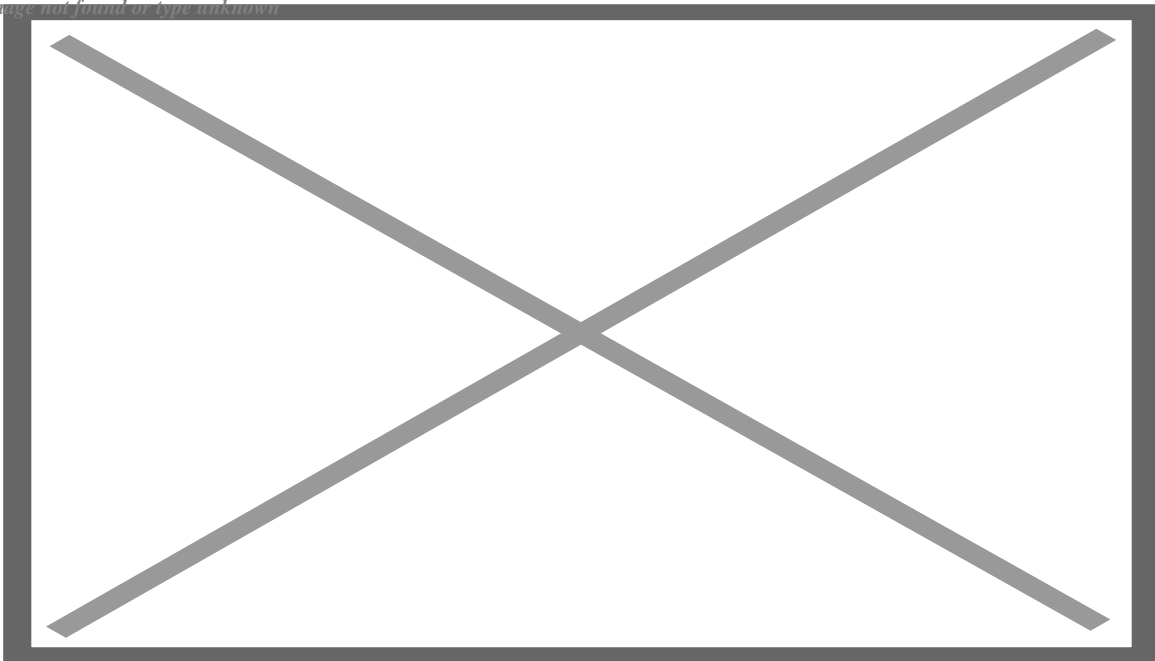


Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro presents annual message to the nation

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Caracas, January 15 (RHC)-- The president of Venezuela, Nicolás Maduro, presented this Monday in the National Assembly (AN), his annual message to the nation.

In his presentation, the president highlighted the economic achievements of the South American country last year under a context of economic genocide, imposed by the White House administration. "Venezuela is part of the 19 countries whose economic, commercial and human rights have been illegally violated by the United States every day, systematically, for the past nine years."

"For that reason, each one of the results obtained, each goal accomplished, must bear the label "made, built, designed, created, overcome, in times of war and imperialist blockade."

We have taken some steps in lifting some licenses, but our goal is the total lifting of all sanctions... Venezuela is not a colony that settles for permits, he maintained.

"Due to the bombs of the "sanctions" Venezuela stopped producing 3,993 million barrels of oil and stopped receiving 323 billion dollars."

The total losses of the national economy in both the public and private sectors, in terms of fall in GDP between 2015 and 2022, was 642 billion dollars, a genocide, an economic massacre, he pointed out.

Since 2015, when the economic war started frontally, oil production fell 87%, reaching its lowest level in June 2020 with 339 thousand barrels per day against 2.5 million that were produced in January 2015.

"In 2023, sanctions were maintained for the purchase of medicines in the international market, as well as for inputs and equipment for the provision of public services. Any international financial transaction carried out by the Venezuelan government continues to be at risk of being stopped and funds frozen due to the threat of sanctions," he recalled.

"I know that our working class, even without having this data, is aware of what we have suffered and has maintained its unrestricted support to the Bolivarian Revolution." "I thank the Venezuelan working class for its loyalty, its love in all circumstances of economic genocide that violated labor rights," he stressed.

"With a thorough national plan against the war, we developed a concrete agenda composed of eight lines of action and work that allowed us to achieve 12 strategic goals and a super objective with which we face this new year victorious: I am referring to the great national consensus."

"Dialectical, dynamic, real, plural and practical that allowed us to advance in the priority, urgent and necessary dimensions for the homeland."

"Our efforts were not in vain and the measures taken were the right ones, and that is why for the month of December 2023 we managed to reduce inflation by 33 points when compared to the same month of the previous year, reaching the lowest figure since 2013, by standing at 2.4%." "Inflation continues to be the first enemy to defeat, which impacts the lives of workers," he added.

He remarked that in the context of the Economic Recovery Plan, during the year 2023, Venezuela achieved three fundamental objectives: Deceleration and control of inflation; Consolidation of the exchange balance; Growth of the economy and national oil and non-oil production.

