

## Comunicado

Panama, December 22, 2024

Statement from President José Raul Mulino

As President, I want to express precisely that every square meter of the Panama Canal and its adjacent area belong to PANAMA, and will continue to be. The sovereignty and independence of our country are not negotiable. Every Panamanian, here or anywhere in the world, carries it in their heart, and it is part of our history of struggle and an irreversible conquest.

The Torrijos-Carter Treaties of 1977, which ended on December 31, agreed to the dissolution of the Former Canal Zone, recognizing Panamanian sovereignty and the complete delivery of the Canal to Panama, 1999, and we will soon celebrate the 25th anniversary of this transfer. Since then, there have been no objections or complaints; on the contrary, it has been a source of strong international support and national pride. It was operated and expanded by Panamanian decision and today represents a great asset that contributes billions of dollars to our economy.

These treaties also established the permanent neutrality of the Canal, guaranteeing its open and safe operation for all nations, a treaty that has obtained the adhesion of more than 40 States.

Any contrary position lacks validity or support on the face of the earth. Our Canal has the mission of serving humanity and its commerce. That is one of the great values that Panamanians offer to the world, giving a guarantee to the international community not to take part, nor to be an active party in any conflict.

Since it has been in Panamanian hands, the Canal has grown. It is managed by qualified professionals who, with clear rules, are responsible for its operation, conservation and maintenance, ensuring its safe, continuous, efficient and profitable operation.

Rates are not a whim. They are and will be established, publicly and in an open audience, considering market conditions, international competition, operating costs and the maintenance and modernization needs of the interoceanic waterway.

This is how we achieved the expansion of the Canal in 2016, which today represents greater economic and commercial growth, generating more wealth and opportunities throughout the world and its trade.

The Canal has no control, direct or indirect, neither from China, nor from the European Community, nor from the United States or any other power. As a Panamanian, I strongly reject any manifestation that distorts this reality.

And it will continue to be in Panamanian hands as the inalienable heritage of our Nation and guaranteeing its use for the peaceful and uninterrupted transit of ships of all nations, as established by our Constitution and the Neutrality Treaty. That is the greatest tribute deserved by the martyrs of January 9, 1964, who sacrificed their lives in the fight for the sovereignty and dignity of our country, and all Panamanians who participated in an unprecedented generational struggle.

Panama respects other nations and demands respect.

With the new United States government, I aspire to preserve and maintain a good and respectful relationship. Security issues such as illegal migration, drug trafficking and organized crime must be a priority on our bilateral agenda, since they are a real threat that should concern us a lot.

We Panamanians may think differently in many aspects, but when it comes to our Canal and our sovereignty, we all unite under a single flag, that of Panama.

We are a country open to dialogue, today and always, to investments and good relations, but with the clear slogan that the country comes first.

That, for this Panamanian President, is not negotiable.

José Raúl Mulino

President of the Republic of Panama