

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 9, 2024

Mr. Josep Borrell Fontelles
EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
c/o Delegation of the European Union
2175 K Street N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20037

Dear Mr. Borrell,

We write to express our grave concern about the situation in Venezuela, where the criminal Maduro regime is ramping up repression against democratic opposition and civil society actors, prolonging a humanitarian crisis, and threatening neighboring democratic countries.

We urge the European Union (EU) to renew all of the existing restrictive measures on Venezuela and leaders in the Maduro regime, and to align its sanctions regime with that of the United States and Canada. Such measures would make it clear to Maduro and his associates that they must allow for the restoration of democratic order in Venezuela— including abiding by their own commitment to allow free and fair elections, with all parties allowed to choose their own candidates, in 2024.

We appreciate the EU's efforts to seek a peaceful resolution to the worsening political and humanitarian crisis in Venezuela. The EU's past sanctions on more than a dozen Venezuelan officials involved in human rights abuses and undermining democracy sent an important signal, but we believe the continuing crisis merits immediate and increased pressure from democratic leaders in Europe.

The Maduro regime has intensified its systematic attacks on Venezuela's civil society and democratic opposition, including arbitrarily barring the democratic opposition's presidential candidate, Maria Corina Machado, from holding public office and persecuting members of her team. In September 2023, the U.N. Independent Fact-Finding Mission in Venezuela found for the fourth consecutive year that the Maduro regime continues to persecute and torture innocent civilians.

Finally, the United States and Canada have responded to this deepening conflict by imposing financial and diplomatic sanctions on more than 200 Maduro regime officials, as well as several Venezuelan institutions directly responsible for human rights violations and widespread corruption. Washington and Ottawa have also made clear that sanctions can be removed from individuals who take concrete and meaningful actions to restore democratic order in Venezuela.

Mr. Josep Borrell Fontelles
May 9, 2024
Page 2

Aligning the EU's restrictive measures against Venezuelan persons with those imposed by the United States and Canada would send a powerful message to Maduro and his accomplices that they will not prevail and that it is time to remove themselves as obstacles to the restoration of democracy and allow the Venezuelan people to choose their own leaders.

Sincerely,



JAMES E. RISCH
Ranking Member
Senate Foreign Relations Committee



RICHARD J. DURBIN
United States Senator



MARCO RUBIO
United States Senator



MICHAEL F. BENNET
United States Senator



JOHN BARRASSO
United States Senator



DAN SULLIVAN
United States Senator



RICK SCOTT
United States Senator



TED CRUZ
United States Senator

Mr. Josep Borrell Fontelles
May 9, 2024
Page 3



BILL HAGERTY
United States Senator



PETE RICKETTS
United States Senator