

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 25, 2017

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

The people of Venezuela have welcomed your Administration's forward-looking policy in support of democracy and human rights. As the economic and political conditions in Venezuela continue to deteriorate and generate a humanitarian crisis, the Maduro regime has responded with repression and brutality. We believe that the time has come to impose additional sanctions against those individuals who have led Venezuela into the abyss.

The *Venezuelan Defense of Human Rights and Civil Society Act of 2014* (Public Law 113-278) authorizes the Executive Branch to impose asset freezes and visa bans against current and former Venezuelan government officials who are responsible for human rights violations, and against those acting on their behalf. Furthermore, Executive Order 13692 called for asset freezes and visa bans against all Venezuelan officials involved in human rights violations and corruption.

Under Maduro, the humanitarian crisis in Venezuela has worsened amid an already imploding economy. Since March 2017, the Maduro regime's repressive forces have killed more than 100 people, eclipsing their use of violence and repression in their response to the 2014 protests in which 43 people died.

The Pharmaceutical Federation of Venezuela has reported that more than 85 percent of medicinal drugs are either unavailable or difficult to find. Hospitals have reported 17 infant deaths "directly related to a possum infestation [that] staff were ill-equipped to confront, lacking cleaning materials or the funds to hire an exterminator."

International human rights organizations like Amnesty International have confirmed that the Bolivarian National Police and the Bolivarian National Guard have indiscriminately used tear gas, firing it directly at dissident demonstrators. For example, Juan Pernaleté died after being shot directly in the chest with a tear gas canister while he was demonstrating in Caracas in April 2017. Fabián Urbina was shot and killed by a National Guard officer on June 20, 2017, while he was protesting in Caracas.

Security forces and pro-government groups called "*colectivos*" have randomly attacked communities and individuals, regardless of whether or not they are participating in anti-

regime protests, including massive violent raids with armored vehicles and tear gas that damaged vehicles and houses, and endangered the lives of residents.

Today, Venezuela has more than 400 political prisoners according to the Venezuelan Penal Forum group, or *Foro Penal*, a human rights organization that provides legal counsel to detainees.

As you have made clear, your Administration is prepared to take strong and swift action against the Maduro regime if it moves forward with a fraudulent vote on Sunday, July 30. However, even before that vote, the current situation in Venezuela justifies sanctions on numerous individuals responsible for supporting the Maduro regime. Among those deserving of sanctions are the following:

- 1) Tibusay Lucena Ramírez
President of the National Electoral Council
- 2) Carlos Erick Malpica Flores
National Treasurer
- 3) Jesús Suárez Chourio
Commander of the Bolivarian Army
- 4) Carlos Alfredo Pérez Ampueda
Director of the Bolivarian National Police (PNB)
- 5) Maria Iris Varela
Minister of Venezuela's Correctional System
- 6) Tarek William Saab
Ombudsman
- 7) Simón Alejandro Zerpa Delgado
Vice President of Finance PDVSA
- 8) Carlos Alberto Osorio Zambrano
Head of the Strategic Region of Integral Defense
- 9) Rodolfo Clemente Marco Torres
Brigadier General
- 10) Rocco Albisini
President of the National Center for Foreign Trade (Cencoex).

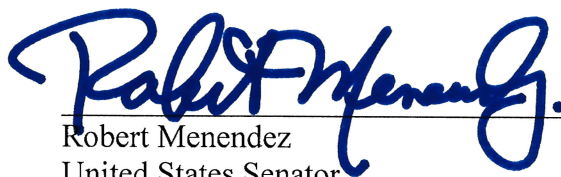
Sadly, there is no shortage of individuals deserving of sanctions. We intend to provide you with additional names in the days to come.

Now more than ever, it is critical that we continue to be a voice in support of the Venezuelan people, and assist them as best we can in reclaiming their representative democracy, their inalienable rights and, at a most fundamental level, their sense of dignity and justice. Your leadership will send a clear message to those who violate fundamental freedoms, and may also discourage others acting on behalf of the Maduro regime to continue the systemic repression and violation of human rights.

Sincerely,



Marco Rubio
United States Senator



Robert Menendez
United States Senator