

Venezuela, Zim: Revolution, Patriotism and Resolve

by

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Abstract

The following is an interview via *The Herald* (November 3, 2017) with Ambassador Jesús Chucho García, the General Consul to the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, the former Venezuelan Ambassador to Angola (the first African embassy established under the revolutionary government of the late president of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Hugo Chávez), and Commandante's Advisor of African Affairs and Developments focused on parallels between Venezuela and Zimbabwe.

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OE (Obi Egbuna Jnr Simunye): How does the political divide between the government of Venezuela and the pro-regime change opposition impact on the people of African ancestry and descent? In these 19 years of the Bolivarian process, Afro-descendant Venezuelans have been dignified in an unprecedented way in Venezuelan history.



AJCG (Jesús Chucho García): The process of social transformation with which Venezuela has experimented with over the past 18 years has not only been economical, but also a political process, where President Chávez played an essential ideological role as the leader of this humane option, of solidarity and participation. When Chávez arrived, on an episode of “Alo, President” filmed in Palmarejo (January 2004), he declared himself Afro-descendant, and handed over 11 000 hectares along with agriculture credits, and decreed the land communal property of the Afro-descendants of Yaracuy.

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In other words, the Sacrocracia (owners of the cane growers) were expropriated in defense of the defenseless.

Additionally, in the sub-region of Barlovento, thousands of hectares in the hands of the Cacaocracia (cacao plantation owners) who had turned our grandfathers and grandmothers' into hunchbacks from bending over to sow the riches of the hacienda owners, who would pay them a hundred times less what each basket of cacao was worth.

Today in Barlovento we are experimenting with the socialist cacao companies and the chocolate manufacturers to work with cacao derivatives. And the six autonomous municipalities of Barlovento have voted in favor of the Bolivarian hope. In the southern area of Maracaibo Lake (Bobures, Gibraltar, El Batey, and San Jose de Hera) people placed their faith in substantial change, in the hopes of eradicating the latifundio of the cane fields owned by the Brillemburg.

This is why it doesn't occur to us to join the guarimbas like they are doing in Altamira or in upper-class areas of Caracas and some inland cities. The Afro-descendants of this country have achieved a dignity without precedent in Venezuelan history.

OE: Please highlight how the people of African descent and ancestry have benefited from the policies implemented by the late Commandante Hugo Chávez and now President Maduro.

AJCG: The Afro-descendant communities of Venezuela have benefited in ways never before seen under previous socio-political processes. Before, the land of Afro communities was in the hands of latifundistas and agrarian bourgeoisie. One of the worst cases of discrimination was reflected in the Farriar municipality, where Cuban supporters of Batista, with the help of the [pre-Chávez] government, dispossessed thousands of hectares of ancestral land, including Cañizos Palo Quemao, Farriar, Palmarejo, and El Chino. Numerous witnesses tell of how the Batista supporters hired armed bands to assault community inhabitants at night, threatening them and burning their cane crops. This led to persecutions, and a youth was murdered when people protested these events.

OE: In the cases of Zimbabwe and Cuba being sanctioned and blockaded has tested the resolve and patriotism of the everyday people, does that dynamic hold true in Venezuela?

AJCG: We dared, under the leadership of President Chávez, to change the geometry of power in our America, including to the people of the United States showing our solidarity to more than two million impoverished people in that country with our policy of giving it warmth in winter time through the mixed company CITGO.

Sovereignty has a very high political cost as it has been demonstrated by Haiti in the 18th century, when it dared to be the first republic of the African Diaspora to achieve its independence from French and American imperialism, and then it was blocked. The same would be done to Bolivar following the Haitian example and also suffered blockade of Europe and the United States.

Then, they also blocked us in 1902 with the government of President Cipriano Castro, and we already know the history of Cuba with more than half a century of blockade and there is with his head high 90 miles from the empire and the blockade of a United States to Zimbabwe is unacceptable, but Cuba and Zimbabwe under the leadership of Comrade Robert Mugabe is exemplary.

The history of any country in our America that has dared to fight for its true autonomy, without military bases in its territories, without obeying the mandates of the great club or the whims of the Pentagon or the fascist leaders disguised as democrats in Europe, have run the risk and we continue to run the risk of being a perfect target of blockades, media manipulation, isolation of international bodies, asymmetric wars, covert operations of the CIA, Israeli intelligence, in order to create a climate for military intervention as might happen in Venezuela on the part of countries with miserable governments such as that of Santos in Colombia, Mexico, Peru, Argentina, among others that have been pronounced against the constitutional government of the current President Nicolás Maduro that until July 27 called the opposition to sit down to dialogue, but this one with its historic and bourgeois hatred and the feeling of being supported by the extreme right internationally refused to dialogue despite the prayers of Pope Francis, as they would say in my land Barlovento ... they have the devil on the shoulders (they heated the electoral situation using violence facts).

OE: When the late Commandante Hugo Chávez decided to present President Mugabe with the Simon Bolivar Award, Venezuela's highest honor, which is modeled after Cuba's highest honor – the Jose Marti Award which President Mugabe received in 1985. What message was the Commandante attempting to send to the African world by bestowing this honor on President Mugabe?

AJCG: The Simon Bolivar prize given by President Chávez to Honorable President Robert Mugabe marks a strategic alliance of dignity before people who do not kneel before imperialism. It was not just a prize for a prize that is a political symbol. I had the opportunity to embrace President Mugabe in Venezuela at the South Africa-South Summit in 2009. I felt his vibrant energy.

OE: If the Governments and peoples of Venezuela, Zimbabwe and Cuba continue to successfully prevent the US-EU Imperialist agenda from accomplishing their ultimate goal, what will be the historical implications on Africans in the Diaspora and on the continent many years down the line?

AJCG: The Cuba-Venezuela-Zimbabwe connection is a determining example of the dignity of the African Diaspora. It is a question of remaining in the battle against imperialism in all its forms. When I was head of diplomatic missions in Angola in 2009, I remember that there was a cholera fever crisis in Zimbabwe and Chávez on December 31, 2009, sent a plane loaded with medicine to Harare. This solidarity between Cuba, Venezuela and Zimbabwe must be vindicated as a great example of Africa and the African Diaspora.

OE: Thank you for this insightful interview

AJCG: The honor is mine Venezuela, Zimbabwe, Cuba will prevail to delicately paraphrase the powerful words and sentiments of Commandante Fidel Castro, history will and has absolved us. Therefore, victory is certain. We salute Mother Africa's bravest leader and voice, Comrade and H.E. Robert Gabriel Mugabe.