

PUBLIC LETTER TO THE DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Mr. Steven T. Mnuchin
Washington, D.C.

I write to you as a Venezuelan citizen and in my capacity as Executive Vice President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, on the occasion to reply to the issuance of sanctions against me by the U.S. Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) last Tuesday, February 13th.

First, in your capacity as OFAC Authority you have been deceived by political sectors, lobbyists and stakeholders in the U.S. whose essential interest is to prevent that the United States and Venezuela restore their political and diplomatic relations on the basis of mutual recognition and respect.

These stakeholders not only lack any evidence to demonstrate the extremely serious accusations against me, but they also have built a false-positive case in order to criminalize –through me– the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, a country that is decidedly waging a war on transnational drug trafficking business.

You should be aware that when I headed the public security corps of my country, in 2008-2012, our fight against drug cartels achieved the greatest progress in our history and in the western hemisphere, both in terms of the transnational drug trafficking business and their logistics structures. During those years, the Venezuelan anti-drug enforcement authorities under my leadership captured, arrested and brought 102 heads of criminal drug trafficking organizations not only to the Venezuelan justice but also to the justice of other countries where they were wanted. From these 102 captured drug lords, 21 were promptly deported to the USA and 36 to Colombia, in accordance with the requests made by the authorities of each country and in compliance with the international agreements on the fight against organized crime, facts formally acknowledged by the US and Colombian authorities.

Between 2005 and 2013, the seizure of drugs by the Venezuelan authorities averaged 56.61 tons per year, which is a far higher figure than the 34.94 tons per year averaged in the six preceding years, when the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) was operating in Venezuela. This figure shows by itself the lack of commitment of DEA to fighting drugs trafficking, and upholds the very well documented assertion of the connections between that U.S. Agency with the criminal drug organizations.

In addition, Venezuela has always been recognized by the United Nations as a drug-free territory.

The extraordinary progress made by the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in the fight against drugs trafficking –which I directed in my capacity as head of the public security corps– was acknowledged by international organizations, such as the United Nations Organization (UNO), and appears from the records in the archives of the Judicial bodies of the United States and Colombia, which countries also acknowledged the efforts that I headed against organized crime, which is unprecedented in our hemisphere.

Further to the firm determination to face international drug trafficking mafia, the President enacted a law in 2012 enabling the interdiction of any drug-trafficking aircraft violating the Venezuelan airspace. Thanks to this modern legal instrument, Venezuela has destroyed, disabled or brought down over 100 aircrafts belonging to the drugs transport structure from Colombia and neighboring countries illegally flying over our territory.

Venezuela is waging an all-out war against drugs because it is a cross-border crime against humanity, and because such fight is a shared responsibility, as members of the international community.

Venezuela also fights drug cartels because our country and our people are victims of drugs trafficking, particularly of the powerful Colombian illegal drugs industry, the main supplier of the drug that floods the

streets of the United States and Europe.

You would need to investigate further before endorsing such false and reckless accusation, crafted by bureaucrats and anti-Venezuelan stakeholders, which sets a dangerous precedent in the relation between sovereign nations.

The decision of 120 countries to reject these illegal measures adopted against Venezuela, clearly demonstrates that this unilaterally decision is a serious error of the US Administration, contrary to international law.

But beyond any political and geopolitical considerations, OFAC's decision constitutes a serious violation against my human rights and seriously damages my dignity and honor. I have led my personal, professional and political life in my country, which I love deeply and to which I devote my life through a political project whose supreme objective is the happiness of our people, equality and social justice. I have no assets or accounts in the United States or in any country of the world, and it is both absurd and pathetic that an American administrative body –without presenting any evidence– adopts a measure to freeze goods and assets that I do not own at all.

The intended sanctions, approved by the head of OFAC, on the very day of his confirmation as Secretary of the Department of the Treasury, are illegal and in violation of International Law. Acting *ex officio* and without any evidence, as an extraterritorial police and without having powers to do so, is a format that violates the entire international human rights system, whose doctrine prevails in the world.

Paradoxically, whereas a governmental office dares to accuse, with no evidence, people anywhere in the world –as recognized by the international organizations and academic research– the “war on drugs” has failed all over the planet and especially in the U.S territory. Today more drugs are brought into the United States than ever before, while a corrupt and legal powerful financial structure legitimizes and recycles dirty money from this international illegal activity, which deprives thousands of American young people of their life and future.

The United States owes the world and their own People a reflection on the resounding failure of their fight against drugs. In the country where the so called “war on drugs” has been implemented as a unilateral strategy, the drug cartels today are stronger than ever; the production of illegal drug has multiplied, bringing about economic losses and, more importantly, more loss of human lives.

How many chiefs of criminal drug organizations have been captured by the U.S in its territory? How many banks and tax havens have been closed down by the U.S. for supporting this gigantic illegal business and crime against humanity? Even though the U.S. claims an extraterritorial power to certify, accuse and punish people and countries, it has failed to ratify any of the international treaties concerning this sensitive issue.

The United States must rethink on this matter and rectify, particularly as to the application of policies and measures that are clearly against the international law; aggressive and unfair in the realm of human rights; in addition, they are dangerous for the international relations and unconstitutional in the light of the U.S Constitution itself.

The U.S. should rectify by recognizing that only through joint, transparent and honest cooperation between the States, the fruits the international community and world citizens look forward in the fight against this world calamity can be harvested.

I am a Venezuelan citizen, I am a Bolivarian and a Latin-American. I am fully convinced of the ideals of independence, justice and freedom for which our liberators gave their lives and I am willing to submit to the same fate in the defense of our sovereignty, our Homeland and our People.

Tareck El Aissami
Executive Vice President
Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela