

Treasury Sanctions Officials Aligned with Former President Nicolas Maduro and Involved in Repression and Corruption

February 15, 2019

Treasury continues to target security and oil officials undermining democracy and human rights

Washington – Today, the U.S. Department of the Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) designated five officials aligned with illegitimate former President Nicolas Maduro, who continue to repress democracy and democratic actors in Venezuela and engage in significant corruption and fraud against the people of Venezuela. This action, pursuant to Executive Order (E.O.) 13692, targets the head of the Venezuelan National Intelligence Service (SEBIN), Manuel Ricardo Christopher Figuera, and SEBIN’s First Commissioner, Hildemaro Jose Rodriguez Mucura; the Commander of Venezuela’s Directorate General of Military Counter-Intelligence, Ivan Rafael Hernandez Dala; and the Director of the Venezuelan National Police’s Special Actions Force (FAES), Rafael Enrique Bastardo Mendoza. Additionally OFAC designated the illegitimate President of Venezuela’s state-owned oil company, Petroleos de Venezuela, S.A. (PdVSA), Manuel Salvador Quevedo Fernandez.

“Treasury continues to target officials who have helped the illegitimate Maduro regime repress the Venezuelan people. We are sanctioning officials in charge of Maduro’s security and intelligence apparatus, which has systematically violated human rights and suppressed democracy, including through torture and other brutal use of force,” said Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin. “We are intent on going after those facilitating Maduro’s corruption and predation, including by sanctioning the President of PdVSA and others diverting assets that rightfully belong to the people of Venezuela.”

As a result of today’s action, all property and interests in property of these individuals, and of any entities that are owned, directly or indirectly, 50% or more by such individuals, that are in the United States or in the possession or control of U.S. persons are blocked and must be reported to OFAC. OFAC’s regulations generally prohibit all dealings by U.S. persons or within (or transiting) the United States that involve any property or interests in property of blocked or designated persons.

U.S. sanctions need not be permanent; sanctions are intended to bring about a positive change of behavior. The United States has made clear that we will consider lifting sanctions for persons designated under E.O. 13692 or E.O. 13850 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.

The following five individuals designated today have been determined to be current or former officials of the Government of Venezuela:

- **Ivan Rafael Hernandez Dala (Hernandez)** is the Commander of illegitimate former-President Maduro's Presidential Guard, or *Guardia de Honor Presidencial*, a position he was appointed to in January 2014. Additionally, Hernandez is Commander of Venezuela's Directorate General of Military Counter-Intelligence, or *Director General de Contrainteligencia Militar*, more commonly known as DGCIM. The DGCIM, in addition to SEBIN, is responsible for serious human rights abuses and the repression of civil society and the democratic opposition. DGCIM has detained and tortured Venezuelan military members suspected of plotting against the government, and has detained and tortured family members of some of those suspects in order to gain information. Abuses reportedly carried out by the DGCIM and SEBIN include brutal beatings, asphyxiation, cutting soles of feet with razor blades, electric shocks, and death threats. Under his command, DGCIM members have often used excessive force against detainees. Hernandez was promoted to the rank of Major General on July 5, 2018.
- **Manuel Ricardo Cristopher Figuera (Cristopher)** is the Director General of the Venezuelan National Intelligence Service, or *Servicio Bolivariano de Inteligencia Nacional*, more commonly referenced to as SEBIN. Cristopher replaced Gustavo Gonzalez Lopez, who was designated by OFAC pursuant to E.O. 13692 on March 9, 2015, who occupied that position from March 9, 2015 until October 30, 2018. Prior to his role with SEBIN, Cristopher was President, with the rank of Director General, of the *Centro Estratégico de Seguridad y Protección de la Patria*, or Strategic Center of Security and Protection of the Homeland, the Venezuelan government organization responsible for the unification of information related to defense, intelligence, internal order, and external relations. According to an official of the Venezuelan opposition party, Justice First, or *Primero Justicia*, Cristopher oversees mass torture, mass human rights violations, and mass persecution against those who want democratic change in Venezuela.
- **Hildemaro Jose Rodriguez Mucura (Mucura)** is the First Commissioner of SEBIN. On January 11, 2019, Mucura, along with three other SEBIN officers, detained Interim President

of Venezuela and President of the Venezuelan National Assembly, Juan Guaidó. Mucura directed the detainment of Guaidó, and was one of 12 SEBIN officials later arrested for their association with Guaidó's temporary detainment.

- **Rafael Enrique Bastardo Mendoza (Bastardo)** is the Commander of a Venezuelan National Police Unit commonly referred to as the Special Actions Force, or *Fuerzas de Acciones Especiales* (FAES). Additionally, Bastardo was promoted to the position of Lieutenant Colonel on July 5, 2018, as a member of the Venezuelan National Guard. FAES has been branded as Maduro's "extermination squad," known for its brutal methods and masked appearances, carrying out nighttime raids throughout Caracas. Since Guaidó assumed his position as Interim President, FAES has been accused of dozens of extrajudicial killings targeting the opposition. On January 31, 2019, in the middle of Guaidó's news conference on his economic plans, Guaidó said that FAES were in his home threatening his family.
- **Manuel Salvador Quevedo Fernandez (Quevedo)** is the current President of Venezuelan state-owned oil company, PdVSA, which he has continued to represent even after OFAC designated PdVSA pursuant to E.O. 13850 on January 28, 2019. PdVSA is Venezuela's primary source of income and foreign currency, and has long been used as a vehicle for significant government corruption. Government officials and businessmen alike devised schemes to launder billions of dollars stolen and embezzled for their personal gain. Quevedo is also the illegitimate Minister of Petroleum and Mining aligned with former President Maduro, a position he has served in since November 26, 2017. Quevedo previously served in numerous government positions, including as the Minister of Housing and Habitat, and as a Brigadier General and head of Regional Command number 5, located in Greater Caracas.

For 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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