

# **An Open Report to AfGJ and A-APRP <sup>(GC)</sup> from Banbose Shango**

## **In Recognition of their Solidarity with Venezuela**

### **On the Occasion of the National Assembly Elections in Venezuela, December 6, 2020**

We extend our thanks to the Alliance for Global Justice, which grew out of the Nicaraguan Network in 1998, the same year as the election of Hugo Chavez in Venezuela. AfGJ had been aware of the US role in undermining countries including Nicaragua in the global south and the need to be in solidarity with those struggles also. By 2006 the AfGJ had taken a leadership role in the organization of two national solidarity conferences on Venezuela, out of which grew a call for the creation of the Venezuelan Solidarity Network (VSN functioning under AFGJ). The VSN and the Bolivarian Embassy of Venezuela in Washington organized an Symposium on Venezuela in 2007 at Howard U. AfGJ' staff Chuck, James, Kathy, I worked on this. However, the solidarity movement with Venezuela ran into financial crisis and the VSN had to close.

AfGJ never gave up on Venezuela. They organized the Venezuelan Strategy Group in 2016. AfGJ has intensified their work on Venezuela during the Trump administration. They helped to provide transportation for a member of BLM-OKC to take part in the 2020 National Assembly elections as an election observer.



The invisible African/Afro-descendant peoples of South and Central America became known by the international community in the 1970s. The All-African People's Revolutionary Party became aware of this African population of Venezuela during this time. The A-APRP was at the forefront of the revolutionary African movements organizing in the USA to work to identify, document and support African people and their progressive and revolutionary movements in the Americas and the Caribbean. Pushed in many ways by our members in the Caribbean because of proximity, we met the African Brazilian, Colombians, Hondurans, the Africans in Nicaragua, Panama, Belize, Bolivia, Ecuador, Venezuela, and others. In 1967, we met our sisters, brothers, and comrades from Venezuela through Kwame Ture at OLAS in Havana. In 2001 inside the USA. Members of (GC) have visited and participated in events in Venezuela since. Many organizations have aided the A-APRP/A-APRP<sup>(GC)</sup> in this process. The A-APRP-GC continues this struggle to meet and unite.



Inheritor and Continuator of the  
Revolutionary Theory and Practice of Kwame  
Nkrumah, Sekou Toure and Kwame Ture!



KWAME NKUMAH SEKOU TOURE KWAME TURE

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## • Introduction

On December 5, 2020 I traveled to Venezuela as an independent international election observer for the National Assembly Elections in Venezuela. I was accompanied by two representatives of Black Lives Matter-Oklahoma City, Sheri Dickerson & Josh Higginbotham. We were assisted in this observer mission by AfGJ. The A-APRP<sup>(GC)</sup> also supported my participation. We were invited by the Ministerio del Poder Popular, Venezuelan Electoral Power, The Plataforma Clase Obrera Ant Imperialista and the International Cumbe of Afrodescendants, (Cumbe Internacional Afrodescendiente).

As we observed the December 6<sup>th</sup> election, I realized that that we needed to be in those spaces at that time because the progressive government of Venezuela and their political party, the PSUV, have done so much for the Afro-Descendants and the Venezuelan people in general, and thus we owe them a debt of gratitude.

We saw people proud to defend their government and their country against the regime-change agenda of the Trump-Pence-Pompeo administration of the United States. Since the election of President Hugo Chavez in 1999 and his expressed desire to use the oil wealth of Venezuela for the benefit of her people, the US has held the absurd position that Venezuela is a threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States. The Obama administration officially labeled Venezuela this threat to the USA in March 2015. It is clear to any unbiased observer that Venezuela is a threat only by demonstrating how good governance and prioritizing the people rather than an imperialist agenda contrasts with the privation and suffering of poor, working class and marginalized people in the United States, which spends its wealth on neoliberal and imperialist adventurism rather than investing in its population.

