

TIMELINE

LIFE & TIME OF HUGO CHAVEZ [1954—2013]

“The only way to end poverty is to give power to the poor.”--Hugo Chávez



28 July 1954: Hugo Chavez was born in Sabaneta in the Venezuelan state of Barinas, one of six children born to Hugo de los Reyes Chavez and Elena Frias. Hugo Chávez’s father was governor of Barinas in Venezuela from 1998 to 2008.

7 December 1958: General elections were held in Venezuela. Rómulo Betancourt (1908 –1981), former President of Venezuela (1945-1948), leader of Acción Democrática party, became President again. Remained president till 1964. As a young man he was a member of the Politburo of the Communist Party of Costa Rica. Fidel Castro visited Venezuela after the victory of Cuban Revolution.

1 January 1959: The victory of Cuban Revolution.

11 September 1973: Salvador Allende, Chilean President was killed.

1975: Chavez was graduated from Venezuela's Military Academy as a sub-lieutenant and with a degree in Military Science and Arts, specialising in Communications.

28 September 1981: Rómulo Betancourt, former President of Venezuela (1945-1948 and 1959-1964), and one of country's most important political figures, died.

1982: Young Chavez formed the Bolivarian Army 200 (EB-200) with other military officers while serving in the national army.

1989: EB-200 was reorganized as the Revolutionary Bolivarian Movement-200 (Movimiento Bolivariano Revolucionario 200 or MBR-200), a military-civilian group.

2 February 1989: Carlos Andrés Pérez Rodríguez (1922-2010), leader of Democratic Action (Spanish: Acción Democrática) party, assumed charge as the President of Venezuela second time. He was President first time from 1974 to 1979. His second period saw a continuation of the economic crisis of the 1980s, and saw a series of social crises, a popular revolt (denominated Caracazo) and two coup attempts.

Carlos was also Vice President of the Socialist International from 1976 to 1992, when Willy Brandt was President.

1990: Chavez earned rank of lieutenant colonel and he also earned a master's degree in political science from the Simon Bolivar University.

4 February 1992: MBR-200 planned and executed military coup under the leadership of Army paratroop commander Lt. Col. Chavez. Chavez faced possible 30-year prison term, but the case never went to trial.

27 November 1992: Military officers close ties to Chavez made second coup attempt, which was quashed.

20 May 1993: President Perez was forced out of the office by the Supreme Court, for the embezzlement of funds.

21 May 1993 – 5 June 1993: Octavio Lepage Barreto of the Democratic Action party served as the Acting President of Venezuela.

5 June 1993: Ramón José Velásquez Mujica, a noted Venezuelan writer, took charge as the acting President of Venezuela.

2 February 1994: Rafael Caldera (1916-2009) assumed charge as President of Venezuela. Caldera was a founding member of COPEI, Venezuela's Christian Democratic Party. He was President of Venezuela first time from 1969 to 1974. In 1993, Caldera split from COPEI to form a new political party, National Convergence, supported by a coalition of many small parties.

Caldera's victory in 1993 was the first time in Venezuela's democratic history that a President had been elected without the support of either of the two major parties, Democratic Action and COPEI.

26 March 1994: As promised during the election campaign, President Caldera granted amnesty to Chavez and his comrades.

13 December 1994: Then retired Venezuelan military officer Chavez met Fidel Castro in Havana.

1 January 1995: The World Trade Organization (WTO) officially commenced, replacing the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT).

July 1997: The Fifth Republic Movement (MVR), a left-wing, socialist political party in Venezuela was founded, following a national congress of the MBR-200, to support the candidacy of Hugo Chavez in the 1998 presidential election. The Communist Party of Venezuela (PCV) also backed Chavez.

6 December 1998: Chavez won the Presidential election with 56 percent of the vote. Henrique Salas Römer, candidate of centre-right political party Project Venezuela came in second to Chavez, with 39% of the vote. Mrs. Irene Lailin Sáez Conde, a former Miss Universe (1981) and former Governor of the state of Nueva Esparta came third.

2 February 1999: Chavez assumed charge as new President, exactly seven years after his failed coup.

President Chavez also signed a decree authorizing a referendum to ask the people of Venezuela whether they wanted to convene a Constitutional Assembly to draft a new constitution.

25 April 1999: The referendum on convening a Constitutional Assembly was held in Venezuela. Voters were asked two questions—(a) Should a Constitutional Assembly be convened? and (b) Do you agree with the President's suggestion of how the Assembly should be elected (each voter having ten votes)?

Both measures were approved, with 92.4% in favour of the first question and 86.5% in favour of the second. Voter turnout was 37.8%.

