

# **“GATHERING OF CANADIAN INTELLECTUALS IN SUPPORT OF THE BOLIVARIAN REVOLUTION”**

## *FINAL STATEMENT*

Following the spirit of solidarity expressed in the message released by the participants of the XII Meeting of the “*Network of Intellectuals, Artists and Social Movements In Defense of Humanity*,” held in Caracas, on April 11, 2016, and as testimony to the support on behalf of all the progressive forces of the world toward the Bolivarian Government and the Venezuelan people, in their struggle against the constant attacks carried out by the local and imperial oligarchy, we, the undersigned Canadian intellectuals, reiterate our support for the sovereignty and self-determination of the Venezuelan people.

We emphasize that the oligarchic/imperial aggressions reflected in the “economic war” and the “media war” directed against Venezuela are not isolated cases. Rather, they form part of an overall global strategy to silence the dissonant voice of the Bolivarian government and Venezuelan people for their opposing the structures implanted by global capitalism’s centres of power.

In this sense, we express our concern regarding the current mechanisms of manipulation, propaganda and intervention used to destabilize Venezuela’s democratic political institutions and social structures with the objective of restoring the previous order of oligarchic elitism as well as re-establishing the nefarious neoliberal policies that seek to dismantle the social gains achieved by the Bolivarian popular transformation process launched in 1998.

Likewise, we denounce that these incessant attacks have increased with the disinformation campaign carried out by media outlets, which have focused on the shortage of food and medicine without mentioning the economic war waged by the domestic oligarchy and other sectors of the local and imperial fifth column, to the detriment of the entire population, particularly the poorest sectors of Venezuelan society.

We also raise our voice against allegations of human rights violations in Venezuela, in particular the unfounded claims of a supposed existence of “political prisoners” in Venezuela. In fact, they are politician-prisoners who have violated Venezuelan penal laws by inciting violence that has caused the death of innocent Venezuelans. Nobody has mentioned this fact at the international level, as these opposition politicians echo that irrationality and have caused numerous deaths, hundreds of wounded and considerable material damage.

We express our admiration because, despite these attacks, aggressions and accusations, we note that Venezuela maintains its Bolivarian principles and enjoys a solid international prestige. In this regard, we congratulate the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela for the successful organization of the XVII Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Non-Aligned Movement, held in Margarita Island, on September 17 and 18, 2016. This Summit took place under the theme of “*Peace, Sovereignty and Solidarity Towards Development*.” On this occasion member states reaffirmed their commitment to respect the sovereignty, national unity, and territorial integrity of states, their sovereign equality, non-interference in the internal affairs of states, the peaceful settlement of disputes, the defense of the right of self-determination of the peoples, to refrain from using threats or force, to reject illegal policies in regards to changes to constitutional governments, and to condemn the promulgation and application of unilateral coercive measures.

Furthermore, we wish the best of success to the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in its exercising of the Presidency of the Non-Aligned Movement for the 2016–2019 period, and, given its leadership, strengths and commitment to the less fortunate, we believe its tenure will reinforce and revitalize the aspirations of humankind to build a world of peace, justice, solidarity and shared development.

We recall that, despite the permanent aggression during 17 years of government management centred on the human being, coupled with a holistic view of human rights, the Bolivarian Revolution, inspired by the ideals of the Liberator Simón Bolívar and led by Commander Hugo Chávez Frías, has achieved one of the fairest distributions of wealth in Latin America, obtaining universal recognition of the progress made in education, food and income distribution, and community and popular development.

We emphasize that this policy of social assistance has been invigorated under the mandate of President Nicolás Maduro Moros, overcoming the adverse effects of a global crisis and the induced collapse of oil prices, given that the sharp drop of this commodity has been a consequence of a “financial war” that promotes stock market speculation as well as the overproduction of fossil fuels generated by, among other factors, the use of hydraulic fracking, a process that has aggravated the ecological fragility of the planet.

We express our firmest condemnation of reactionary actions taken to censor and silence the voice and critical opinion of *TeleSUR* through measures intended to weaken its image as a communication tool available to the entire world. For this reason, we deplore the Republic of Argentina’s untimely withdrawal from this communication platform, a departure that undermines political and media pluralism as well as the tangible progress of Latin American integration.

In order to counter these actions of censorship and misinformation regarding Venezuela, we express our willingness to contribute toward popularizing the broadcast of *TeleSUR*’s programming in Canada, employing the tools of modern media technologies and social networks, which have a high penetration rate in various sectors of Canadian public opinion.

In light of the long and dark interventionist record of the U.S. in Latin America, we vehemently declare our rejection of interventionist acts by the U.S. government against the democratic and institutional stability of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, imperial actions that are part of a new offensive inserted into a “Continental Condor Plan” in order to regain its lost influence in the region. These actions have sponsored a national and international vilification media campaign and a dehumanizing domestic economic war, without let-up, with the aim of provoking the suppression of the Bolivarian process.

Venezuela is not a security threat to any country but an example of hope, though it does represent a threat to the prevailing imperial order. In this regard, we demand the immediate repeal of the dismal and infamous U.S. government Executive Order, in which Venezuela is considered a threat to its national security and foreign policy; this Executive Order has been rejected by an overwhelming majority of countries around the world.

We reject any attempt to undermine the sovereignty of Venezuela through direct imperial actions, or by using hemispheric or international organizations to promote a change of government by illegal means that restore the old oligarchic structures and dismantle the social gains achieved through revolutionary governmental social programs.

Therefore, we express our commitment to defend Venezuela's institutions in the face of the de-legitimization campaign orchestrated in the current process of activating a constitutional option for

convening a recall referendum, as definitely these operations of discrediting erode the fundamental precepts contained in the Bolivarian Constitution of 1999.

Given the recent destabilizing experiences against progressive governments in Latin America, evidenced in “soft” or “constitutional” coups, we reaffirm our solidarity with the Bolivarian government and people, and announce that we will remain alert to report any aggression against the Venezuelan constitutional order; therefore, we continue to support the Bolivarian process and the empowerment and deepening of popular grass-roots education and participation as a legacy of Commander Hugo Chávez Frías and as a guarantee of the continuity of the struggle for social justice and equality.

Finally, we reaffirm our full support towards Venezuela, whose government has been legitimately elected by the majority of the Venezuelan people, and, from this perspective, we call on the Canadian government to distance itself from interventionist U.S. policies that seek to dismantle progressive governments in Latin America and the Caribbean, framed in the American global strategy of promoting “wars by region” worldwide.

**Ottawa – October 7, 2016**

Michel Chossudovsky

James Cockcroft

Mahdi Darius Nazemroaya

Kathy Hogarth

Maricarmen Guevara

Víctor Ramos

Stuart Ryan

Jorge Sorger

Santiago Escobar

Jean-Claude Balu

Luis Gómez

Félix Grande

Claude Morin

Arnold August