



Embassy of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the UK and Ireland

*Fact Sheet:*  
**VENEZUELA'S SUCCESSFUL FIGHT AGAINST ILLEGAL DRUGS  
– 2011 UPDATE**

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### **Background**

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Venezuela is neither a major drug-producing nor drug-consuming country. But Venezuela finds itself in a difficult geographical position, as being situated **between one of the world's largest producers of cocaine, Colombia, and one of its biggest users, the United States.** Venezuela shares one of the world's longest borders with Colombia. This means that the Venezuelan government has had to take strong action in the fight against illegal drugs.

### **Anti-drug policies and achievements of the Chavez government**

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As part of the fight against illegal drug-trafficking and drug consumption, the Venezuelan President approved the **“National Anti-Drug Plan 2009-2013”** and the creation of the **“National Anti-Drug Fund”** on the 1<sup>st</sup> of July 2009.<sup>1</sup> This action-plan involves the State, the business sector and the communities and takes place on 3 strategic levels: family guidance, drug prevention and therapy for those suffering from addiction.

### Drug seizures

- **Over 500 tons of drugs have been seized within the last 10 years**, thanks to the successful cooperation with a number of countries worldwide. 63 tonnes of drugs were seized in Venezuela over the course

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<sup>1</sup>National Anti-drug Plan:  
[http://www.ona.gob.ve/Plan\\_Nacional\\_Construccion.php](http://www.ona.gob.ve/Plan_Nacional_Construccion.php)

of 2010. This represents an 11% increase from 2009.<sup>2</sup>

### Investment in infrastructure and military technology to intercept drugs

- **Ten Chinese made radar stations have been installed** to track and intercept planes carrying illegal drugs. This was an important investment, as after the suspension of cooperation with the US Drug Enforcement Agency's (DEA), US forces withdrew the radar-systems they had previously installed in Venezuela. The break in cooperation between the DEA and Venezuela was based on accusations that agents were involved in espionage in Venezuela and were linked to drug trafficking rings. **Drug seizures in recent years have increased 40 percent relative to the level of seizures during the final years of cooperation between Venezuela and the DEA.**
- In 2010 Venezuela purchased 18 K-8 scout planes from China to continue intercepting illegal air drug-transport. Ten Y8 planes, also from China, have been ordered and expected to be delivered in 2011.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> <http://venezuela-us.org/?s=drugs#9>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.correodelorinoco.gob.ve/nacionales/venezuela-fortalece-su-aviacion-militar-aviones-carga-chinos-y-8/>



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- The installation of **non-intrusive baggage screening systems in 5 airports** throughout the country.
- **Since 2007, 52 drug laboratories have been dismantled** on the border with Colombia.
- As of September 2008, **over 223 illicit landing strips were destroyed in Venezuela over the first three quarters of that year.**<sup>1</sup>
- The **construction of 10 incineration ovens** is planned. As of 2011, 7 out of the 10 are fully operational.

### High profile arrests of international drug kingpins and drug offence convictions in Venezuela

- In 2010, 17 people wanted internationally for drug trafficking or related crimes have been captured by Venezuelan authorities. Of these, 12 have been deported, two are set to be deported and one is being tried in Venezuela. Five of those detained were deported to the U.S. and three to Colombia.<sup>4</sup> So far in 2011, 3 key drug traffickers wanted by Interpol.<sup>5</sup>
- After the July 2010 deportation of the three Colombian drug kingpins wanted by the U.S. (Carlos “Beto” Rentería, Luis Tello, and Carlos Ojeda), even the U.S. Embassy in Caracas recognized the world of Venezuela’s security agencies and qualified the deportations “positive.”<sup>6</sup>
- Over people **13,000 were convicted** of drug trafficking offences were made in **Venezuela in 2010**. Of the 13,000, nearly 400 foreigners were arrested. 65% of the foreigners were Colombian citizens.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Informe de la Oficina Nacional Antidrogas. “Balance de la Lucha Antidrogas” Enero Septiembre 2010

