

US Declares Venezuela a Threat to 'National Security'

By **Telesur**

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Telesur and Tony Seed's Web Log

Region: Latin America & Caribbean

UPDATE: Venezuela's foreign minister says Caracas will soon respond to Washington's statements.

U.S. President Barack Obama issued a new Executive Order against Venezuela Monday aimed at interfering in the country's politics, claiming, "Venezuelan officials past and present who violate the human rights of Venezuelan citizens and engage in acts of public corruption will not be welcome" in the United States.

Immediately after, Venezuela's Foreign Ministry announced the government of President Nicolas Maduro would "soon" respond to Obama's executive action against the Latin American country.

"We will soon make Venezuela's response to the extent and reach of these statements," Venezuelan Foreign Minister Delcy Rodriguez said in a news conference.

Reuters reported that Obama declared Venezuela a national security threat, sanctioning seven individuals and expressing concern about the Venezuelan government's treatment of political opponents.

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"We now have the tools to block their assets and their use of U.S. financial systems," White House spokesman Josh Earnest said in a statement.

"We are deeply concerned by the Venezuelan government's efforts to escalate intimidation of its political opponents. Venezuela's problems cannot be solved by criminalizing dissent," Earnest added.

The White House spokesperson also said that, "We are deeply concerned by the Venezuelan government's efforts to escalate intimidation of its political opponents. Venezuela's problems cannot be solved by criminalizing dissent."

Earnest said Washington has consistently called on the Venezuelan government to release opposition member they claim to be unjustly jailed.

"The Venezuelan government should release all political prisoners, including dozens of students, opposition leader Leopoldo Lopez and Mayors Daniel Ceballos and Antonio Ledezma," he stated, completely ignoring all the conclusive evidence presented by the Venezuelan government against the these and other members of the right-wing opposition.

These statements come despite the fact that grave human rights violations have been reported in the United States, including the police killing of various unarmed African-Americans and hispanics without any legal consequences against the perpetrators.

The U.S. is also responsible for serious human rights violations against dozens of arbitrarily detained people in Guantanamo.

The Obama administration has also opted to ignore the extremely serious human rights issues in allied countries such as Mexico, despite the fact that international organizations, including the United Nations, have continuously reported on them.

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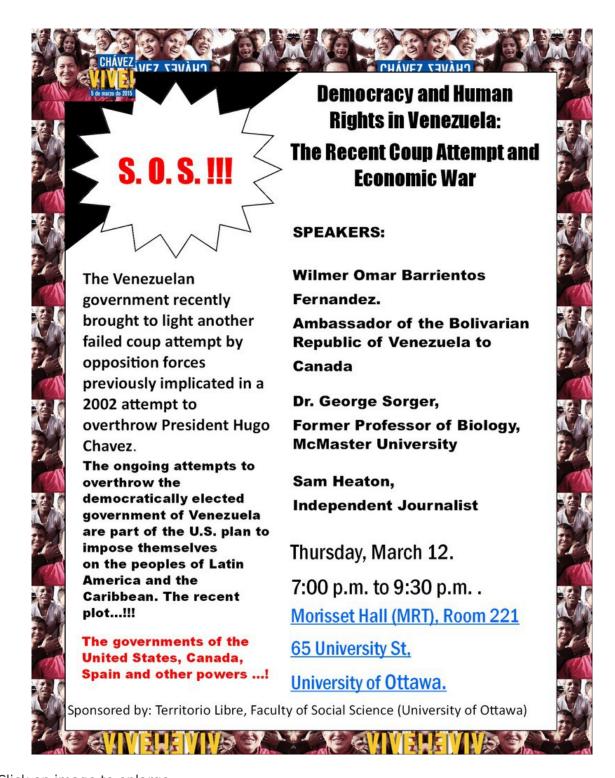
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