

# *Venezuelans Commemorate Death of Bolivarian Leader Hugo Chavez*

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Caracas, March 5 (RHC) -- Tens of thousands of Venezuelans participated Wednesday in commemorations to mark one year since the death of Bolivarian leader Hugo Chavez Frías.

Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro presided over a military parade in Caracas on Wednesday, which was followed by a ceremony at the mausoleum treasuring Chávez's remains, located in one of Caracas' most populated barrios.

Speaking to reporters at Miraflores, the seat of the presidency, Maduro himself detailed the activities planned for Chavez' death anniversary. The press conference followed a private meeting with his Bolivian counterpart Evo Morales, who is in Caracas to join the Venezuelan people in the commemorations.

"We're here, not only to remember the death of our comrade and brother, Hugo Chavez, but also his struggle for Latin American unity, democracy and peace," the Bolivian president said to reporters.

"We also want to proclaim our solidarity for the Venezuelan people and the Bolivarian Revolution. It's our duty to defend elected presidents... we do not accept coup attempts," Evo Morales added, standing next

to Maduro at the presidential palace.

Early Wednesday, despite President Maduro's call to commemorate the date in a climate of peace and tolerance, rioters set up barricades in various streets of Caracas, and other cities. One 26-year-old man died in western Tachira state when he crashed his car, attempting to avoid a roadblock set up by rioters.

Venezuela has witnessed violent unrest since February 12th. The government says at least 18 people have died and more than 260 have been injured in the attacks on government institutions.

According to the government, right-wing groups backed up by the United States, have encouraged the violence as part of a coup plot against the administration of President Nicolas Maduro.

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