

United States Senate

November 1, 2023

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

Dear President Biden:

On Sunday, October 22, 2023, more than two million Venezuelans around the world made their voices heard and cast their votes in support of María Corina Machado, the official opposition candidate for the upcoming presidential elections. These brave Venezuelans participated in this election at great personal risk, but did so united by their dedication to ridding Venezuela of the brutal oppression brought onto them by Nicolas Maduro, and returning freedom and democracy to their country. This is a significant moment in the Venezuelan people's fight for freedom and true representative government, and it is imperative that the United States stand with them, recognize María Corina Machado as Venezuela's duly elected Presidential Opposition Candidate, and lead the international community in doing the same.

The National Primary Commission (NPC) is to be commended for its ability to successfully organize and carry out the opposition primary election despite facing numerous obstacles, threats and attacks from the illegitimate Maduro regime. The work of the NPC advances the cause of freedom in Venezuela and represents the best interest of its citizens. It's also in our national security and all who strive for peace, liberty and stability for nations in Latin America and across the Western Hemisphere to recognize and support the fundamental role the NPC is carrying out in Venezuela.

The United States must use this opportunity to put the full weight and power of our nation behind the cause of freedom in Venezuela. Our national security depends on us being strong in this moment, however, we cannot act from a position of strength while negotiating with a murderous, dishonest and tyrannical dictator. I have been unequivocal in my condemnation of attempts to negotiate with Nicolas Maduro on any

issue beyond how and when he will leave power. I urge you to immediately revise the conditions of sanctions relief that your administration has recently offered to the Maduro regime and make clear that he and his thugs, who have horrifically murdered and oppressed the Venezuelan people for years, that there will be no easing of sanctions until free and fair elections are held and democracy returns to Venezuela and the following conditions are met:

1. María Corina Machado, as the sole presidential opposition candidate, is welcomed to lead the opposition side of the Venezuelan-led negotiations in Barbados.¹
2. María Corina Machado is officially allowed to run in the 2024 Venezuelan Presidential Election.
3. The release of all political prisoners, including all U.S. citizens, by the illegitimate Maduro regime.
4. Verify that the illegitimate Maduro regime is permitting international election observers from the Organization of American States, the European Union, the International Republican Institute and the National Democratic Institute, to ensure that the electoral process is genuinely free, fair and transparent.
5. Recognize the votes of the Venezuelan diaspora in the 2024 Venezuelan Presidential Election.

Just a few days after María Corina Machado's big win in the 2023 primary elections, we're already seeing Nicolás Maduro, Diosdado Cabello, Jorge Rodríguez and their thugs threatening, harassing, and attacking the NPC and everyone who voted for Machado. Two days ago, the Maduro regime's hand-picked Supreme Court declared the suspension of 'all effects' of the Venezuelan primaries. You must see this for what it is: a clear sign of Maduro's true intentions to never give up his power or allow freedom to return to Venezuela.

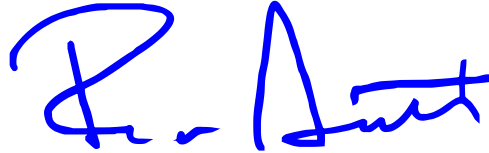
Lifting sanctions on the illegitimate regime of Nicolás Maduro and permitting the sale of oil and gas would essentially fund Maduro's 2024 presidential campaign, further empowering the regime, prolonging oppression and genocide and propping terrorism and narco-trafficking in the region.

¹ <https://www.state.gov/venezuelans-return-to-negotiations/>

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President Biden, you have a historic opportunity to be a part of the recovery of democracy in Venezuela and to stand up for freedom and democracy – values that define us as Americans. Do not let this opportunity go to waste.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rick Scott". The signature is stylized with a large initial "R" and a prominent "S".

Rick Scott
United States Senator