

Parliamentary Subcommittee on International Human Rights investigates antisemitism in Venezuela

A Parliamentary committee investigation to the human rights situation in Venezuela touched on the pervasive antisemitism that characterized the ruling Socialist government of President Nicholas Maduro. The Chair of the Parliamentary Subcommittee on International Human Rights Michael Levitt yesterday asked a visiting delegation of Deputies representing the opposition majority in the Venezuelan National Assembly about the antisemitism perpetrated by the ruling Socialist Maduro government.

The transcript is below. You can listen to the audio of the exchange [HERE](#).

Question:

“Yesterday, in their Daily Intelligence Brief, the Canadian Friends of Simon Wiesenthal highlighted the following egregious and incendiary remarks by Venezuelan envoy to the U.N. Rafael Ramirez. The remarks were as follows: “What does Israel plan to do with the Palestinians? Will they be ‘disappeared’? Does Israel aim to wage ‘Final Solution’ as was perpetrated against the Jews?” What makes these comments even more shocking is that they occurred the day after Yom HaShoah, or Holocaust Remembrance Day, celebrated around the globe. From your role, as members of the National Assembly [of Venezuela], can you please give us some perspective on these remarks that were made?” – **Michael Levitt, MP, Chair, Subcommittee on International Human Rights**

Response:

“First, we have to say that Rafael Ramirez is one of the most corrupt people in Venezuela. If you use corruption as a measure of importance, then he is quite important. Our group promoted an agreement among all political forces in Venezuela to commemorate the Shoah. We invited a survivor of the Nazi concentration camps in Germany, who told his shocking story for all participating members of the Assembly to hear. We commemorated it because we believe that another Holocaust cannot happen again. Thankfully, we had unanimous support from both the opposition and government side for this.” – **Luis Florido, President of the Commission of Foreign Affairs, National Assembly of Venezuela (Voluntad Popular party – member of Democratic Unity Roundtable).**

Additional response:

“The Jewish Diaspora is leaving Venezuela in increasing numbers each year. According to the Venezuelan Confederation of Israelite Associations (CAIV), 60% of the Jewish people that lived in Venezuela before [Hugo] Chavez came to power have since left the country. You have a lot of antisemitic actions that originate with the government. I have 2 examples: First, you have violations against synagogues – they broke into one synagogue and vandalised it with graffiti. Second, was the harassment faced by a Mayor of one municipality in Caracas, who is from our party and of Jewish descent. People using the language of the government - we can’t say for sure they were the government - entered his apartment by force and put graffiti on the wall of his

bedroom saying ‘You puppet of the Empire. Zionist pig’ and then stole his property. Furthermore, the former President of the National Assembly that is from the [Maduro] government, the second in command of the political party that rules Venezuela, the PSUV [Socialist party] often uses the terms ‘Zionist’ and ‘genocide’ when referring to the Israeli government. They always use antisemitic rhetoric and refer to us [the opposition] as ‘pro-Empire,’ referring to the United States, or as ‘Zionist,’ referring to Israel. The persecution is not only against the Jewish people, but also gay people and other minorities. For example, one Deputy of the National Assembly is in jail, and he is one of the leaders of the gay community in Venezuela.” – **Freddy Guevara, President, Standing Committee on Oversight of Government Operation and Public Accounts, National Assembly of Venezuela (Voluntad Popular party – member of Democratic Unity Roundtable)**

READ MORE about antisemitism in Venezuela [HERE](#).