

# *Venezuelan president says U.S. government sabotaged dialogue with opposition in Mexico*

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The interview with the Venezuelan president was conducted by Spanish journalist Ignacio Ramonet?

Caracas, January 2 (RHC)-- Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro says that the United States government sabotaged the dialogue process with the country's opposition held in Mexico.

In an interview with Spanish journalist Ignacio Ramonet, broadcast by teleSUR, the head of state added that the kidnapping of diplomat Alex Saab by the U.S., illegally detained in Cape Verde, was what caused the breakdown of the dialogue.

"The opposition itself, its coordinator Gerardo Blyde, talked about it in Washington with the State Department and they gave him and us guarantees that they were not going to take Alex Saab, our diplomat, so that the dialogues could continue to be fruitful," he explained.

The Venezuelan president recalled that Saab was included as part of the Venezuelan Government delegation in the dialogue process and they expected him to participate by videoconference. "Now the U.S. stabbed the dialogues in Mexico in the back," he said, after affirming that the dialogues were on the right track and that they were going to give great news to the country when the kidnapping of the diplomat happened.

"Why did they do it? Why are they sabotaging a dialogue that is fruitful for the country, that is going to give results to Venezuela and that is going to give peace and institutionality to our democracy?" asked Maduro, adding that there must be "great changes in the matter with the kidnapping of Alex Saab for us to return to Mexico."

The Bolivarian leader commented that the presence of the Omicron variant in the world warns that the coronavirus is not over yet and that "it is here to stay until further notice." "We have the 7+7 method that allowed us to ride the time of this year 2021, with the arrival of the Covid-19 variants to the country (...) With respect to other countries such as the US and Europe, regarding the numbers of contagions and deaths, Venezuela has had an exemplary control over the pandemic", he highlighted.

In addition, he reiterated that the coercive measures, blockades and economic persecution of the U.S. against Venezuela reached the point where "all the vaccine companies in the world were threatened with sanctions if they sold us vaccines. The U.S. Government threatened all the companies in the world, then they said it was a lie".

"We did our part intensively and managed to obtain all the vaccines that the country needed this year (...) We are vaccinating from 2 years of age, which will give us a more powerful protection for our population", he explained and specified that the percentage of vaccinated reached 90 percent.

The Venezuelan president assured that they have not renounced to biosecurity measures to prevent further contagions, and expects that in 2022, with 95 percent of the population vaccinated, "we will have a peaceful country, deploying freely, working with its social life moderately normalized, and enjoying great happiness".

Nicolas Maduro emphasized that the country has progressed in the economic recovery with its own productive engines, demonstrating that the Venezuelan people have the industrial and technological capacity and the knowledge to move forward.

Despite the more than 400 coercive measures applied during the administration of former U.S. President Donald Trump, the Venezuelan head of state indicated that "we have been progressively implementing measures to free the productive forces in a scheme of war economy."

"We have recovered economic growth. In the second half of the year 2021 we are having a growth of 7.5 percent. The economy with its own engine has taken the path of economic growth (...) The greatest achievement of all this has been the defense of our economic model, thinking of the most vulnerable", he clarified.

He recalled that the coercive measures caused the Venezuelan State to lose 99 percent of its income, going from receiving 54 billion dollars in one year to 600 million, as a consequence of the persecution of the country's oil and bank accounts.

"Venezuela has achieved four months in a row with one digit inflation. Today we can say (...) that the country leaves the state of hyperinflation product of the economic war and sanctions", he announced.

In oil matters, he affirmed that Venezuela's experience will remain as one of the cruelest crimes ever attempted against a people. "Venezuela is reaching one million barrels per day of oil production (...) Next year's goal is 2 million barrels per day", he clarified, mentioning the recovery of more than 90 percent of the petrochemical industry.

The Venezuelan leader recalled the triumph of the revolutionary people in the regional elections of last November 21, in spite of the various adversities that arose along the way. He also highlighted that the Venezuelan opposition obtained three of the 23 Governorships, as well as 108 of the 335 Mayorships in dispute.

"Despite these circumstances, we had a great victory. We won 65 percent of the Mayors and Municipal Councils of the country; we won 80 percent of the Governorships with our own and renewed leadership", he highlighted.

President Maduro stated that "after all the war they have waged against Venezuela, how is it that the Bolivarian and Chavista forces obtain this tremendous victory? In Venezuela we have held 29 elections in 22 years -- and this is victory number 27".

Maduro affirmed that Trump could have left the U.S. Presidency, but "the empire remained intact" and asserted that "in relation to Venezuela, everything has remained the same, the persecution. There has been no sign of rectification of these cruel measures."

"Who knows when and with whom the possibilities of a direct, courageous, sincere and understanding dialogue with the U.S. will open up. Hopefully it will be with the government of Joe Biden. If it happens, fine, and if not, we will continue with our battle," he commented.

Likewise, he highlighted the change that Latin America is going through with the presence of more progressive governments and the departure of right-wing and neoliberal presidents. "Venezuela has always been at the forefront. It is our historical truth (...) Now a second wave is taking place, different from the first one, but with an anti-neoliberal take."

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