

**Letter to Congressional Leaders on Blocking Property and Suspending Entry of Certain Persons Contributing to the Situation in Venezuela**

*March 8, 2015*

*Dear Mr. Speaker: (Mr. President:)*

Pursuant to the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 *et seq.*) (IEEPA), I hereby report that I have issued an Executive Order (the "order") declaring a national emergency with respect to the unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States posed by the situation in Venezuela. The order does not target the people of Venezuela, but rather is aimed at persons involved in or responsible for the erosion of human rights guarantees, persecution of political opponents, curtailment of press freedoms, use of violence and human rights violations and abuses in response to antigovernment protests, and arbitrary arrest and detention of antigovernment protestors, as well as the exacerbating presence of significant public corruption in that country. In addition to taking action under IEEPA, the order implements the Venezuela Defense of Human Rights and Civil Society Act of 2014 (Public Law 113–278) (the "Act"), which I signed on December 18, 2014, and delegates certain of its authorities.

The order blocks the property and interests in property of persons listed in an Annex to the order and would block the property and interests in property of any person determined by the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Secretary of State:

- to be responsible for or complicit in, or responsible for ordering, controlling, or otherwise directing, or to have participated in, directly or indirectly, any of the following in or in relation to Venezuela:
  - actions or policies that undermine democratic processes or institutions;
  - significant acts of violence or conduct that constitutes a serious abuse or violation of human rights, including against persons involved in antigovernment protests in Venezuela in or since February 2014;
  - actions that prohibit, limit, or penalize the exercise of freedom of expression or peaceful assembly; or
  - public corruption by senior officials within the Government of Venezuela;
- to be a current or former leader of an entity that has, or whose members have, engaged in any activity described in the order or of an entity whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to the order;
- to be a current or former official of the Government of Venezuela;
- to have materially assisted, sponsored, or provided financial, material, or technological support for, or goods or services to or in support of:
  - a person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to the order; or
  - an activity described in the order; or

- to be owned or controlled by, or to have acted or purported to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, any person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to the order.

In addition, the order suspends entry into the United States of any alien listed in the Annex or determined to meet one or more of the above criteria.

I have delegated to the Secretary of the Treasury the authority, in consultation with the Secretary of State, to take such actions, including the promulgation of rules and regulations, and to employ all powers granted to the President by IEEPA and relevant provisions of the Act as may be necessary to carry out the purposes of the order, other than the provision suspending entry into the United States of certain aliens, and to carry out the related provisions of the Act. I have delegated to the Secretary of State the authority to take such actions, including the promulgation of rules and regulations, and to employ all powers granted to the President by IEEPA and relevant provisions of the Act as may be necessary to carry out the provision of the order and the Act suspending entry into the United States of certain aliens and the authority to issue waivers under the Act. All executive agencies are directed to take all appropriate measures within their authority to carry out the provisions of the order.

I am enclosing a copy of the Executive Order I have issued.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to John A. Boehner, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the Senate. The letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 9.

*Categories:* Communications to Congress : Venezuela, blocking property and suspending entry, letter.

*Subjects:* State, Department of : Secretary; Treasury, Department of the : Secretary; Venezuela : Government officials, corruption issues; Venezuela : Human rights issues; Venezuela : Political unrest and violence; Venezuela : Relations with U.S.

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