We are thankful for this opportunity to act in solidarity with the Venezuelan people in ensuring the integrity of their elections. But even more than this we want to make this report a teaching experience

for those in the US who read it. We congratulate Venezuela on conducting a free, fair, transparent, and democratic election. We are elated to have played a small part in the Venezuelan people's triumph against neoliberalism, neo-colonialism and the reactionary forces used for U.S. interference and regime change agenda.

- **The Significance of the December 6<sup>th</sup> elections**

We understand the significance of this election for the Venezuelan National Assembly, created by the constitution of 2000. We recall the reactionary opposition that seized the National Assembly in the December 7, 2015 election, winning 99 seats of the 167 seat-legislature and giving them a super majority. They immediately set about sabotaging, dismantling, and destroying the Bolivarian project.

In the Bolivarian Constitution of 2000, it states that "...the deputies are to elect a president and two vice-presidents from among themselves to administer and represent the National Assembly for a period of one year."

It was this opposition led National Assembly of 2015-2020 that elected Juan Guaido, leader of the Popular Will (VP) party as president of the National Assembly for the period January 2019 – 2020. On January 23, 2019, the day after Guaido had received a call from US Vice President Pence, he declared himself president of Venezuela and illegally took the oath of office<sup>1</sup>. Although Juan Guaido was relatively unknown both within Venezuela and outside of it, he immediately became a spectacle in international politics. He soon proved to be little more than a neocolonial agent, the product of Anti-Chavismo right-wing Catholic university student uprising of 2006 that was pushing for regime change in Venezuela at the behest of the United States of America.

After Guaido declared himself the interim president of the country illegally on January 23, 2019 the government of the US, Canada, England, and Israel immediately recognized his presidency and as a pre-planned arrangement and they solicited 30 other countries to formally recognize his presidency as well. It is notable that only one of these countries are on the African continent, it is unsurprising that this country happened to be the feudal monarchy of Morocco.

In 2020 Guaido's term of office in the National Assembly expired. With splits inside the Venezuelan right-wing, which had grown tired of Guaido's individualistic plots, the National Assembly elected Luis Parra as its President for the 2020-2021 legislative session. However, the very day of the election, Guaido claimed to have won the presidency once again in a meeting held at the *El Nacional*, the national newspaper. It was taken to be more of a show of his desperation than a serious dispute.

With the previous year in mind, an examination of the revolutionary significance of the December 6<sup>th</sup> elections victory for PSUV is in order. Though its turnout of 31% voter participation was low for its election, Venezuela rate was compatible with other nations for 2020, especially considering the conditions caused by the global pandemic. Venezuela's rate was just above Egypt with 28% (elections held Nov. 7-8, 2020) and Jordan at 29.8% (elections held Nov. 10, 2020) and just below Romania's at 33%, (elections held Dec. 6, 2020), and Jamaica at 37% (elections held Sep. 3, 2020). The US midterm elections of 2019 saw a mere 40% turnout and was not held in the midst of a global pandemic.

On January 4<sup>th</sup>, 2021, Deputy Jorge Rodriquez (pictured below) was elected President of the Venezuelan National Assembly. He is the son of Jorge Antonio Rodriguez, the popular socialist leader brutally murdered on 25 July 1976 by forces loyal to then President Andres Carlos Perez.



**President elect of Venezuelan National Assembly Jorge Rodriquez, being sworn in.**



***Members of the OKC delegation, Josh, Sheri and Banbose. Sheri with past president of Ecuador Rafael Correa***



***Banbose as election Observer at polling station. Fernando Lugo, past president of Paraguay, Evo Morales, past President of Bolivia also came to observe the Venezuelan National Assembly election***

It should be noted that in spite of their obvious political differences. PSUV and Venezuelan opposition parties certified the 2020 elections as fair and fraud-free. What we observed along with 261 other independent international election observers from over 34 countries including the USA, is the election was a peaceful, fair, transparent and credible process.

