

# Obama Attacks Legitimacy of Venezuelan Government

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Mérida, 6 May 2013 (Venezuelanalysis.com) – The Venezuelan government hit back at a series of what it describes as “false and “interventionist” statements made by U.S. President Barack Obama over the weekend.

During his visit to Mexico on 3 May, Obama questioned whether “basic principles of human rights and democracy and freedom of press and freedom of assembly” were being observed in Venezuela.

“There are reports that they have not been fully observed post-election,” he concluded.

Obama then cited Mexico, Colombia, Chile and Peru as examples that Venezuela should follow.

“I think our only interest at this point is making sure that the people of Venezuela are able to determine their own destiny free from the kinds of practices that the entire hemisphere generally has moved away from,” he said.

In his visit to Costa Rica last week, Obama also said, “I think our general view has been that it’s up to the people of Venezuela to choose their leaders in legitimate elections”.

In an interview with Univision, he also said that his administration continues to monitor the “violence, the protests, the crackdowns on the opposition”, but refused to say whether Washington would recognise the results of the 14 April elections.

## Venezuelan Response

On Saturday, Venezuelan Foreign Minister Elias Jaua read an official government communique, describing Obama’s comments as an “attack” on the “legitimate government of Venezuela”.

In the televised statement, Jaua criticised Obama for ignoring Venezuela’s democratic processes.

“President Obama attacks the legitimate Venezuelan government, which was elected on 14 April through a transparent electoral process, whose results were recognised by electoral accompaniments coming from the whole continent and other countries of the world; including the Electoral Mission of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) as well as by all the governments of Latin America and the Caribbean and other continents.”

Jaua then stated that Venezuela's automated electoral system is subject to numerous audits "guaranteeing...the accuracy of the data".

"President Obama, please get informed. The National Electoral Council has overcome those terrible practices that used to violate the people's will, and that the U.S. supported in order to have governments that were obedient to its bidding."

He then criticised Obama for showing "double standards" by not condemning what he described as the "violent record of...[Venezuelan] opposition groups".

The statement also called on Obama to close "the illegal prison of Guantanamo", describing the controversial site as "one of the most shameful chapters of human history".

"You've gone against the promise you made in 2008 and 2012 to close this shameful place," Jaua said.

### **Timothy Tracy**

In an interview with Telemundo, Obama also reiterated his support for Timothy Tracy, a 35 year old Californian currently detained by Venezuelan authorities under charges of espionage, conspiring to commit an offence, using a false document and being an accomplice in a criminal act.

Obama described the charges as "ridiculous".

On Sunday, Minister for Internal Affairs Miguel Rodriguez Torres told Venezuelan media that authorities are now convinced that Tracy's occupation as a film-maker was "a guise".

According to Torres, Venezuelan authorities have seized more than "500 videotapes" and other evidence including emails that allegedly show Tracy was involved in a conspiracy with "members of the far right...to cause violent actions on the streets and create a climate of chaos".

Tracy's family has maintained that he is innocent, according to Associated Press.

One of Tracy's associates, Aengus James, told AP that the film-maker "literally has no political agenda. He is very sympathetic to all sides."

"He's telling stories about people and what their life is like there [in Venezuela]".

### **The "big boss of the devils"**

President Nicolas Maduro also weighed in over the weekend, criticising Obama for "financing" the opposition and "seeking to destroy Venezuela's democracy".

However, he reiterated previous calls to "sit down" with Obama, who he described as the "big boss of the devils".

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