The private sector contributed an important volume of foreign currency in the exchange market, being in 2023 the highest with 14 thousand 577 million dollars, surpassing the 2022 volume of 8 thousand 624 million. With this we succeeded in reinventing a healthy relationship of national benefit between the State and private enterprise after a century of corporate rentierism.

"The year 2023 closed with 10 quarters of growth continued. Similarly, the agricultural GDP grew in 7 consecutive semesters, with a closing in October of 5.20% of the production volume", he mentioned.

"Inflation is the first enemy to be defeated in any economy, and in ours, blocked and persecuted, besides being the priority task, it is the most difficult one, every time that criminal sanctions operate directly against the country's income".

"Venezuela will consolidate its definitive victory against inflation by returning to an annualized inflation of 2 digits in February 2024."

"Our second strategic goal, to advance economic growth with equality, was exchange control which is directly related to the protection of the income of working men and women," he noted.

"In 2023 our country reflected the lowest increase of the dollar since the exchange tables were created. This behavior is encouraging and will allow us this year to consolidate stability to further lower inflation to its historical record," he alerted.

"The third goal set was precisely the growth of the national oil and non-oil production, where the main industry of the country leveraged each and every one of the 18 economic engines, fulfilling the virtuous circle of sowing oil", he stressed.

"Had it not been for these perverse attacks, Venezuela would have already fulfilled one of the objectives of the Plan for the Homeland and at this moment we would be a true power. That is why they launched those attacks, to stop our growth.

"They were not going to allow a Latin American, socialist and anti-imperialist country to demonstrate that it is possible to build an alternative model to savage capitalism".

By 2023, we have reached 100% sovereign production in the following items: Coffee, bananas, cassava, ocumo, white cheese, full liquid milk, carrot, paprika, pumpkin, yucca, cambur, pineapple, milky, guava, orange, melon, patilla, potatoes, onion, fresh fish, tomato, beef, chicken and pork.

President Maduro emphasized: "We have achieved a 96.7% supply, a figure that journalists could use as a headline: 96.7% supply achieved and materialized in times of economic war and imperialist sanctions".

"Our PDVSA industry, even though it was blocked, demonstrated the strength of its internal capacities that led it to overcome the adversities created by the illegitimate blockade and by the mafias that had become entrenched in the industry, at the service of destabilizing plans. PDVSA closed the year 2023 with an income of 6,230 million dollars", he considered.

"Our oil activity grew by 12.99% in the third quarter of 2023, with the increase in 14.60% of crude oil and natural gas extraction, generating an increase in oil exports of 60.46%", he added.

"To all those who make the effort to create, innovate, undertake, I say that we have achieved a supply level of 96.7%, in times of economic war."

"Tourism has become a fundamental element for the economic growth of the country. In 2023, 73 tourist routes were validated in 19 states of the country for national and international."

"I want to bet, this year 2024, on communal tourism development, of communal tourist routes throughout the country. Tourism is the secret weapon to defeat rentierism", he pointed out.

The President emphasized that the defense of the Essequiba Guyana, through the mandate of the people, which was manifested in the last referendum, put the Venezuelan model of participative democracy to the test. "Our democracy is living a stellar moment in which balances have prevailed over extremism and common sense has prevailed over sterile conflict and the petty particular interests of the usual haters", he indicated.

"Our model of direct democracy, not only works as it has been seen and proven in each of our accomplished goals, but it is becoming increasingly necessary in the world to avoid social catastrophes," he said.

"And in spite of the criminal blockade that the Empire is imposing every day, we will never give up our mission of guaranteeing the protection of the Venezuelan people", the President pointed out.

"The mere fact that we are here today in peace, allows me to affirm that our model of participative, direct and protagonist democracy not only works, as it has been proven in each of our accomplished goals, but it is increasingly necessary in the world to avoid social catastrophes".

President Maduro considered that "2024 is not just any year: it is marked by the light of the bicentennials of the Battle of Junín and the Battle of Ayacucho, masterfully led by Liberator Simón Bolívar and Antonio José de Sucre, respectively.

"Two events that sealed the victory, putting an end to a cycle of heroic battles (...) Let us feel that we are heirs of that glory and let us prepare our souls to celebrate it," said the head of state.

At the beginning of his presentation, the President emphasized that he is coming to the National Assembly to present the constitutional review with the consent of this people and this Assembly, and underlined the support of the people with the peaceful mobilizations registered this Monday in Caracas.

Before delivering his message, accompanied by the First Combatant, Cilia Flores and the President of the National Assembly, Jorge Rodríguez, the Head of State greeted the people who were waiting for him outside the Chamber of Deputies.

The people crowded around the Legislative Palace to show their support to the President, who greeted effusively all those present. A cultural event was held in the gardens of the Chamber as part of the activities to welcome the Head of State in this historic event.

Government representatives such as the Executive Vice-President of the Republic, Delcy Rodríguez; the Attorney General of the Republic, Tarek William Saab; the President of the Supreme Court of Justice, Gladys Gutierrez, as well as the President of the National Electoral Council (CNE), Elvis Amoroso, attended the event.

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