- **We offer the following reasons for the turnout**

- A US call to boycott the election by all Venezuelan opposition parties. It was not really a suggestion but rather an order, and the leadership of those opposition parties that refused to follow the order were placed on sanction by the Trump-Pence administration. But even under these sanctions most opposition parties participated, except the far-right extremist such as the members of Juan Guido's and Leopoldo Lopez's Voluntad Popular (VP or Popular Will) party.
- The COVID-19 pandemic. According to the WHO statistics on the virus, Venezuela has the fifth lowest Covid-19 death and infection rates in all of South and Central America, coming in only behind French Guiana, Uruguay, Guyana, and Nicaragua with a total of 954 deaths as of December 15, 2020. We who came from the United States found a much higher degree of awareness of the danger of the virus and the need to protect oneself and the public there, compared to what exists in the US. We are sure this had an impact on the election turnout.
- The illegal US sanctions against Venezuela. These of course affected the overall turnout in the elections causing people to not expend their meager resources to get to the polls. Many election observers saw firsthand how U.S. sanctions caused gasoline shortages and lines at the pumps that Venezuelans are facing today.

Despite these obstacles, the turnout on election day was approximately one out of every three eligible voters. Overall voter turnout is aided by the fact that in Venezuela every eligible voter is automatically registered. This simple provision among others made it abundantly clear to us that Venezuela's

election was more open and fairer than election in the United States, which are fraught with voter suppression, district gerrymandering and other efforts to limit the electoral power of voters, especially BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) and poor people.

Questions raised by the neoliberal imperialist media in Canada, the U.S. and Europe are just subterfuge compared to the role these countries played in attempting to sabotage the election so that it meets their narrative for regime change.

No legitimate questions remain today with respect to the openness and fairness of the Venezuelan election on 6th of December. The only questions that remain to be answered are regarding the extent of U.S. involvement in attempts to subvert Venezuelan democracy and independence; how the Organization of American States has been used by imperialism and why; and what is the National Endowment for Democracy's and USAID's role, and who is this neoliberal, neocolonial puppet Juan Guaido?

- **Venezuelan Chávez-Maduro-PSUV Successes**

What did the US Government fear from Venezuela and before them Cuba? Could it be that both countries are examples of what a better society that place the people over profit can become, especially if left unhampered by the USA:

Venezuela developed a free socialized education and health system for all. Mission Barrio Adentro (Inside the community) which has brought over thirty thousand Cuban doctors to underserved communities in Venezuela. Mission Miracle using Venezuelan ophthalmologists, has restored the eyesight of many thousands of patients from multiple countries.

In the area of education Mission Robinson founded in 2003 utilizes Cuban teaching materials in a method called "Yes I can!" In the first two year of Mission Robinson literacy was provided for 1.5 million Venezuelan, illiteracy rate for 21- to 60-year-old fell to 0.4%. Mission Robinson also focused on senior students. By 2012 Venezuela University Education Mission reached over 695,000 students.

Yet another program, the Food Mission, CLAP (Local Supply and Production Committee), a subsidize food program serving over six million Venezuelans. Most notable is that this is one of the programs that the Trump, Pence Administration has vowed to destroy.

Venezuela's "Great Housing Mission" (GMVV) has set as its goals to build at least five million homes by the end of 2025. In 2020 they had reached over half of that goal set by President Chavez in 2011. "The homes are distributed through the Carnet de la Patria, or Homeland Card, a state-regulated mechanism for accessing social programs."

Other programs and missions are all geared to ensuring that the masses of people in Venezuela live well, and that their quality of life is improved. This is the reasoning behind the Mission for Authorities – to restructure the National Police Force.

The Anti-Poverty Mission created in 2015 to fight poverty, and many others. The missions are the driving force behind the creation of the Homeland Card in 2017, designed to streamline access to social programs among the country's most vulnerable sectors over 15-years-old.

- **Foreign Policy and Alliances**

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Early in their development, the PSUV, President Hugo Chavez realized the necessity to form strong international alliances against US imperialism. They created international bodies such as ALBA (The Bolivarian Alliance for the People of Our America) as early as December 2004, and CELAC, (The Community of Latin American and Caribbean States), founded in Mexico in 2010. The African-South American Organization founded in 2004, which has expanded to include 54 African and 12 South American countries. The first of its three summits took place in Nigeria in 2006, where current Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro represented Venezuela as the country's foreign minister.