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.avn.info.ve/node/38538>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.globovision.com/news.php?nid=154835>

<sup>7</sup> [http://www.ona.gob.ve/Pdf/Estadisticas\\_de\\_la\\_Oferta/CIERRE\\_GENERAL\\_ANO\\_2010.pdf](http://www.ona.gob.ve/Pdf/Estadisticas_de_la_Oferta/CIERRE_GENERAL_ANO_2010.pdf)

### International cooperation

- **Venezuela is signatory to over 50 bilateral cooperation agreements with 38 countries**, including Spain, France and Portugal. Venezuela has also signed and ratified the 1988 U.N. Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances and the 1971 U.N. Convention on Psychotropic Substances, and it is a signatory to the 1961 U.N. Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs.
- According to a 2010 report of the U.N. Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Venezuela ranks second in South America, behind only Colombia, in drug seizures.<sup>8</sup>
- Venezuela is continuing to cooperate with the UNODC on a law enforcement and intelligence cooperation **project against cocaine trafficking from Latin America to West Africa**.

### Venezuela-UK cooperation

- The strong and long-standing “de-facto relationship”, between Venezuela and the UK in terms of counter-narcotic policies was formalised in a Memorandum of Understanding. The Memorandum centres on the exchange of intelligence information in real time, carrying out joint operations such as the interception of boats and the capture of drug traffickers, as well as preventing the trafficking of synthetic drugs into Europe.<sup>2</sup> **Chris Bryant, former British Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs**, who visited Venezuela in autumn 2009 made clear that **“The drug problem cannot be addressed in isolation. First, there is a consumer**

<sup>8</sup> [http://www.unodc.org/documents/wdr/WDR\\_2010/World\\_Drug\\_Report\\_2010\\_lo-res.pdf](http://www.unodc.org/documents/wdr/WDR_2010/World_Drug_Report_2010_lo-res.pdf)



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*demand for illegal drugs in Europe, which is a huge part of the problem. [He added that] Venezuela has made progress in various areas of the fight against drug trafficking.*<sup>3</sup>

- In a common operation in September 2008 last year, which resulted in the seizure of 337 kilos of pure cocaine to be smuggled to the UK, Bill Hughes, the Director of the UK Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA) stated that **“We have forged new links with the Venezuelan authorities which will be of enormous value in future investigations.”**<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, at a Westminster debate Gillian Merron, former Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs made clear that **“We [the British Government] engage with the [Venezuelan] Administration on the many social justice initiatives ... [and] We have also tackled drug trafficking and corruption.”**<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Press Release, “British Government Acknowledges the Effectiveness of Drug Policy in Venezuela”, Oct. 2009, <http://www.venezlon.co.uk/news/231.asp>

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> “Soca cracks Venezuela connection”, Sep. 2008, [http://www.policeoracle.com/news/SOCA-Cracks-Venezuelan-Connection\\_17382.html](http://www.policeoracle.com/news/SOCA-Cracks-Venezuelan-Connection_17382.html)

<sup>5</sup> Official Parliamentary Report, Daily Hansard, <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200809/cmhansrd/cm090303/halltext/90303h0004.htm#0903030000505> retrieved March 9, 2009.

Participatory democracy

- The creation of a **national anti-drug network** where organised communities choose their leaders for anti-drug campaigns. Over 200 agreements have been signed with the government.

For more comprehensive information on Venezuela’s fight against illegal drugs visit:

[http://www.venezlon.co.uk/pdf/fc\\_drugs.pdf](http://www.venezlon.co.uk/pdf/fc_drugs.pdf)

This fact-sheet is based on a report by the Bolivarian Government of Venezuela. All numbers mentioned stem from this report, unless indicated otherwise.

London, 10<sup>th</sup> of February, 2009

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<sup>1</sup> “Venezuela destruyó 223 pistas clandestinas en su combate al narcotráfico - Vanguardia.com”  
<http://www.vanguardia.com/mundo/america/81-america/7092-venezuela-destruyo-223-pistas-clandestinas-en-su-combate-al-narcotrafico->