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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Solidarity Delegation of 20 US Activists to Visit Venezuela from July 4-16, 2015

A delegation of US organizations with long histories of support for social justice movements in Latin America and the Caribbean—Marin Task Force on the Americas, National Lawyers Guild, School of the Americas Watch, Alliance for Global Justice—is set to visit Venezuela next month. The delegation is a direct result of President Barack Obama’s March 9, 2015 executive order declaring Venezuela a national security threat to the United States in order to sanction high-ranking government officials.

Delegates plan to demonstrate their solidarity with the people of Venezuela by declaring that Obama’s sanctions do not represent their sentiments. They will begin the delegation on July 5, Venezuela’s Independence Day, as a symbolic statement of their affirmation of Venezuela’s independence and sovereignty.

Among the delegates from the National Lawyers Guild, an organization that has made multiple visits to Venezuela to observe elections, are: Natasha Lycia Ora Bannan, president-elect; David Gespass, former president; Judy Somberg, former vice president; Susan Scott, former International Committee co-chair and current co-chair of the NLG Task Force on the Americas; and David Mandel, of the Guild’s Free Palestine Subcommittee.

Joining them will be several members of the leadership team for the Marin Interfaith Task Force on the Americas, an organization that has organized numerous delegations to Venezuela over the past decade, including their director, Dale Sorensen. Thanks to the work of Sorensen, a meeting with then-Venezuelan Vice President Jose Vicente Rangel took place in 2004, leading to President Chavez’s decision to withdraw Venezuela from the notorious US military training institute, the School of the Americas.

The delegation is expected to meet with sectors of government including the legislative, judicial and electoral branches. They also plan to meet with press, trade unions, student groups, opposition members, human rights groups, and Latin American regional organizations. Activists will return to the US to and report back on current reality of Venezuela—one often distorted by mainstream media.

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