

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 9, 2014

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I write to urge you to take immediate action to impose visa bans and asset freezes on Venezuelan officials and their families. As you know, the Venezuelan regime, led by Nicolas Maduro, has been involved in a brutal crackdown of peaceful student-led protests since February 2014. Maduro and other Venezuelan officials have overseen violence and human rights abuses by security forces against civilians. More than 40 people have died, many more have been injured. Beatings of protesters have been routine. Many innocent Venezuelans have been detained and prosecuted for nothing more than attempting to exercise their freedoms of expression or assembly.

I have argued since the start of the crisis that we should capitalize on the fact that many senior Venezuelan officials and businessmen with ties to the regime frequently travel to and house their investments in the United States. They buy residences here. They use our banks and send their children to school in the United States. Three months ago, the Senate unanimously passed a resolution urging you to impose targeted sanctions, including visa bans and asset freezes, against officials involved in this ongoing repression. I have been working with Senators Menendez and Nelson on legislation that would impose such sanctions immediately. I intend to seek Senate passage of this bill in the coming weeks, a version of which the House of Representatives has already passed, to ensure that Congress continues to send a strong message to the Maduro regime.

I urge you to heed these bipartisan calls from Congress and take action immediately. You already have the ability to begin to make life more difficult for those involved in brutal human rights abuses and corruption. By preventing these individuals and their families from traveling to and investing in the United States, you can make clear that those who violate the Venezuelan people's fundamental freedoms will pay a significant price.

I hope you agree that a stable, peaceful, and democratic Venezuela is in the region's, and America's, interest. Unfortunately, under the Maduro government, the Venezuelan people have seen their resource rich country's economy suffer, with shortages of even basic goods. I hope that you will urgently take action to make clear that the United States stands with those Venezuelans who seek a better future for their country.

The Venezuelan people should not be made to wait any longer for this strong statement of support from the United States.

Most Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'MR', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Marco Rubio
U.S. Senator