



Pence Assures Venezuelan Opposition Leader Guaidó of U.S. Support

Meeting on February 25 on the sidelines of a gathering of the Lima Group in Bogotá, Colombia, Vice President Mike Pence told Venezuelan opposition leader Juan Guaidó that President Trump supports him “100 percent.” (the Lima Group is a multilateral body established following the Lima Declaration on August 8, 2017 in Lima, Peru, where representatives of 12 countries met in order to establish a way to resolve the crisis in Venezuela.)



Guaidó, the president of the opposition-controlled National Assembly of Venezuela and leader of the political forces opposing President Nicolás Maduro, declared himself acting president in January after the legislature concluded that Maduro was fraudulently reelected.

During his address to the members of the Lima Group, Pence said, in part:

Just days ago, as the world watched, the tyrant in Caracas [Maduro] danced as his henchmen burned truckloads of food and medicine, and murdered civilians....

As President Trump said one week ago today, so I say to all of you: Despite the brutality that the world witnessed this weekend, “a new day is coming in Latin America.... In Venezuela and across the Western Hemisphere, socialism is dying, and liberty, prosperity, and democracy are being reborn” before our eyes.

And, President Guaidó, President Donald Trump asked me to be here today to deliver a simple message to you and to the people of Venezuela: *Estamos con ustedes*. We are with you 100 percent. We stand with you in America, along with all the nations gathered here today, and we will keep standing with you until democracy and your *libertad* are restored.

During his address, Pence made clear that the U.S. government disputes Maduro’s position as the legitimate leader of Venezuela and recognizes Guaidó’s authority to carry out presidential functions, saying:

Nicolas Maduro is a usurper with no legitimate claim to power, and Nicolas Maduro must go....

By contrast, the Venezuelan people’s true leader took decisive action to put an end to their suffering. Interim President Juan Guaidó issued a direct order to the armed forces of Venezuela to allow all humanitarian aid to enter the country on Saturday, February 23. And he called on the Venezuelan people to show their resolve by holding peaceful protests outside military bases across the country.

During his address, Pence made note of the aid that the United States has already sent to Venezuela, saying, “Just in the last two weeks, we’ve sent five military transport aircraft with 400 tons of food and medicine to Colombia and Brazil.”



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on February 26, 2019

UPI reported on February 16 that a U.S. shipment of humanitarian aid from Miami had landed in Cúcuta, Colombia. However, the Venezuelan military used two containers and a liquid tank carrier to block travel lanes of a bridge connecting Venezuela to Cúcuta earlier in the month and it was uncertain exactly how the aid will get to the country.

However, Guaidó said the aid will somehow enter Venezuela. Whether any members of the military will comply with his order to allow the aid through remains to be seen.

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