

Venezuela to Donate \$5 Million to Harvey Victims in Houston, Texas



Caracas, August 30 (RHC)-- Venezuela has extended its solidarity to the victims of Harvey in Texas and Louisiana. Venezuelan Foreign Minister Jorge Arreaza has announced that the South American country will be donating \$5 million to help with recovery efforts in areas devastated by Harvey, particularly Houston and Corpus Christi, Texas.

"We can not let war be imposed, instead we need to impose solidarity. We will always be with the people of the United States and the peoples of the world in difficult times," Arreaza said. He explained that President Nicolas Maduro has approved a special program to help the victims, especially those in the states of Louisiana and Texas.

The plan calls for the donation of \$5 million to help the cities of Houston and Corpus Christi, a decision that is also approved by U.S. authorities and the cities' mayors.

The diplomat indicated that a percentage of the sales of gas from Citgo will be destined for the construction of houses for the people affected. Citgo is a subsidiary of the Venezuelan state oil company, PDVSA, based in Houston.

The minister said that he is sending a letter to the charge d'affaires at the United States embassy to deliver the petrochemical construction project Wednesday, adding that Venezuela has offered rescues workers, doctors, and other specialized personnel to help with the situation on the ground.

Nelson Martinez, president of Citgo, said the company was "going to contribute to the improvement of the quality of life of those affected with the support plan for construction."

Citgo operations were forced to shut down at its Corpus Christi, Texas facilities, near where Harvey made landfall Friday, but are reportedly on their way to restarting in the next few days.

The latest U.S. sanctions ban trades of Venezuelan debt and prevent PDVSA from selling new bonds to U.S. citizens or financial groups. Trades of existing bonds commissioned by Caracas will also be barred. U.S. President Donald Trump signed a decree imposing these economic sanctions on Venezuela, which were announced last Friday.

Mark Weisbrot, Co-Director of the Center for Economic and Policy Research in Washington D.C., said the new round of sanctions are "severe" on a level never seen before, making Trump's cursory threats of military intervention against the Bolivarian state highly plausible.

The economist, in an interview with teleSUR described the sanctions as "broader" than previous measures, saying they will strike the country's financial sector, massively impacting its revenue.

The new sanctions come weeks after Trump said that a "military option" has not been ruled out against Venezuela.

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