23 May 1999: “Hello President” or “Aló, Presidente”, a live regular programme of President Chavez first went on the air from Venezuelan National Radio. On 27 August 2000 it started broadcasting on both national TV and radio.

25 July 1999: Election to form the proposed 131-member Constituent Assembly was held. Allies of Chavez won 122 seats.

11 October 1999: President Chavez visited China. President Chavez also visited China in May 2001, December 2004, August 2006 and April 2009.

15 November 1999: Cuban President Fidel Castro inaugurated the Latin American School of Medicine in Havana.

15 December 1999: Venezuelans approve a new Constitution with 350 articles proposed by Chavez. Voters were asked whether they approved of the new constitution drawn up by the Constitutional Assembly elected earlier in the year. The question was: Do you endorse the new Constitution drafted by the National Constituent Assembly?

The 1999 constitution was presented to the national electorate on 15 December 1999 and approved with a 71.78% "yes" vote.

20 December 1999: The government officially adopted the constitution of the newly renamed Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

30 July 2000: A new round of elections under the auspices of the 1999 constitution held, with President Chavez winning with a large majority (nearly 60% vote) and taking the helm again as Venezuela's president until 2006. After the 2000 elections, the Fifth Republic officially took shape.

30 March 2001: Catia TVe, (Televisora Comunitaria del Oeste), a Venezuelan television channel created and administered by the residents of Catia, a major neighborhood in the capital city of Caracas, began its transmissions.. Seventy

percent of its programming is created by community organizations in the barrios (poor, heavily populated neighborhoods in Venezuela).

November 2001: Mission Zamora is an integrated land reform and land redistribution program in Venezuela, created in law by the Ley de Tierras ("Law of Land"), part of a package of 49 decrees made by President Chavez in November 2001. The plan is named in honor of Ezequiel Zamora, a 19th century Venezuelan peasant leader.

13 November 2001: The Organic Law of Hydrocarbons published in the official gazette.

11-12 December 2001: President Chavez at the Third Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Association of Caribbean States, held in Margarita Island proposed to create the Bolivarian Alternative for the People of Our Americas (ALBA).

as other Latin American and Caribbean nations join. ALBA has eight member countries: Antigua and Barbuda, Bolivia, Cuba, Dominica, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Venezuela. The proposal to create ALBA was first made by President Chavez at the Third Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Association of Caribbean States, held on 11-12 December 2001, in Margarita Island.

8 January 2002: The National Land Institute (Instituto Nacional de Tierras, INTI) was created. It manages all land held by the central government and administers all land titles. Its main duty is to determine ownership of land and to redistribute it according to the land law. Also, it certifies the quality of the land and whether it is being used productively or is idle. Subsequently, the Venezuelan government created the National Institute for Rural Development (INDER), which provides agricultural infrastructure, such as technology and roads, credits, and training for farmers and the Venezuelan Agrarian Corporation (CVA), which helps farmers and cooperatives that benefited from the land reform to bring their products to market.

9 April 2002: The Confederación de Trabajadores de Venezuela (CTV), the country's largest trade union federation, called for a two-day strike in support of the recently fired executives and managers of Petróleos de Venezuela (PDVSA), Venezuela's state-owned oil company. Fedecámaras—the Venezuelan

Federation of Chambers of Commerce—joined the strike/lockout and called on its affiliated member businesses to shut 48 hours.

The opposition general strike was covered extensively by the privately owned news media.

11 April 2002: Coup d'état against President Chavez and he was kidnapped by the plotters. Popular reactions against the coup and international condemnation. The coup was promoted under the guise of a “labor strike”, spearheaded by the Venezuela's largest business owners' association, Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Manufacturer's Associations (Fedecámaras), to which the corrupt labor union of the Punto Fijo era, the Confederation of Venezuelan Workers (CTV), allied itself.

12 April 2002: Backed by the USA, the then president of Fedecámaras, Pedro Carmona Estanga proclaimed himself president.

The self-proclaimed president immediately issued a decree, known as the “Act Constituting the Government of Democratic Transition and National Unity”. This Act established a transitional government, dissolving the National Assembly and the Supreme Court and also suspending the Attorney General, Comptroller General, governors and mayors elected during Chavez's administration.

However, Carmona dictatorship lasted only for two days, 12 April and 13 April. Tens of thousands of Venezuelan people took to the street demanding the return of the president they had democratically elected.

The majority of the Armed Forces remained loyal to the Constitution and along with the Venezuelan people took to the streets en masse to demand the return of President Hugo Chavez.

