

# Treasury Sanctions Four Current or Former Venezuelan Officials Associated with Economic Mismanagement and Corruption

March 19, 2018

**Washington** – Today the U.S. Department of the Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) designated four current or former Venezuelan government officials pursuant to [Executive Order \(E.O.\) 13692](#) , as part of Treasury’s ongoing efforts to highlight the economic mismanagement and endemic corruption that have been the defining features of the Maduro regime. The Venezuelan government’s actions have rendered Venezuela’s currency essentially worthless through hyperinflation, made food and medicine rare commodities through price controls, and triggered a humanitarian crisis that the Venezuelan government refuses to alleviate by changing policy or accepting international assistance.

“President Maduro decimated the Venezuelan economy and spurred a humanitarian crisis. Instead of correcting course to avoid further catastrophe, the Maduro regime is attempting to circumvent sanctions through the Petro digital currency – a ploy that Venezuela’s democratically-elected National Assembly has denounced and Treasury has cautioned U.S. persons to avoid,” said Secretary of the Treasury Steven T. Mnuchin. “Today, I participated in an important meeting in Argentina with my counterparts from the region and Europe, where we discussed how to achieve our shared objectives of restoring Venezuelan democracy, combating the kleptocracy of the Maduro regime, and responding to the humanitarian crisis caused by Maduro’s economic policy. We urge Maduro to distribute humanitarian aid and stop blocking much-needed foreign assistance to the suffering people of Venezuela, and we again call upon the Venezuelan military to respect and uphold the Constitution.”

Today, President Trump also signed an Executive Order prohibiting U.S. persons and others subject to U.S. jurisdiction from engaging in all transactions related to, provision of financing for, and other dealings in any digital currency, digital coin, or digital token that was issued by, for, or on behalf of the Government of Venezuela after January 9, 2018.

As a result of today’s actions, all assets of the following current or former officials of the Government of Venezuela that are subject to U.S. jurisdiction are frozen, and U.S. persons are generally prohibited from dealing with them:

- **Américo Alex Mata García (Mata)** was appointed as an Alternate Director on the Board of Directors of the National Bank of Housing and Habitat, also known as BANAVIH, under the Ministry of Popular Power for Habitat and Housing. Mata was also the Vice Minister of Agricultural Economics and the President of the Agricultural Bank of Venezuela, both of which attached to the Ministry of Popular Power for Agriculture and Lands. Mata is a former President of Corpomiranda, a state-owned company known for its role in executing public policies involving the territorial development of and populations inhabiting the area that comprises the state of Miranda, the Tuy River Basin, and the Tovar, Ribas, Revenga, and Santos de Michelena municipalities of Aragua State. In his role as the coordinator of Maduro's 2013 presidential campaign, Mata allegedly asked for and received payments from Odebrecht, a Brazilian construction company mired in a worldwide corruption scandal. Mata allegedly asked for 50 million dollars in the name of the Venezuelan Government, simultaneously guaranteeing Odebrecht contracts for future works. Odebrecht is reported to have provided 35 million dollars to Maduro's campaign in 2013.
- **Willian Antonio Contreras (Contreras)** is the head, or National Superintendent, of the Superintendency for the Defense of Socioeconomic Rights (SUNDDE), the agency responsible for imposing price controls in Venezuela. Additionally, Contreras is the Vice Minister of Internal Commerce within the Ministry of Popular Power of Economy and Finance. Due to continued price controls imposed by SUNDDE on businesses ranging from supermarkets to multinational companies, businesses have slowed production or have stopped operating rather than continuing to import raw materials to be incorporated into products that they are ordered to sell for significantly less than the prices typically found in supermarkets. Contreras has been quoted as stating that SUNDDE implements government-mandated price controls on raw materials and that these laws prohibit the private sector in Venezuela from declaring prices different from the government's official price determination.
- **Nelson Reinaldo Lepaje Salazar (Lepaje)**, as of mid-March 2018, was acting in the capacity of the Head of the Office of the National Treasury of Venezuela. Lepaje was formerly delegated the functions of the Assistant National Treasurer, and in that role he was involved in oversight of administrative procedures and the signing of official documents, including financial agreements between the Ministry of Popular Power, the Central Bank of Venezuela, and any national or foreign financial institutions that are auxiliary entities of the National

Treasury Office. Lepaje also authorized the opening of bank accounts with funds from the National Treasury in both national and foreign currencies. The former National Treasurer, Carlos Erick Malpica Flores, also was designated by OFAC, in July 2017. In addition, the Venezuelan National Treasury has been the subject of previous corruption allegations, as it was alleged that President Maduro stole nearly \$10 million from the National Treasury.

- **Carlos Alberto Rotondaro Cova (Rotondaro)** is the former President of the Board of Directors of the Venezuelan Institute of Social Security (IVSS), the government agency tasked with providing patients with drugs for chronic conditions. As a result of Venezuela's economic collapse under Maduro, the country no longer purchases sufficient foreign medications or produces enough of its own medications. Due partly to insufficient vaccines and antibiotics, once-controlled diseases like diphtheria and measles have returned, while Venezuelans suffering chronic illnesses like cancer or diabetes often have to forgo treatment. Venezuela's healthcare system continues to slide deeper into crisis following years of economic turmoil, spurring outbreaks of treatable diseases and rising death rates.

[Identifying information on the individuals designated today.](#)

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