



REPÚBLICA BOLIVARIANA DE VENEZUELA  
**ASAMBLEA NACIONAL**  
**Diputada María Corina Machado**  
Estado Miranda

Caracas, November 23rd, 2015

Mr. President of the French Republic  
Elysee Palace  
55 rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré  
75008 Paris

Mr. President,

Democrats must unite without delay.

The abominable attacks committed in Paris on November 13th of this year have reset the world's coordinates. Just as you have described it, we are confronting a war against values without which essential human dignity cannot be fully realized. This is a war against freedom.

Enemies of freedom prosper in places where there is no rule of law, places where institutions are weak, where speeches coming from the highest echelons justify violence, which is then practiced with the active support of those in power.

In today's Venezuela we are subjected to an "arbitrary tyranny," as former Spanish President Felipe González has characterized the system currently in power. Mine is a country where formal institutions present an increasingly transparent mask that tries to hide various forms of crimes ranging from drug smuggling to weapons trade to terrorism.

Ever since the so-called "chavismo" took power in Venezuela, my country has been forcefully separated from its traditional democratic allies as well as from democracy itself. Instead, we have fostered links to authoritarian regimes of all stripes – Cuba, Syria, Belarus, Iran, Hussein's Iraq, and Gadhafi's Libya, to name a few. We have forged ties with guerrilla, terrorist, and drug smuggling organizations such as Colombia's FARC and ELN, Spain's ETA, and Hezbollah. Top-ranking members of government – both civilian and military – have been singled out for being directly linked to narcotics smuggling. We are well aware that this lucrative business is one of international terrorism's prime sources of financing.

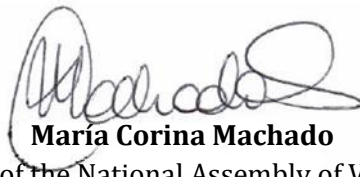
Thus, the current Venezuelan regime is a threat to freedom and the rule of law. In this new context, if chavismo were to remain in power this would not affect only Venezuelans. Venezuela would end up mutating into a rogue state and, taking advantage of its location and its multiple natural resources, would become a platform for all sorts of activities hostile toward a civilized world order.

We, Venezuelan democrats, have always helped those who fight for freedom. This is why our solidarity with the French Republic during this time is absolute. This is also the reason we turn to France, one of the bedrocks of modern democracy, for help. Chavismo is agonizing. It is palpable in every corner of the country, and all opinion polls reflect this. The legislative elections that will take place on December 6th are a turning point.

But faced with the unavoidable, the regime's violence has increased. Last November 17th, for example, Mr. Maduro warned the opposition: "start praying for the Revolution to win on December 6th so that there will be calm and peace. Because if not, we will take to the streets, and when we take to the streets, we bring fire with us."

Mr. President: we live in dangerous times for France, for Venezuela, and for freedom. The democrats of the world act in accordance to universal values, which is why unity is a moral and political imperative. You can count on our support in the war against terrorism. We also count on you to raise your voice in a firm manner so that popular sovereignty in Venezuela can express itself in a clean and peaceful way. This is a necessity if our region is to transit toward democracy and greater stability.

Long live freedom! Long live France! Long live Venezuela!



**Maria Corina Machado**

Member of the National Assembly of Venezuela