13 April 2002: Chavez returned to the presidency. Carmona escaped Venezuela and was given shelter by the pro-US Colombia government.

This coup was considered the first “media coup” of contemporary history. As human rights organizations have noted, all private channels on Venezuela's public airwaves not only supported the coup, but also participated in a black-out of street protests supporting President Chavez. While the Venezuelan people took to the street requesting the return of the president they had democratically elected, the private media were broadcasting cartoons, movies and soap operas.

However, in April 2002, an Irish film crew made a documentary on the whole event. Directed by Irish filmmakers Kim Bartley and Donnacha Ó Briain, the documentary is titled, “The Revolution Will Not Be Televised”.

2 December 2002: Business organizations, labor unions, anti-Chavez political parties and executives from state-run oil company PDVSA initiated a political action called “national civic strike” demanding that Chavez agree to nonbinding referendum on his rule.

On December 4, the television and radio channels of the country began to transmit the news of the demobilizing of a tanker, the “Pilín León,” in the navigation channel of Lake Maracaibo.

Strike fizzles after two months, government regains control of oil industry.

10 December 2002: President Chavez’s land reform law went into full effect. Congress enacted the Law on Land and Agricultural Development in November 2001.

7 April 2003: President Chavez fired some top executives at state oil company for joining strike.

16 April 2003: Mission Barrio Adentro (“Inside the Neighborhood”) was launched with a goal of developing a system of primary care clinics centered around curative and preventive medicine and establishing a system that guarantees a doctor for every 250 families throughout the country. The mission began to offer free medicines as well as dental and vision services.

The mission’s second phase was launched on 12 June 2005. Its goal was to offer free services like advanced medical exams, treatment for medical emergencies and physical rehabilitation through High Technology Centers (CAT), Centers of Integral Diagnosis Centers (CID) and Integral Rehabilitation Rooms (RIR).

The third phase of the mission consisted of the modernization of the country’s hospital network. Unlike the first two phases, the third phase builds upon the existing traditional network of hospitals as a means to restructure the National Public Health System. It includes the modernization of medical equipment and the restructuring, enlargement and improvement of the hospital infrastructure.

The fourth phase was formally launched on 6 October 2006. The goal of this phase was to build 16 new specialized hospitals around the country, continuing the example of the Latin American Children’s Cardiac Hospital located in Caracas.

Mission Robinson and Mission Ribas were launched in 2003 to provide all adult Venezuelans with opportunities to complete their education. Mission Robinson is divided into two phases, the first aimed at eliminating illiteracy and the second at providing primary education. Because of Mission Robinson, millions of citizens who previously lacked access to schools have completed their primary education. Mission Ribas allows Venezuelans to complete their high school degrees. Mission Sucre, also launched in 2003, facilitates the completion of university-level education. By September 2011, Mission Sucre has reached 560,000 people, graduated 140,000 new professionals, and has made Venezuela the country with the fifth-highest university enrollment rates in the world, according to UNESCO.

24 April 2003: Mission Mercal was launched in Venezuela. Mission Mercal, announced is based on article 305 of the constitution, which guarantees a secure food supply. . Its aim is to ensure easy access to basic foods among the population by selling these goods to consumers in a manner that maintains quality and low prices.

The Mission involves a state-run company called Mercados de Alimentos, C.A. (MERCAL), which provides subsidised food and basic goods through a nationwide chain of stores. In 2010 Mercal was reported as having 16,600 outlets, "ranging from street-corner shops to huge warehouse stores," in addition to 6000 soup kitchens. Mercal has guaranteed not just the right to food security, but it has also contributed to job creation. Mercal employs 85,000 workers.

12 October 2003: Misión Guaicaipuro, one of the Bolivarian Missions (a series of anti-poverty and social welfare programs), was launched by President Chavez. Carried out by the Venezuelan Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, mission seeks to restore communal land titles and human rights to Venezuela's numerous indigenous communities. The mission is named for the famous Venezuelan indigenous tribal chief Guaicaipuro, who was instrumental in leading native resistance against Spanish colonization of Venezuela.

Twenty six different indigenous groups exist in Venezuela today, around 535,000 people, or about 2.1% of the national population and are known in their own languages as the Wayúu, Warao, Pemón, Añú, Yanomami, Jivi, Piaroa, Kariña, Pumé, Yecuana, Yukpa, Eñepá, Kurripakao, Barí, Piapoko, Baré, Baniva, Puinave, Yeral, Jodi, Kariná, Warekena, Yarabana, Sapé, Wanai, and Uruak.

