



By: TA | AP Brief

Colombia's president-elect suspends transition process



Colombia's President-elect **Abelardo de la Espriella** suspended the transition process with President Gustavo Petro and accused him of planning a coup to stay in power, after the incumbent leader refused to recognize results of the country's election.

Petro said Monday that he refused to recognize de la Espriella's victory in the June 21 presidential run-off election over the Petro coalition's candidate Sen. Iván Cepeda, alleging fraud without providing evidence.

The conservative, **Trump-endorsed** de la Espriella said in a video posted Tuesday on social media that Petro and Cepeda had launched a plan to "cling to power at all costs" through "a coup d'état" by refusing to recognize his victory.

He did not provide evidence to support the allegation, and Petro did not immediately respond to it.

"As president-elect, I call on Colombia's armed forces to honor their oath to protect the Constitution and democracy and to disobey any orders from Petro to the contrary," de la Espriella said.

He also called on the international community to monitor the transfer of power and urged his supporters to "resist" until his inauguration on Aug. 7.

The presidential transition, known in Colombia as "empalme," in which the outgoing administration provides the president-elect with the information to prepare for governing, has been marked by mutual accusations between political rivals Petro and de la Espriella.

Germán Ávila, Colombia's finance minister and the Petro administration's transition coordinator, ordered his team to suspend the handover process in response to de la Espriella's suspension.

In a televised address, he criticized statements by members of de la Espriella's transition team, and said that the president's team had

"nothing to hide."

Indictment of Petro's government

De la Espriella, a lawyer and businessman whose ventures include a clothing line, alcoholic drinks and a restaurant, earned U.S. President Donald Trump's endorsement despite never having run for office.

He was declared the winner of Colombia's **June 21 runoff election**, in which he defeated progressive lawmaker Cepeda by 1 percentage point, or more than 251,000 votes.

The result was effectively an indictment of Petro's government, whose policies Cepeda had promised to continue, including a largely failed effort to establish **dialogue with multiple armed groups**.

After the runoff election, a European Union observer mission praised the transparency and efficiency of the vote-counting process

After the runoff election, a European Union observer mission praised the transparency and efficiency of the vote-counting process.

The Carter Center said the results management system was "reliable, transparent and fully traceable."

On Tuesday, de la Espriella announced six more Cabinet appointments, adding to those already named to lead ministries of defense, interior, finance and environment.