The creation of TeleSUR, in July 2005, the ALBA-TV and the only news station presenting an objective world news analysis especially for south and central American was another strategic significance.

ALBA was founded with the objectives of building an alliance of the progressive countries of South & Central America and the Caribbean. Promoting political, economically, and social integration of Latin America and the Caribbean.

ALBA plans included the creation of a Bank of the South/ALBA Bank, the banks ..."currency's name was both an abbreviation of Sistema Único de Compensación Regional [Unified System of Regional Compensation] and a reference to South American historic independence leader [Antonio José de Sucre](#), a compatriot of ALBA's own namesake, [Simón Bolívar](#).) this bank would be an alternative for Latin America and the Caribbean countries which for years have been at the mercy of the exploitative International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, both controlled by the USA.

"Other longer-term plans have included the implementation of regional literacy and health care programs, the creation of an arbitration court, and the establishment of a united military force of ALBA members." In preparation for the united military force of ALBA, President Evo Morales of Bolivia established ALBA's Regional Defense School in Santa Cruz to develop the "common defense doctrine."

This writer had the privilege to attend in April 2007, the founding of the Council of ALBA Social Movements, in Barquisimeto, Venezuela. This council was the beginning of the end for imperialism domination of the non-governmental social movements sectors of the Americas and the Caribbean through funding and advisers, usually from the CIA and NED.



*ALBA meeting in Barquisimeto, Venezuela April 2007*

The current countries of ALBA are Antigua and Barbuda, Bolivia, Cuba, Dominica, Grenada, Nicaragua, Saint Kitts & Nevis Federation, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Venezuela. (2018)

At the ALBA meeting of 2019 there was an agreement to concentrate on the Petro Caribe project and to prioritize the Mission Miracle and the ALBA culture.

The Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, (CELAC) is comprised of 32 member states: Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Dominica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Co-operative Republic of Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Santa Lucia, Federation of Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay, and Venezuela. In January 2020, Brazil under the leadership of its right wing president Jair Bolsonaro, known as mini-Trump, suspended its membership in CELAC.

On 28 January 2014 the summit for CELAC was held in Havana, Cuba. Many speculated that the summit proceedings indicated that the region is distancing itself from the United States. Following the summit, all 33 nations from CELAC adopted a landmark agreement making the region a “**zone of peace**”. The agreement highlights the Tlatelolco Treaty and the unity of the region.

PetroCaribe was created alongside the ALBA in 2005 to supply Venezuelan crude oil to Caribbean and Central American nations at preferential prices with long-term payment plans or in exchange for other goods or services, including doctors or agrarian technicians. It benefitted all ALBA members as

well as other neighboring countries including El Salvador, Jamaica, and Haiti. The program closed in 2018 because of US sanctions.

An appendage to PetroCaribe was taking shape in New York, On November 17, 2006--CITGO Petroleum Corporation, in partnership with Citizens Energy Corporation, made its first delivery of discount heating oil of the 2006-2007 winter season. The CITGOVenezuela heating oil program is committed to delivering more than 25 million gallons of fuel, at a 40 percent discount, to more than 100,000 needy households in New York City. The program will deliver fuel to eligible families throughout the five boroughs. The initiative will also devote 5 percent of the delivery volume free of charge to homeless shelters during the heating season. The initial delivery was made to a 60-unit Bronx apartment building, whose low-income tenants will receive rent rebates because of the discount delivery of 200 gallons per unit.

### **Venezuela and Africa**

Venezuela has prioritized developing relations with Africa. It currently has more embassies in Africa, third only to Cuba and Brazil. Venezuela has 16 Embassies in Africa. It did have an Embassy in Morocco, which was closed because of Venezuela's principled support for the POLISARIO Liberation Movement in Western Sahara. Venezuela has held numerous South-South Conferences and has signed many agreements with African nations on cooperation and development. Many of Venezuela's ambassadors to African nations are members of the Afro-Venezuelan Network. Jesus Chucho Garcia one of the founders of the Network was Venezuelan Ambassador to Angola. The Afro-Venezuelan Network has championed the struggle of the Afro-descendente community and has allied closely with Hugo Chavez and the PSUV.

