



Embassy of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the U.S.

## FACT SHEET: VENEZUELA'S FIGHT AGAINST DRUGS

### *U.S. Majors List is an Inaccurate Portrayal*

Venezuela has once again been the target of false accusations by the U.S. government in this year's "Presidential Determination for Major Drug Producing and Transit Countries" (also called the "Majors List") released on September 15, 2011. It claims, despite much evidence to the contrary, that Venezuela is among the world's 22 "major drug producing or drug transit countries," and one of three nations to have "failed demonstrably" to meet counterdrug obligations in 2010.

The determinations made by the U.S. in its "Majors List" are not scientific in nature, but rather, are largely designed to serve political ends. They can be used to exert political pressure on countries through financial sanctions. Venezuela is not tapped for sanctions in the 2010 report, which gives the U.S. the option to send funding to domestic groups or organizations of its choosing. Most disturbingly, Venezuela's inclusion on the list is a blatant attempt to discredit its serious and documented commitment to stopping the global flow of drugs from the countries of the South to consumers in the North.

The U.S. has consistently placed Venezuela on the "Majors List" during the Chávez administration. It deemed Venezuela "failed demonstrably to meet obligations" ever since 2005, when the country expelled the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) after discovering that agents were involved in espionage and had links to drug trafficking rings. But despite U.S. claims that Venezuela is not cooperating in the fight against drug trafficking, the evidence clearly demonstrates the opposite.

- For the last six years, annual reports by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime have found that no cultivation of coca or poppy takes place in Venezuela.<sup>1</sup>

- In recent years, Venezuela has stepped up patrols along the border with Colombia and acquired new technologies such as radar stations to intercept planes<sup>2</sup> and special incinerators to dispose of seized drugs.<sup>3</sup>

- Venezuela achieved a 16 percent increase in illegal drug seizures between 2008 and 2010. According to the National Anti-Drug Office (ONA), 63 tons of drugs were seized in 2010 – 46 percent more than in 2004, the last year of cooperation between Venezuela and the DEA. As of the end of 2010, the total amount of drugs seized by the Chávez government since he took office in 1999 was 584 tons.<sup>4</sup>

- In 2010, Venezuelan officials made 13,132 drug-related arrests. As evidence of its zero tolerance policy toward trafficking, Venezuela captured 17 drug kingpins wanted by Interpol, deporting them to the U.S., Colombia, and the Netherlands.<sup>5</sup>



We're waging a frontal, determined and tireless battle with the support of the Bolivarian National Armed Forces and the entire country... Venezuela is not a drug-producing country and we are not even considered a drug-consuming country"

- Tareck El Aissami, Minister of the Interior and Justice



- Progress is continuing in 2011: In the first six months of the year, Venezuelan officials seized multiple tons of illegal drugs, destroyed 17 drug-processing laboratories near Colombia, and made more than 9,000 drug-related arrests. Large quantities of equipment used by drug traffickers, such as planes, vehicles, chemicals and arms were also seized.<sup>6</sup>
- Venezuela's new Drug Law entered into force in 2010. One of its key initiatives is the creation of a National Anti-Drug Fund to finance drug prevention, treatment, rehabilitation and social integration programs domestically. The fund became active in January 2010.
- Venezuela takes a comprehensive approach to fighting drugs, a vision that is reflected in the 2009-2013 National Anti-Drug Plan signed by President Chavez in June 2009. Under the plan, ONA has supervised hundreds of educational workshops and aims to train five million Venezuelans as prevention advisors.
- Venezuela is a team player in the global effort against drugs. It currently adheres to 52 different international anti-drug cooperation agreements, and participates in the OAS's Inter-American Commission for the Control of Drug Abuse. Venezuela has ratified all three of the main anti-drug conventions under the Inter-American system, and seven out of eight UN anti-drug conventions.<sup>7</sup>

In response to the release of the "Majors List," Venezuelan Foreign Minister Nicolas Maduro held a press conference on September 16 in which he rejected the allegation that Venezuela had failed to fight drug trafficking. He pointed to Venezuela's significant domestic counter-drug efforts, as well as its leadership role in the region; Venezuela has urged fellow members of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) to create an autonomous policy to stop the scourge of drugs.

Maduro also asserted that the U.S. uses the issue of the struggle against drugs to intervene and impose political and economic measures on countries whose governments exercise sovereignty and independence from imperialism, saying "Venezuela will always be an independent republic."<sup>8</sup>

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