

# *Ecuador's Correa Calls U.S. Sanctions on Venezuela 'a Bad Joke'*

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Quito, March 10 (teleSUR-RHC)-- Ecuador's President Rafael Correa blasted the U.S. government's listing of Venezuela as a "national security threat" while slapping sanctions on seven Venezuelan officials through an executive order signed by President Barack Obama.

"An executive order by Obama declaring Venezuela a national security threat and declaring a national emergency to face this threat... must be a bad joke, which reminds us of the darkest hours of our America, when we received invasions and dictatorships imposed by imperialism... Will they understand that Latin America has changed?" wrote the Ecuadorean leader Tuesday in his Facebook account.

The government of Ecuador also issued an official statement rejecting the move by Washington against the government of Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro, calling it "an unacceptable attack on the sovereignty of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and against its government."

Meanwhile, outgoing Secretary-General of the Organization of American States Jose Miguel Insulza described the escalation by the U.S. government against Caracas as "very harsh." The remarks come despite Insulza's history of making statements against the Venezuelan government.

Many leaders and regional organizations have also expressed their solidarity with Venezuela and President Maduro has responded by saying the U.S. measures are intended to topple his government. Venezuela's Foreign Ministry has recalled its top diplomat in the U.S. for "immediate" consultations following the announcement.

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