### **Gains for Venezuelan workers including paid maternity leave for mother and father.**

Labor is seen as a key importance for building 21<sup>st</sup> Century Socialism in Venezuela. Maria Cristina Iglesias, Labor Minister (2013) emphasizes that the increase in free time for the working classes "opens important spaces... to work more for the development of the country and also free days to enjoy family time, recreation, to study, or for the National Recreation Plan, which is being extended to all public spaces". The human right to family time, time for recreation, sport, to study, and for voluntary or community work is guaranteed in the Constitution on an equal footing as the right to work.

In Venezuelan history, Hugo Chavez was the first president to declare himself a feminist. Gender equality was always among the commander's concerns, and he was determined to highlight women's

role in society, primarily through measures expressed in the [1999] Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

Under the Lottt, Venezuelan Labor Law) Venezuela now has the world's third longest maternity leave. Mothers are entitled to six weeks pre-natal leave, and twenty post-natal. Fathers are also entitled to two weeks paternity leave. Under the law, the same conditions apply to parents who adopt a child under three years of age.

### **How has the US attacked Venezuela with the CIA, sanctions, USAID, NED, Colombia, OAS, Juan Guaido, and asymmetric warfare?**

The US have used every weapon at its disposal, both governmental and private, national and international, everything short of the nuclear option to attack the sovereignty of the Venezuelan state and the liberation of its people.

In November 2007, Venezuelan intelligence acquired a CIA document from the US Embassy in Caracas which reported a CIA program called OPERATION PLIERS" was authored by CIA Officer Michael Middleton Steere. The report outlined its objectives as "Operation Pliers," a manual for election interference. See it here: <http://www.venezuelanalysis.com/analysis/2914>. This plan has been used in Venezuela in every election since 2001. Including the recent December 6, elections.

When we look at US sanctions against Venezuela it is a unilateral act, not sanctioned by the UN or the rest of the independent world, even though the US have lobbied both the UN and individual nations to gain legitimacy for their sanctions. But even more insidious is that mass punishment and mass suffering that it has caused among the Venezuelan masses. Sanctions is not some gray area between war, diplomacy and peace. Sanctions is a tool of war, and it takes innocent lives.

The US has sanctions over 30 countries of the world representing over 25 percent of the world's population. "That U.S. sanctions are "blatant violations of international law," the letter states, is not in doubt. As the American Special Rapporteur to the UN, Alfred de Zayas, [notes](#), only sanctions expressly verified and imposed collectively by the UN Security Council can be considered legal; any unilateral punishment is, by definition, illegal." The Portside.org article continued ... "The sanctions meant that Venezuela was unable to import key medicines for conditions like cancer and diabetes, leading to scores of deaths. A 2019 [report](#) from the Washington-based Center for Economic Policy Research conservatively estimated the sanctions killed 40,000 Venezuelans between mid-2017 and 2018."

In July 2019, the Trump chose to intensify the sanctions effect in starving the Venezuelan people by placing sanctions on the leadership and suppliers of food to the CLAP (the food mission) “The Foreign Ministry likewise reacted through a [statement](#), denouncing the “the criminal purpose of depriving Venezuelans of their right to food.”

“The Trump administration has blocked bank transactions, food and medicine purchases, as well as an endless number of actions meant to achieve regime change by non-constitutional means,” the statement reads.