20-21 November 2003: The Ministers Responsible for Trade in the Hemisphere, representing the 34 countries participating in the negotiations of the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) held in Miami, USA to provide guidance for the

final phase of the FTAA negotiations. The proposed agreement was an extension of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) between Canada, Mexico and the United States. Cuba, Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador, Dominica, Nicaragua and Honduras, Argentina, Chile and Brazil opposed the proposal.

14 May 2004: The General Assembly of the shareholders of the PDVSA, the state-owned oil company, approved the FONDESPA, the Fund for Social Economic Development, created by President Chavez to put country's oil resources to the service of the country.

15 August 2004: The Venezuelan recall referendum to determine whether President Chavez should be recalled from office. The recall referendum was announced on 8 June 2004 by the National Electoral Council (CNE) after the Venezuelan opposition succeeded in collecting the number of signatures required by the 1999 Constitution to effect a recall. The result of the referendum was not to recall Chávez (58% no).

14 December 2004: The Cuba-Venezuela Agreement, was signed by President Chavez and Cuban President Fidel Castro. The pact was aimed at the exchange of medical and educational resources and petroleum between both nations. Venezuela delivers about 96,000 barrels of oil per day from its state-owned petroleum operations to Cuba at very favorable prices and Cuba in exchange sent 20,000 state-employed medical staff and thousands of teachers to Venezuela's poorest states. Venezuelans can also travel to Cuba for specialized medical care free of charge. The pact evolved into the Bolivarian Alternative for the People of Our Americas (ALBA) as other Latin American and Caribbean nations join. ALBA has eight member countries: Antigua and Barbuda, Bolivia, Cuba, Dominica, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Venezuela. The organization has developed a common currency to facilitate economic exchange between member countries called the Sucre.

7 December 2004: The Law on Social Responsibility on Radio and Television, a Venezuelan law, adopted by the National Assembly came in force.

26-31 January 2005: President Chavez was warmly received at the 5th World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, Brazil, where he held several meetings with local leaders, intellectuals and activists, and gave the closing speech at the Gigantinho Stadium. Chavez said in his speech that U.S. imperialism is not invincible. "We have to re-invent socialism. It can't be the kind of socialism that we saw in the

Soviet Union, but it will emerge as we develop new systems that are built on cooperation, not competition," he added.

Chavez said that Venezuela is trying to implement a social economy. "It is impossible, within the framework of the capitalist system to solve the grave problems of poverty of the majority of the world's population. We must transcend capitalism. But we cannot resort to state capitalism, which would be the same perversion of the Soviet Union. We must reclaim socialism as a thesis, a project and a path, but a new type of socialism, a humanist one, which puts humans and not machines or the state ahead of everything. That's the debate we must promote around the world, and the WSF is a good place to do it."

4 March 2005: President Chavez reached New Delhi.

5-6 March 2005: President Chavez visited Kolkata, West Bengal. On 5 March a public reception was accorded to the Venezuelan leader by the West Bengal government at the Rabindra Sarovar stadium in south Kolkata. Chief Minister, Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee, Governor, Gopal Krishna Gandhi, and State Assembly Speaker, Hasim Abdul Halim, addressed the gathering.

President Chavez in his speech boldly asserted that the 21st century belonged to the working people of the world and it belonged without doubt to socialism.

"We want the 21st century to be the century of social justice, of the triumph of the working people everywhere, and of Socialism. Socialism is the future and it is a certainty", declared Chavez before ending his speech by reciting a Tagore poem, which was then recited in the original by Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee.

Among those present at the mass reception were, Polit Bureau member of the CPI(M), Prakash Karat, state secretary of the Bengal CPI(M), Anil Biswas, Bengal Left Front chairman, Biman Basu, and All-India general secretary of the CITU, Chittabrata Majumdar. Also present were leaders of the Bengal Left Front and of other political parties.

Chavez reached Kolkata in the early evening and was greeted along both sides of the road he took to the Rabindra Sarovar venue by thousands of people who waved both the Red Flag and the Venezuelan colours while shouting slogans welcoming the Latin American leader to Kolkata.

Chavez began by endearing himself to the hearts-and-minds of the gathering by enunciating clearly in Bengali: "Ami apnader bhalobashi" ('I love you all'). He

was indeed cheered throughout his speech, and subsequently as he started using words that sounded familiar to the audience, he was greeted with loud cheering.

April 2005: The Venezuelan National Assembly passed a reform of the land reform law,

25 June 2005: Petrocaribe, an oil alliance of many Caribbean states with Venezuela to purchase oil on conditions of preferential payment, was launched in Puerto La Cruz, Venezuela. Initially At the first summit, 14 countries joined the alliance: Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Belize, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St Lucia, St Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname and Venezuela.

