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Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate
ReleaseMarch 09,
2015**FACT SHEET: Venezuela Executive Order**

President Obama today issued a new Executive Order (E.O.) declaring a national emergency with respect to the unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States posed by the situation in Venezuela. The targeted sanctions in the E.O. implement the Venezuela Defense of Human Rights and Civil Society Act of 2014, which the President signed on December 18, 2014, and also go beyond the requirements of this legislation.

We are committed to advancing respect for human rights, safeguarding democratic institutions, and protecting the U.S. financial system from the illicit financial flows from public corruption in Venezuela.

This new authority is aimed at persons involved in or responsible for the erosion of human rights guarantees, persecution of political opponents, curtailment of press freedoms, use of violence and human rights violations and abuses in response to antigovernment protests, and arbitrary arrest and detention of antigovernment protestors, as well as the significant public corruption by senior government officials in Venezuela. The E.O. does not target the people or the economy of Venezuela.

Specifically, the E.O. targets those determined by the Department of the Treasury, in consultation with the Department of State, to be involved in:

- actions or policies that undermine democratic processes or institutions;
- significant acts of violence or conduct that constitutes a serious abuse or violation of human rights, including against persons involved in antigovernment protests in Venezuela in or since February 2014;
- actions that prohibit, limit, or penalize the exercise of freedom of expression or peaceful assembly; or
- public corruption by senior officials within the Government of Venezuela.

The E.O. also authorizes the Department of the Treasury, in consultation with the Department of State, to target any person determined:

- to be a current or former leader of an entity that has, or whose members have, engaged in any activity described in the E.O. or of an entity whose property and interests in property are blocked or frozen pursuant to the E.O.; or
- to be a current or former official of the Government of Venezuela;

Individuals designated or identified for the imposition of sanctions under this E.O., including the seven individuals that have been listed today in the Annex of this E.O., will have their property and interests in property in the United States blocked or frozen, and U.S. persons are prohibited from doing business with them. The E.O. also suspends the entry into the United States of individuals meeting the criteria for economic sanctions.

We will continue to work closely with others in the region to support greater political expression in Venezuela, and to encourage the Venezuelan government to live up to its shared commitment, as articulated in the OAS Charter, the Inter American Democratic Charter, and other relevant instruments related to democracy and human rights.

The President imposed sanctions on the following seven individuals listed in the Annex to the E.O.:

1. **Antonio José Benavides Torres: Commander of the Strategic Region for the Integral Defense (REDI) of the Central Region of Venezuela's Bolivarian National Armed Forces (FANB) and former Director of Operations for Venezuela's Bolivarian National Guard (GNB).**



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Benavides Torres is a former leader of the GNB, an entity whose members have engaged in significant acts of violence or conduct that constitutes a serious abuse or violation of human rights, including against persons involved in antigovernment protests in Venezuela in or since February 2014. In various cities in Venezuela, members of the GNB used force against peaceful protesters and journalists, including severe physical violence, sexual assault, and firearms.

2. Gustavo Enrique González López: Director General of Venezuela's Bolivarian National Intelligence Service (SEBIN) and President of Venezuela's Strategic Center of Security and Protection of the Homeland (CESPPA).

- González López is responsible for or complicit in, or responsible for ordering, controlling, or otherwise directing, or has participated in, directly or indirectly, significant acts of violence or conduct that constitutes a serious abuse or violation of human rights, including against persons involved in antigovernment protests in Venezuela in or since February 2014. As Director General of SEBIN, he was associated with the surveillance of Venezuelan government opposition leaders.
- Under the direction of González López, SEBIN has had a prominent role in the repressive actions against the civil population during the protests in Venezuela. In addition to causing numerous injuries, the personnel of SEBIN have committed hundreds of forced entries and extrajudicial detentions in Venezuela.

3. Justo José Noguera Pietri: President of the Venezuelan Corporation of Guayana (CVG), a state-owned entity, and former General Commander of Venezuela's Bolivarian National Guard (GNB).

- Noguera Pietri is a former leader of the GNB, an entity whose members have engaged in significant acts of violence or conduct that constitutes a serious abuse or violation of human rights, including against persons involved in antigovernment protests in Venezuela in or since February 2014. In various cities in Venezuela, members of the GNB used excessive force to repress protesters and journalists, including severe physical violence, sexual assault, and firearms.

4. Katherine Nayarith Haringhton Padron: national level prosecutor of the 20th District Office of Venezuela's Public Ministry.

- Haringhton Padron, in her capacity as a prosecutor, has charged several opposition members, including former National Assembly legislator Maria Corina Machado and, as of February 2015, Caracas Mayor Antonio Ledezma Diaz, with the crime of conspiracy related to alleged assassination/coup plots based on implausible - and in some cases fabricated - information. The evidence used in support of the charges against Machado and others was, at least in part, based on fraudulent emails.

5. Manuel Eduardo Pérez Urdaneta: Director of Venezuela's Bolivarian National Police.

- Pérez Urdaneta is a current leader of the Bolivarian National Police, an entity whose members have engaged in significant acts of violence or conduct that constitutes a serious abuse or violation of human rights, including against persons involved in antigovernment protests in Venezuela in or since February 2014. For example, members of the National Police used severe physical force against peaceful protesters and journalists in various cities in Venezuela, including firing live ammunition.

6. Manuel Gregorio Bernal Martínez : Chief of the 31st Armored Brigade of Caracas of Venezuela's Bolivarian Army and former Director General of Venezuela's Bolivarian National Intelligence Service (SEBIN).

- Bernal Martínez was the head of SEBIN on February 12, 2014, when officials fired their weapons on protesters killing two individuals near the Attorney General's Office.

7. Miguel Alcides Vivas Landino: Inspector General of Venezuela's Bolivarian National Armed Forces (FANB) and former Commander of the Strategic Region for the Integral Defense (REDI) of the Andes Region of Venezuela's Bolivarian National Armed Forces.

- Vivas Landino is responsible for or complicit in, or responsible for ordering, controlling, or otherwise directing, or has participated in, directly or indirectly, significant acts of violence or conduct that constitutes a serious abuse or violation of human rights, including against persons involved in antigovernment protests in Venezuela in or since February 2014.

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