully meets our respective states' national interests.



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