



Chicago, July 30, 2019

Jesse Sharkey
President
Chicago Teachers Union
1901 W. Carroll Ave.
Chicago, Illinois

Dear Mr. Sharkey:

This letter is to inform you that the Illinois Venezuelan Alliance (IVA) categorically rejects the resolution passed by the Chicago Teacher Union (CTU) in support of the Venezuelan regime and in opposition of a potential United States military intervention in Venezuela. This intervention has not been a matter of discussion at any international agency and or any government. The resolution is falsely claiming a violation of the United Nations' principal of "sovereign equality" and statements of use of force against territorial integrity or political independency. Such claims are unfounded.

The CTU resolution failed to recognize the severity of the humanitarian crisis in Venezuela. The current crisis of Venezuelan migrants and refugees is unprecedented in the region. In June 2019, the Organization of American States (OAS) revealed in a report that at least 4 million Venezuelans have fled the country, representing just over 13% of the nation's total population. Comparing globally, only Syria, which has suffered a war for more than 8 years, surpasses Venezuela in the flow of migrants and refugees.

The OAS report also states that despite not suffering a war or a natural catastrophe, 5,000 Venezuelans flee daily. The determinants of the humanitarian crisis identified by OAS (2019) are: shortage of food and medicine; economic collapse, reflected in a hyperinflation of 10,000,000%; systematic and widespread violation of human rights through persecution, repression, social control and crimes against humanity; repeated failures in the provision of basic services such as electricity, water and gas; and widespread violence with a homicide rate of 81 people per 100,000 inhabitants. Economic estimates are that, by the end of 2019, there could be between 5.3 and 5.7 million Venezuelan migrants and refugees; and by 2020 between 7.5 and 8.2 million.

Of special concern is the fact that a CTU delegation - paid with "taxpayers" funds - obtained Venezuelan visas directly from the Maduro's regime and traveled with a sole purpose: to serve as the propaganda disseminators of the cruelest regime that the country has endured historically. The granting of the visas to the delegation has called IVA's attention because it is well known that a US citizen cannot process a visa from any Venezuelan Consulate in the US. They have all been closed since January 23, 2019. Who processed the visas for the delegation members? How did they obtain that immigration permit to operate internally in a country that has closed its doors to US citizens?

Moreover, IVA has been concerned about the type of daily reports published by the CTU blog called "Radical Educator Collective". The five members of the delegation, including Sarah Chambers, the Vice-President of CTU, as she publicly indicated in TeleSur (<https://youtube/wTjSNNGhbyk>), a South American communist TV station founded and funded by the Venezuelan regime. The CTU blog reported delegates stating, "We didn't see one homeless person" while in Venezuela. We would encourage you to

verify the multiple stories of hunger, malnutrition and Venezuelans of all ages picking food out of trash on the streets of Venezuelan cities and towns. The delegation also emphasized, “The Bolivarian Revolution in Venezuela...has improved the lives of the Venezuelan people”. The corruption in Venezuela is unquestionable and among the worst in the world. Many international agencies, neighboring countries, and the international community at large have asked about the trillions of dollars that disappeared in the course of 20 years of mismanagement during the time that the combo Chavez-Maduro have remained in power. Those public funds could have been used to completely bring happiness and prosperity to a country that, on the contrary, it is suffering the major destruction of its productive apparatus ever.

In Venezuela, the media has reported that the Ministry of Education extended an invitation to your delegation. The question is what schools did they visit during their stay? Did they look at the irregular school year with less than 120 days of teaching in the academic year 2018-2019? The fact that the school is closed for summer vacation since mid-June. Did they talk to teachers? Did they investigate the \$10 monthly, \$120 annually teachers’ salary? Did they look at the indoctrinating communist curriculum? IVA understands the regime uses very effective propaganda that found in the 5-CTU delegation members the best bearers of their partial truths.

The Illinois Venezuelan Alliance demands from Chicago Teacher Union an objective position concerning Venezuela and its humanitarian crisis. In Chicago Public Schools, there are Venezuelan teachers, paraprofessionals, administrators, staff and many children who are members of the imposed Venezuelan diaspora. It is our expectations that CTU respects not only the views of the delegation funded by the membership but also the views of hundreds of well-informed teachers who oppose the use of CTU forces and energies to support anti-democratic and criminal regimes.

Secondly, the Illinois Venezuelan Alliance respectfully requests an explanation of the use of the CTU and Illinois taxpayers’ funds to pay for an education delegation that is willing to repeat the anti-democratic propaganda fed by a ruthless regime and its dictator.

Thirdly, the Illinois Venezuelan Alliance also demands clarifications on the process of obtaining Venezuelan visas to US citizens. How was the CTU delegation granted Venezuelan visas?

Finally, the Illinois Venezuelan Alliance would like to request an appointment with the CTU executive board. For that purpose, you may reach Dr. Ana Gil Garcia at 773-9965459 or email anagilgarcia@hotmail.com.

Respectfully,

Dr. Ana Gil Garcia, Co-Founder
Chair of IVA Board
Illinois Venezuelan Alliance
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IVA is a not-for-profit 2-year old organization created to serve and attend an estimate of 17,000 Venezuelans representing the fastest growing community in Illinois. IVA operates from Chicago. It has targeted four important aspects of the lives of the Venezuelan immigrants: civic engagement, educational actions, charitable efforts, and political activism.