

Treasury Targets Venezuelan President Maduro's Inner Circle and Proceeds of Corruption in the United States

September 25, 2018

Washington – Today, the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) designated four members of Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro's inner circle, including First Lady and former Attorney General and President of the National Assembly Cilia Adela Flores de Maduro. OFAC also targeted a network supporting a key front man for designated President of Venezuela's National Constituent Assembly (ANC) Diosdado Cabello Rondon, and identified as blocked property a \$20 million U.S.-based private jet as belonging to Cabello's front man.

“President Maduro relies on his inner circle to maintain his grip on power, as his regime systematically plunders what remains of Venezuela's wealth. We are continuing to designate loyalists who enable Maduro to solidify his hold on the military and the government while the Venezuelan people suffer,” said Secretary of the Treasury Steven T. Mnuchin. “Treasury will continue to impose a financial toll on those responsible for Venezuela's tragic decline, and the networks and front-men they use to mask their illicit wealth.”

VENEZUELA'S DECLINE

By the end of 2018, hyperinflation in Venezuela is projected to reach over one million percent. Three million Venezuelans will have departed Venezuela for neighboring nations to escape widespread poverty and its attendant hardships. The Maduro regime, meanwhile, continues to pursue failed policies and financing schemes to mask the regime's corruption and gross mismanagement. The United States has imposed sanctions on many who have profited during Venezuela's decline — like former Executive Vice President Tarek El Aissami (El Aissami) and Cabello — as well as front-men like Rafael Sarria whose relative anonymity is used to the benefit of senior officials.

The United States will continue to use every available diplomatic and economic tool to support the Venezuelan people's efforts to restore their democracy. U.S. sanctions need not be permanent; they are intended to change behavior. The United States has made it clear that we

will consider lifting sanctions for persons designated under E.O. 13692 who take concrete and meaningful actions to restore democratic order, refuse to take part in human rights abuses, speak out against abuses committed by the government, and combat corruption in Venezuela.

MADURO'S INNER CIRCLE

OFAC designated Nicolas Maduro on July 31, 2017. Today's designations target key current or former officials of the Venezuelan government. Maduro has relied on key figures, such as previously designated Cabello and El Aissami, and those officials being designated today, to maintain his grip on power. Maduro has also installed another member of his inner circle and lifelong member of the Venezuelan military, Vladimir Padrino Lopez, to help ensure the military's loyalty to the Maduro regime. Finally, Maduro has given Delcy Eloina Rodriguez Gomez and Jorge Jesus Rodriguez Gomez senior positions within the Venezuelan government to help him maintain power and solidify his authoritarian rule.

- **Cilia Adela Flores De Maduro (Flores)** is the wife of President Nicolas Maduro. She resigned from her position as a National Assembly Deputy in mid-2017 to run as a candidate for the ANC. Prior to this resignation, Flores was a principal for the Cojedes State in the Venezuelan National Assembly. In February 2017, Flores was a member of the Presidential Commission responsible for the formation and operation of the ANC process. From August 15, 2005 through January 5, 2011, Flores was the President of the Legislative Power (National Assembly). In February 2012, now-deceased former President, Hugo Chavez, appointed Flores as the Attorney General of Venezuela.
- **Delcy Eloina Rodriguez Gomez (Delcy Rodriguez)** was delegated the role and authorities of the Executive Vice President of Venezuela on June 14, 2018. On August 4, 2017, Delcy Rodriguez was elected president of the new ANC, a position now held by Cabello. In December 2014, Delcy Rodriguez was named the Minister of Popular Power for External Relations.
- **Jorge Jesus Rodriguez Gomez (Jorge Rodriguez)** was appointed to the position of Minister of Popular Power for Communication and Information in late 2017. On November 23, 2008, Jorge Rodriguez was elected Mayor of Caracas, Libertador District, and held the position until he was appointed to the aforementioned Minister position. On January 8, 2007, Jorge Rodriguez was sworn in as the Vice President of Venezuela.
- **Vladimir Padrino Lopez (Padrino)** was appointed the Sectoral Vice President of Political Sovereignty, Security, and Peace (Venezuelan Defense Minister) in June 2018. He previously

held a multitude of military posts, including Second Commander and Chief of the General Staff of the Bolivarian and Joint Chief of Staff of the Central Integral Defense Strategic Region.



RAFAEL ALFREDO SARRIA DIAZ'S FRONT NETWORK

OFAC designated Rafael Sarria on May 18, 2018 for acting for or on behalf of Cabello as his front person and maintaining an illicit business relationship with Cabello since at least 2010. During this time, Rafael Sarria owned several real estate properties in Florida that were registered under his name, but in reality he acted as the named representative for Cabello on these properties. As of 2018, Rafael Sarria continues to advise and assist Cabello, profiting from the investment of Cabello's corruptly obtained wealth.

Today, OFAC identified a Gulfstream 200 private jet, tail number N488RC, located in Florida, as blocked property. Rafael Sarria originally purchased the plane, but his beneficial ownership had been obfuscated through the following companies that act for or on his behalf:

- **Agencia Vehiculos Especiales Rurales y Urbanos, C.A. (AVERUCA, C.A.):** AVERUCA, C.A. is a Venezuelan company that currently operates the aforementioned aircraft, and for which Rafael Sarria is identified as the President. As the President of AVERUCA, C.A., Rafael Sarria purchased the aircraft in 2008 for an approximate price of \$20 million.
- **Jose Omar Paredes (Paredes):** Paredes is identified as the Chief Pilot of AVERUCA, C.A., and given this role, he is responsible for the operational control of the aircraft.
- **Quiana Trading Limited (Quiana Trading):** Quiana Trading is a British Virgin Islands company for which Rafael Sarria, at the time of registration in 2009, was the President and sole shareholder. Quiana Trading is the beneficial owner of the aforementioned aircraft through a trust agreement.
- **Edgar Alberto Sarria Diaz (Edgar Sarria):** Edgar Sarria is identified as a Director of Quiana Trading. Additionally, Edgar Sarria is the Chief Executive Officer and sole shareholder of Panazeate SL.
- **Panazeate SL:** Panazeate SL is a company based in Valencia, Spain, which is owned or controlled by Edgar Sarria.

As a result of this action, all property and interests in property of those designated today subject to U.S. jurisdiction are blocked, and U.S. persons are generally prohibited from engaging in transactions with them.

For additional information about the methods that Venezuelan senior political figures, their associates, and front persons use to move and hide corrupt proceeds, including how they try to exploit the U.S. financial system and real estate market, please refer to FinCEN's advisories [FIN-2017-A006](#) , "Advisory on Widespread Public Corruption in Venezuela," and [FIN-2017-A003](#) , "Advisory to Financial Institutions and Real Estate Firms and Professionals."

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

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