

Venezuelan Social Movements Take to the Streets to Oppose U.S. Aggression

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“A lot of balls and ovaries there are here to defend this land. Yankees of shit.” An anti-imperialist refrain inspired by a popular Chávez slogan. (Credit: Lucas Koerner/venezuelanalysis.com)

Caracas – Venezuelan social movements converged in Plaza Venezuela in the center of the capital on Thursday to manifest their firm rejection of the latest round of U.S. sanctions.

On Monday, President Obama issued an executive order sanctioning seven top officials of the Venezuelan government as well as declaring the Bolivarian nation an [“unusual and extraordinary national security threat,”](#) a step that could pave the way for [possible economic sanctions](#).

This latest move by the U.S. administration has been [roundly condemn by a host of nations](#) and regional bodies, including Cuba, Ecuador, Bolivia, Argentina, UNASUR, CELAC, and most recently China and Russia.

Among the movements assembled in the center of Caracas on Thursday were various collectives such as the Pioneers Encampment, government-affiliated social missions such as the Great Housing Mission and Barrio Tricolor, as well as a plethora of people representing their neighborhood communal councils.

Chanting “Yankee go home” and “Venezuela respects itself”, thousands of Venezuelans of all ages filled the streets with their characteristic red shirts, exhibiting national pride and indignation in response to the White House’s announcements.

“We are here to defend the motherland left to us by Chávez, Bolívar, Zamora, and all of our heroes and heroines, because we’ve also had many heroines, many barefooted women who defended this country. We’re following in the same legacy as all of them,” Lies Guzmán of the Socialist Environmental Workers’ Front told Venezuelanalysis.

“We are steeled, knee to the ground, for anything that happens, with the women in the vanguard, prepared on all fronts, including the diplomatic, military, and guerrilla fronts if necessary.”

In his executive order, President Obama expressed concern for alleged human rights violations in Venezuela.

Olenia Quintana, 32, of the Pioneers Encampment collective challenged what she perceives to be a clear double standard underlying the U.S president’s accusations.

“If you’re talking about human rights, the first thing that Obama needs to do in his country is revise all of the laws. [The United States] is the only country [in the hemisphere] with the death penalty. Here there is no death penalty.”

This critique has been repeated on numerous occasions by President Nicolas Maduro who has denounced the U.S. government’s human rights record vis-a-vis its own people.

On Monday, the Venezuelan leader called on Obama to defend the rights of U.S. citizens, including “Black people killed in U.S. cities every day, the thousands of people who don’t have a place to sleep and die of cold on the streets of New York, Boston, or Chicago, and those detained in Guantánamo.”

Despite general indignation, Venezuelans attending yesterday’s rally were keen to distinguish between the actions of the U.S. government and its people.

“The message to the people of the United States is that they should rise up,” declared José Zegarra, 36, a construction worker and general coordinator of the Revolutionary Hugo Chávez Workers’ Front.

“In the United States, there are many dignified people who know that their government has regrettably interfered in the affairs of other countries, believing itself the world policeman. But the average North American person isn’t any kind of world policeman, but a person who has to work to eat, work to pay the mortgage, work to pay the heat and everything else.”

Guzmán echoed this sentiment, underscoring the need for social and political transformation in the U.S.

“[The U.S. people] must organize and make the necessary changes in their country, which is a noble but subdued country, whose people are much more subdued than our own [people].”

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