



Fire This Time Movement for Social Justice
Statement on OAS General Secretary Luis Almagro

March 24, 2017

On Monday, March 20 Organization of the American States (OAS) General-Secretary Luis Almagro renewed his witch hunt against the democratically elected government of Venezuela. In another incredible display of blatant bias and opportunism he was joined by key members of Venezuela's right-wing opposition to call for Venezuela's suspension from the regional group. Fire This Time Movement for Social Justice joins hundreds of social movements, intellectuals and governments in denouncing this reactionary and obvious provocation.

This is not the first time Almagro has tried to intervene in the domestic affairs of Venezuela. In June of 2016 he tried to invoke the "democratic charter" against Venezuela to suspend its membership in the OAS, while also publicly supporting a re-call of democratically elected Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro. Unfortunately for him, both of his maneuverings inside and outside of Venezuela completely failed.

With its headquarters and much of its funding coming from Washington, DC the OAS has a long and shameful history of being used as a tool for US intervention in Latin America. Cuba was famously suspended in 1962 after overthrowing the US backed dictator Fulgencio Batista and refusing to bow to US domination. Realizing their Cuba policy was isolating them in Latin-America, in 2009 the US agreed that Cuba re-join the OAS. Cuba refused stating that the organization still had the same dynamic of US control. With General-Secretaries like Almagro, who could blame Cuba!

Almagro's offensive and hostile move against Venezuela coincides with a continued push by the US government to overthrow the democratically elected government of Nicolas Maduro in Venezuela. As one of the final acts of his presidency, Barack Obama renewed the executive order declaring Venezuela "an extraordinary threat" to US national security. This outrageous action enables the US Congress to continue their sanctions against Venezuela and opens the door to the possibility of military intervention.

The new President of the US, Donald Trump, and his new Secretary of State Rex Tillerson have already publicly called for the interference of other Latin American countries in Venezuela's domestic affairs. The US also continues to give millions of dollars to violent right-wing opposition groups in Venezuela to destabilize and to force the government of Venezuela to comply with US interests in Latin America.

We thoroughly condemn the Canadian government's ongoing participation in this campaign. This includes most recently joining 13 other OAS member countries in issuing a statement threatening to suspend Venezuela from the OAS over unproven and inflated allegations. These countries are a clear minority of the 34 member organizations, and much less than the two thirds vote which would be required to suspend Venezuela. They know this, which is why they are resorting to meaningless media stunts. The US, Canada and their allies continue to try and hurl mud at Venezuela in the vain hope that some of it might one day stick. We demand Canada immediately withdraw from 13 OAS countries statement against Venezuelan government.

These efforts have so far all failed. Throughout the entire history of the Bolivarian Revolution, and especially when faced with U.S aggression, the Venezuelan people have stood up to defend their dignity, sovereignty and self-determination. They have also been able to count on the solidarity and support of millions of people around the world who see Venezuela as a leading example in the fight to build a better world. Fire This Time Movement for Social Justice reaffirms our solidarity and commitment to the Bolivarian Revolution and denounces Luis Almagro, and all of his dirty tricks. We condemn all attempts of foreign intervention against the people of Venezuela.

- > LUIS ALMARGO MUST GO!
- > U.S. AND CANADA RESPECT THE SOVEREIGNTY & SELF-DETERMINATION OF THE VENEZUELAN PEOPLE!
- > LONG LIVE THE VENEZUELAN BOLIVARIAN REVOLUTION!