

## United States Senate

November 15, 2023

The Honorable Joe Biden  
President  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Biden:

I am writing regarding Colombian President Gustavo Petro's hostile and anti-Semitic statements<sup>[1]</sup> made after Iran-backed Hamas terrorists tortured and massacred more than 1,400 Israeli men, women and children, and at least 33 Americans on October 7, 2023, and continues to hold more than 200 people hostage, including numerous Americans. President Petro has a gross track record of opposing U.S. interests and has now crossed a new line by blaming Israel for the atrocities committed by these Iran-backed Hamas terrorists and comparing Israel to Nazi Germany. It is clear that the positions taken by President Petro's administration require a full examination of the U.S.-Colombia relationship.

One of Petro's first acts as president was to restore diplomatic relations with the illegitimate Maduro regime in Venezuela, a regime that eagerly befriends and hosts the United States' major adversaries: Cuba, Russia, Communist China and Iranian proxies. In April, Petro officially aligned with Communist China by announcing the Colombian government shall not have any contact with the Government of Taiwan.<sup>[2]</sup> President Petro appeases narco-guerilla groups like the National Liberation Army (ELN), a foreign terrorist organization, and sides with the illegitimate Communist Cuban regime by calling for Cuba to be removed from the U.S. list of state sponsors of terrorism.

Perhaps worse for the current security environment in which the U.S. and our allies find ourselves, Petro's recent comments about Israel have shown his sympathy for Iran-backed terrorist groups, some of whom live freely and under the protection of Maduro in Venezuela<sup>[3]</sup>. In 2017, it was revealed that the Maduro regime used its embassy in Iraq to sell Venezuelan passports and IDs to individuals from the Middle

<sup>1</sup>[Colombia's president compares Israeli military to Nazis - The Jerusalem Post \(jpost.com\)](https://www.jpost.com)

<sup>2</sup>[Gustavo Petro's government asks its officials to embrace the 'One China' principle, in the midst of the conflict with Taiwan \(semana.com\)](https://www.semana.com)

<sup>3</sup>[The-Maduro-Hezbollah-Nexus-How-Iran-backed-Networks-Prop-up-the-Venezuelan-Regime.pdf \(atlanticcouncil.org\)](https://atlanticcouncil.org)

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East, including people connected to Hezbollah.<sup>[4]</sup> It is now credibly alleged that Hezbollah is working to use its passport and visa loophole with Venezuela to infiltrate Colombia.<sup>[5]</sup> Iran's influence in South America, specifically Venezuela, is a clear and present danger to the United States. Colombia, a longtime U.S. ally in fighting these groups and their crimes, is now openly taking their side and apparently looking the other way while Colombia is used as a visa market for entry into the United States.

When President Petro was elected, many observers noted his prior membership in the M-19 guerilla movement and were rightly concerned about his ability and desire to govern as a democratic ally of the United States. His actions since taking office, and recent hostile and profoundly anti-Semitic comments toward Israel, confirm that the suspicions were right and that there is significant cause for alarm when examining the relationship between the Petro administration and the United States to determine whether his administration is supporting activities that jeopardize the national security of the United States.

The United States is Colombia's largest trading and security partner and I do not raise these concerns lightly. If America is dedicated to freedom, democracy and stability in Latin America, we cannot allow these threats to go unchecked or concerns of this magnitude to be ignored.

I urge your administration to apply enhanced scrutiny to all forms of U.S. aid to Colombia and ensure its value for U.S. interests. We must be clear that allies of the United States do not engage in disgusting attacks on Israel and side with its terrorist enemies; nor do they embrace terrorists and facilitate their work in this hemisphere.

We have seen the consequences of ignoring warnings of these behaviors. The Maduro regime is a prime example of what can be established when the U.S. looks the other way as our adversaries gain new footholds in Latin America. It is time to make sure that Colombia and all other allies understand that you cannot be both an ally of the United States and an ally of the terrorists and evil regimes that wish to destroy our way of life.

Sincerely,



Rick Scott  
United States Senator

<sup>4</sup> [Venezuela may have given passports to people with ties to terrorism | CNN](#)

<sup>5</sup> [TERRORISMO INTERNACIONAL SE AFIANZA: EL HEZBOLLAH EN COLOMBIA](#)