Funding opposition to ferment regime change by the USA is not new in Venezuela as can be observed by the documentation of Gregory Wilpert “[Changing Venezuela By Taking Power](#)” and Eva Golinger’s book “[The Chavez Code: Cracking US Intervention in Venezuela](#)”. “The United States government has almost perfected a method of intervention that is able to penetrate and infiltrate all sectors of civil society in a country which it deems to be of economic and strategic interest. In the case of Venezuela, this strategy began to take form in 2002. Now it is also being applied to Bolivia.” The US Neo-colonial client state Colombia, which boasts of being the only non-northern member of NATO, is a major threat to the people of Venezuela. As a neighboring border country, Colombia is a greater threat than the right-wing neighboring border country of Brazil. Colombia has seven US military bases and has been used in the past as staging points for invasion of US mercenaries into Venezuela. In September 2020, Mike Pompeo, speaking in Brazil said that “The new funding brings the United States' total humanitarian and development assistance for the Venezuela regional crisis to more than \$1.2 billion since Fiscal Year 2017.” The fact is that this funding has one major purpose – ‘regime change’. It is not driven by any altruistic or humanistic objective.

The Organization of American State constitutes another weapon in the US arsenal against Venezuela. President Evo Morales of Bolivia stated on June 4, 2018 that ““We condemn the interventionist intention of the U.S. Vice President Mike Pence who was defeated in his coup plan against Venezuela and announced that he will ask the OAS assembly for the suspension of the sister nation,” the Bolivian president wrote on Twitter adding the United States intends to use the agency as a “repressive stick” against the sovereign nation.” He was so right because one year and five months later November 11, 2019, the OAS orchestrated a coup d’état against Evo Morales, which was only overthrown with the reelection of the MAS Party on October 19, 2020. To gain a better understanding of this OAS role allow me to refer you to a speech by President Rafael Correa of Ecuador on April 10, 2015 at this link. <https://venezuelanalysis.com/analysis/12016> . And for more understanding of this international organization, we should also recall that Cuba, a founding member was suspended from OAS from 1962 until 2008. At the demand of the U.S. which said the Cuban government under Fidel Castro was not compatible with the government of the other American states. The OAS were involved

in numerous plots to demonize and overthrow the Cuban government. When it became clear that strategy had failed. Cuba was re-admitted without pre-conditions to right a historical wrong. However, a Declaration of the Revolutionary Government dated 8 June 2009 stated that while Cuba welcomed the Assembly's gesture, considering the Organization's historical record "Cuba will not return to the OAS". The OAS has outlived its usefulness and must be retired.

Back in 2008, author Eva Golinger explained the new type of war that Venezuela is facing from the US, and its strategic objectives. She noted: to Relate Chávez with: \*Drug trafficking; \*Terrorism; \*A Dictatorship; \*An Arms Race; \*Money Laundering; \*A Threat Against Regional Security

While the Pompeo State Department, and newly President Elect Joe Biden is still trying to prop up Juan Guido, his kingmaker has been overthrown (Trump) and eventually Biden will abandon him, the European Union already has. They are now searching for someone to replace him. We will oppose whoever they produce also.

- **What friends of Venezuela and people who want justice and peace must do now?**
  1. Organize a broad base information campaign to fight misinformation on Venezuela, using social media especially tele-conferencing platforms.
  2. Organize to shut down and destroy the OAS as an arm of the US government used to control and manipulate sovereign nations of the global South.
  3. Work with organizations exposing the internal functioning and financing of NED and USAID.
  4. Build a national movement in solidarity with Venezuela using the model of the International Cuban solidarity movement.
  5. Prepared to challenge the Biden-Harris government when they try to have Regime Change in Venezuela. Their process will be different from Trump's, but their objectives will be the same.

In conclusion, this report demonstrates how imperative it is for us to continue the fight against neo-liberalism, neo-colonialism, regime change, sanctions, and the fascist political structures of the United States and their allies. We must meet hegemony head-to-head and not defer in fear, but triumph against this type of ideology.

The Venezuelan election is a prime example of not succumbing to an agenda imposed by a Superpower. The fight against foreign interference and sanctions by the Trump administration, was met with a fraud-free and transparent election. While this may be considered by some as a microscopic victory in comparison to the eradication of US/European imperialism, neo-colonialism,

and supremacy across the globe. It is a major victory for the people of Venezuela, South & Central America, and the Caribbean. It also demonstrates how organization and solidarity can defeat our oppressors.