

Treasury Sanctions Venezuelan Officials Supporting Nicolas Maduro's Repression and Illegitimate Claim to Power

Today, the Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) is sanctioning eight Venezuelan officials who lead key economic and security agencies enabling Nicolas Maduro's repression and subversion of democracy in Venezuela.

VENEZUELAN OFFICIALS FROM STATE-OWNED ENTITIES AND MINISTRIES

The following Venezuelan officials of state-owned entities and ministries are being designated pursuant to E.O. 13692, "Blocking Property and Suspending Entry of Certain Persons Contributing to the Situation in Venezuela," as amended, for being a current or former official of the Government of Venezuela.

Hector Andres Obregon Perez (Obregon) was named by Maduro in August 2024 as president of Petroleos de Venezuela, S.A. (PdVSA), Venezuela's state-owned oil company and a primary source of Venezuela's income and foreign currency. OFAC sanctioned PdVSA in January 2019. Previously, Obregon was the executive vice president of PdVSA. Obregon also served as director general of the office of the Ministry of Communication and Information, general director of the Autonomous Service of Registries and Notaries, president of the Venezuelan Foreign Trade Corporation, and president of the Economic and Social Development Bank.

Ramon Celestino Velasquez Araguayan (Velasquez) has served as Maduro's Minister of Transportation since May 2023. Velasquez also is the president of the Venezuelan Consortium of Aeronautical Industries and Air Services (CONVIASA), the U.S.-sanctioned Venezuelan state-owned airline.

Felix Ramon Osorio Guzman (Osorio) was named on November 12, 2024 as vice minister of Interior Policy and Legal Security of Maduro's Interior Ministry. Previously, Osorio served as commander general of the Bolivarian Army of Venezuela. The Bolivarian Army is one of the components of the National Bolivarian Armed Forces of Venezuela (FANB, its Spanish acronym).

VENEZUELAN POLICE AND MILITARY OFFICIALS

Danny Ramon Ferrer Sandra (Ferrer) was named on November 12, 2024 as vice minister of the Integrated System of Penal Investigations of Maduro's Interior Ministry. In this role, Ferrer has been responsible for the evaluation, control, and supervision of investigative police units, including the Scientific, Penal, and Criminal Investigations Corps (CICPC, its Spanish acronym) and the National Service of Forensic Medicine and Sciences. The CICPC is Venezuela's largest national police agency.

Douglas Arnoldo Rico Gonzalez (Rico) has served as director of CICPC since February 2016. The CICPC has reportedly committed systematic human rights abuses in Venezuela, including extrajudicial killings and arbitrary arrests. Rico was sanctioned by the European Union for human rights abuses on April 20, 2023.

Jhonny Rafael Salazar Bello (Salazar) has served as deputy director of the CICPC since March 19, 2018. Venezuelan lawyers have made public complaints against the CICPC for human rights violations and abuses committed under Rico's and Salazar's command since the July 28, 2024 presidential election.

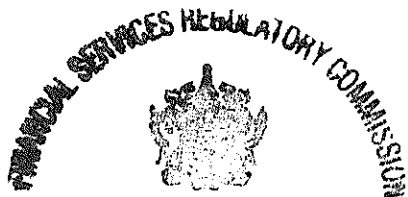
Manuel Enrique Castillo Rengifo (Castillo) was named on October 16, 2024 as deputy commander of the Strategic Operations Command (CEOFANB, its Spanish acronym) of the FANB. Previously, Castillo served as commander of Strategic Regions for Integral Defense Los Andes. The CEOFANB is one of FANB's six branches, whose mandate is to be the operational command for strategic operations. As the operational command of the FANB, the CEOFANB also oversees the repression tactics carried out by the FANB.

Jose Ramon Figuera Valdez (Figuera) was named on October 17, 2024 as commander of the Integral Defense Zone (ZODI, its Spanish acronym) for the Venezuelan capital district, having previously served as second-in-command of the capital district ZODI. Under Figuera's leadership, the capital district has reportedly experienced the highest levels of arbitrary detentions against protesters since the July 28, 2024 election. On July 29, 2024, at least eight protesters and bystanders were killed in the capital district, where Figuera was in command.

SANCTIONS IMPLICATIONS

As a result of today's action, all property and interests in property of the designated persons described above, and of any entities that are owned directly or indirectly, 50 percent or more by them, individually, or with other blocked persons, that are in the United States or in the possession or control of U.S. persons are blocked and must be reported to OFAC.

Dated 10th January, 2025



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