

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 13, 2024

VIA ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION

The Honorable Antony Blinken
Secretary
Department of State
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Blinken,

I write for clarification concerning reports that the Biden-Harris administration is actively considering granting Nicolás Maduro amnesty if he relinquishes power in Venezuela.¹ According to the *Wall Street Journal*, the Biden-Harris administration has offered to pardon Maduro of his atrocities and acts of narco-terrorism at least two times.² The administration reportedly made the same offer last year during secret talks in Doha, Qatar.³ This offer seems at odds with the assurances Deputy Attorney General (DAG) Monaco gave me that same year at a hearing of the Senate Judiciary Committee.⁴ There, DAG Monaco testified that the Justice Department considers Maduro a fugitive of U.S. justice and is “absolutely committed to pursuing justice in cases that [DOJ has] indicted and brought.”⁵ These reported negotiations contradict the commitment the Justice Department gave in sworn testimony before Congress.

The Biden-Harris administration’s denial of amnesty talks provides more questions than answers. A White House spokesperson simply stated that the administration had not offered Maduro amnesty “since the election,” but provided no clarity about offers the Biden-Harris administration may have made leading up to the election.⁶ This administration has a troubling history of negotiating with terrorists and their sympathizers.⁷ I urge you to reconsider this failed approach.

¹ Juan Forero, Patricia Garip, and Kejal Vyas, *In Secret Talks, U.S. Offers Amnesty to Venezuela’s Maduro for Ceding Power*, *The Wall Street Journal* (Aug. 11, 2024), https://www.wsj.com/world/americas/in-secret-talks-u-s-offers-amnesty-to-venezuelas-maduro-for-ceding-power-e22b4821?mod=Searchresults_pos1&page=1

² *Id.*

³ *Id.*

⁴ Press Release, *Grassley Calls Out Justice Department For Mismanagement of U.S. Funds* (Apr. 19, 2023), <https://www.grassley.senate.gov/news/news-releases/grassley-calls-out-justice-department-for-mismanagement-of-us-funds>

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ Caitlin McFall, *State Department Cries False Over WSJ Report Claiming US Offered Venezuela’s Maduro Amnesty* (Aug. 12, 2024), <https://www.foxnews.com/world/state-department-cries-false-over-wsj-report-claiming-us-offered-venezuelas-maduro-amnesty>

⁷ See e.g., Heather Timmons, Idrees All, and Lisa Shumaker, *Iran Prisoner Swap for \$6 Billion In Spotlight After Hamas Attacks Israel*, *Reuters* (Oct. 9, 2023), <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/iran-prisoner-swap-6-billion-spotlight-after-hamas-attacks-israel-2023-10-09/>

On September 22, 2023, I warned the Biden-Harris administration that concessions made to Maduro in exchange for mere assurances of a democratic election were foolish and likely to fail.⁸ I asked the administration to brief my office before granting Maduro further allowances. The administration ignored my request and my warning.

Then, on November 3, 2023, I again cautioned the Biden-Harris administration that Maduro “gains nothing from relinquishing his authority to a legitimate presidential challenger.”⁹ Still, the administration pushed forward with its plan and returned Maduro’s co-conspirator, Alex Saab, to Venezuela.

In exchange for a sham election, the Biden-Harris administration pardoned Maduro’s co-conspirators, eased sanctions, and seemingly allowed Maduro to travel internationally without real fear of U.S. apprehension. After receiving these benefits, Maduro claimed victory and is clinging to power despite losing the presidential election in a landslide.¹⁰ In the days that followed, his illegitimate government arrested 2,200 political opponents and killed 23 protesters.¹¹

Please answer the following questions by September 13, 2024, or before engaging in further talks with the Maduro regime.

1. Is the Biden-Harris administration considering granting amnesty to Maduro?
 - a. What are the contemplated terms of such an agreement?
 - b. Which federal agencies have been consulted?
 - c. Please brief my office before any offer is discussed with Maduro or his representatives.
2. Has the Biden-Harris administration engaged in discussions relating to amnesty with Maduro or his representatives since 2020? If so, please detail the circumstances surrounding each discussion.
3. What number of deaths is the Biden-Harris Administration willing to tolerate before the administration will cease negotiations with Maduro?
4. What is the status of U.S. sanctions on the Maduro regime and Venezuela?

⁸ Sen. Grassley to the National Security Council Senior Director for The Western Hemisphere (Sept. 22, 2023), https://www.grassley.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/grassley_to_nsc_gonzalez_-_venezuela_briefing.pdf

⁹ Sen. Grassley to the National Security Council Senior Director for The Western Hemisphere (Nov. 3, 2023), https://www.grassley.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/grassley_to_nsc_gonzalez_-_venezuela_follow-up.pdf

¹⁰ Regina García Cano, *Venezuela’s Opposition Secured Over 80% Of Crucial Vote Tally Sheets. Here’s How They Did It*, Associated Press (Aug. 2, 2024), [Venezuela's opposition secured over 80% of crucial vote tally sheets. Here's how they did it | AP News](https://apnews.com/article/venezuela-opposition-secured-over-80-of-crucial-vote-tally-sheets-how-they-did-it-46004554e59ec77f95130efe)

¹¹ Fabiola Sánchez, *Voices Across The Globe Express Concern Over Increasing Arrests in Venezuela After Disputed Election*, Associated Press (Aug. 4, 2024), <https://apnews.com/article/venezuela-maduro-machado-biden-gonzalez-elections-protests-abb8176b46004554e59ec77f95130efe>

5. Maduro has a network of co-conspirators, several of whom the Biden-Harris administration released back to Venezuela as part of negotiations with the Maduro regime. What is the administration's plan for ensuring Maduro's co-conspirators do not rise to power or act as mere conduits for Maduro in the event that Maduro facially relinquishes power?

Sincerely,



Charles E. Grassley

cc: Jake Sullivan
National Security Advisor
Washington D.C., 20500