

# *Are Chavista Politicians Being Targeted For Assassination?*

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Caracas, March 24 (teleSUR-RHC) Late Friday, local council member Dimas Gomez Chirinos, 47, was shot dead alongside his 20-year-old son, Eli David Gomez in the western state of Falcon, Venezuela.

The office of the public prosecutor stated that two were killed by unknown persons. Gomez' older son, Eliezer Jose, was also injured in the attack. Gomez was a member of the ruling United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV).

In a separate incident the office of the public prosecutor charged two people Monday in the attempted homicide of PSUV Congressman Carlos Sierra. On Jan. 28, Sierra's car was surrounded by two persons who threatened the congressman with a gun. They were subdued and arrested by Sierra's security detail.

These two incidents come shortly after the assassination of Socialist legislator, Robert Serra. Serra, who was killed in his home in October, was a rising star in the ruling socialist party of President Nicolas Maduro.

The Venezuelan President has suggested that paramilitary groups connected to former Colombian president Alvaro Uribe are involved in the murder of Serra. The alleged mastermind of the murder, Leiva Padilla Mendoza, was arrested in Colombia in November 2014 and is awaiting extradition. Meanwhile, former vice-president and TV host Jose Vicente Rangel stated on his television program Sunday that

1,600 paramilitaries are positioned on the border between Colombia and Venezuela. Supporters of the government are concerned that far-right political groups – with proven ties to paramilitary groups – may already be targeting leftist politicians in Venezuela.

Targeted assassinations are part of the recent history of political life in South America. Leftist politicians in Colombia associated with the Patriotic Union party were systematically killed in the 80's and 90's. An estimated 5,000 members of the party were murdered, including two presidential candidates.

Paramilitary groups have also recently issued death threats to journalists and politicians seen as friendly to the peace process currently underway between the Colombian government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC).

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