

# *Venezuela Accuses U.S. of Bankrolling Right-Wing Violence*

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Caracas, May 12 (RHC)-- Venezuela has accused the United States of financially propping up violent opposition groups in the South American country, slamming U.S. officials for promoting an "unprecedented and systematic attempt" to intervene in Caracas' affairs.

"U.S. financing and logistical support for violent groups in Venezuela have facilitated an armed insurgency," the Venezuelan Foreign Ministry said in a statement, adding that the situation will be dealt with in accordance with the rule of law.

"The U.S. system of power relies on frequent and repeated statements, unilateral extraterritorial sanctions, economic financing of organizations in Venezuela for terrorist purposes, financial blockade, threats of military intervention, among others, to mask an open process of intervention marked by a rude meddling and violating International Law," the statement continued.

The Venezuelan Foreign Ministry's accusations against Washington highlighted recent comments made by U.S. official Francisco Palmieri, acting assistant secretary for the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, as an example of how Washington operatives tirelessly promote foreign intervention.

Earlier this week, Palmieri criticized President Nicolas Maduro's call for all political parties and social organizations to participate in a Constituent Assembly, which the Venezuelan government says will

promote a peaceful solution to political crisis in the country. The U.S. State Department official attacked the plan as an "authoritarian exercise" dressed up as an assembly.

Palmieri also defended the Organization of American States, saying it has acted -- in his words -- "in defense of democracy and human rights in the region." The Venezuelan and other governments in the region have criticized the OAS for doing Washington's bidding and attempting to seek a foreign intervention in Venezuela in the name of tackling political crisis while at the same time turning a blind eye to severe human right violations in other nations.

Venezuela's Foreign Ministry, headed by Delcy Rodriguez, said that the Constituent Assembly is a democratic process where the people will be able to take a stand against violence that at times has erupted in the streets over the past six weeks of opposition protests by casting a "universal, direct and secret vote in defense of peace, democracy and Venezuelan sovereignty."

The Foreign Ministry also argued in response to Palmieri's praise for the OAS that the "vandalism and extreme violence" seen in Venezuela in recent weeks has been a consequence of the "hostile and interventionist decisions" taken by the OAS to attempt to sanction Caracas and act, according to Venezuela and other allied governments in the region, against its own constitutional rules.

The statement reiterated that the government has called on the opposition to continue a stalled dialogue process to resolve the political and economic crisis, with the guidance of the Vatican and the Union of South American Nations.

Finally, the government said that it regrets that U.S. authorities continue to "follow the already failed path of the Bush and Obama era in disregarding the call of the Venezuelan government to seek diplomatic relations of respect and equality." It also reported that so far in 2017, Caracas has recorded at least 105 hostile statements and actions from the U.S. against Venezuela.

The Venezuelan Foreign Ministry statement said: "This is the method that the empire has already tried in Eastern Europe and the Middle East, but in Venezuela it's a defeat already announced."

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