10 July 2005: Mission Culture, a social program that aims to transform cultural education in Venezuela, was created by the Chavez government.

24 July 2005: La Nueva Televisora del Sur (teleSUR, English: The New Television Station of the South), a pan-Latin American terrestrial and satellite television network headquartered in Caracas, Venezuela launched with the objective of providing information to promote the integration of Latin America.

8-15 August 2005: 16th World Festival of Youth and Students, 2005, under the auspices of the World Federation of Democratic Youth, held in Caracas, Venezuela. The festival was inaugurated by President Chavez.

21 August 2005: President of Cuba, Fidel Castro, and Venezuelan President Chavez signed an agreement to create the National Programme on Integral Community Medicine in Venezuela.

25 August 2005: Mission Miracle was founded on August 25, 2005, when the presidents of Cuba and Venezuela, Fidel Castro and Hugo Chávez, signed the Sandino Commitment in Havana to provide eye surgeries to 6 million people, including Venezuelans and other Latin Americans, in just 10 years.

22 August 2005: Religious broadcaster and founder of the Christian Coalition of America, Pat Robertson calls for assassination of Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez to stop his country from becoming "a launching pad for communist

infiltration and Muslim extremism." Robertson said this on the Christian Broadcast Network's The 700 Club.

7 September 2005: President Chavez created Petrocaribe agreement to sell oil on preferential credit terms to more than dozen countries. PetroCaribe is intended to change Latin American and Caribbean societies, by making them fairer, more cultured, participative and supportive, and, because of that, it is regarded as a comprehensive process which promotes eradication of poverty and encourages quality of life and effective involvement of peoples in shaping their own destiny.

16 September 2005: President Chavez in his speech at the United Nations said: "As we stride toward a new United Nations model that includes all of us when they talk about the people, we are bringing four indispensable and urgent reform proposals to this Assembly: the first; the expansion of the Security Council in its permanent categories as well as the non permanent categories, thus allowing new developed and developing countries as new permanent and non permanent categories. The second; we need to assure the necessary improvement of the work methodology in order to increase transparency, not to diminish it. The third; we need to immediately suppress- we have said this repeatedly in Venezuela for the past six years- the veto in the decisions taken by the Security Council, that elitist trace is incompatible with democracy, incompatible with the principles of equality and democracy. And the fourth; we need to strengthen the role of the Secretary General; his/her political functions regarding preventive diplomacy, that role must be consolidated. The seriousness of all problems calls for deep transformations. Mere reforms are not enough to recover that 'we' all the peoples of the world are waiting for."

28 October 2005: UNESCO affirmed that more than 95 percent of the Venezuelan population is literate, qualifying the country for the title of "Territory Free of Illiteracy". 1.5 million Venezuelans were taught to read.

4 December 2005: Chavez's allies won all 167 seats in National Assembly as major opposition parties boycotted election.

24-29 January 2006: The sixth World Social Forum was held in Caracas. President Chavez proclaimed "socialism or death" in finishing his rousing speech to a rally of around 10,000 people at the Polihedro Stadium on January 27.

14 January 2006: Mission Negra Hipólita launched in Venezuela to coordinate policies to provide integral health care to the homeless, those living in extreme poverty, pregnant women in extreme poverty, and people with disabilities. The mission operates through protection committees, which are community groups formed to monitor the needs of their neighborhoods.

22 January 2006: Evo Morales assumed charge as President of Bolivia for the first term.

4 June 2006: Mission Arbol (“Mission Tree”) founded in Venezuela with the purpose of recovering forests and woodlands throughout the country, preventing erosion and desertification and helping preserve the land and habitats for animal species. At the same time, this mission has a plan of reforestation that requires the joint action of the public institutions and its citizens.

31 July 2006: Ailing President Fidel Castro transferred his official responsibilities to the Vice President Raul Castro.

13 August 2006: President Chavez met Fidel Castro in Havana.

11-16 September 2006: President Chavez attended 14th Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement at Havana, Cuba. 11-16 September 2006.

20 September 2006: Chavez calls U.S. President George W. Bush “the devil” in his speech at United Nations General Assembly.

3 December 2006: Chavez won his third presidential re-election and second six-year term with 63 percent of the vote. Chavez defeated Manuel Rosales, governor of Zulia State, representing the party, A New Era (Un Nuevo Tiempo).

4 December 2006: In Ecuador, Rafael Correa was officially declared President by the country's electoral court. He took charge on 15 January 2007 as the 56th president of Ecuador.

5 December 2006: Emboldened by victory, Chavez told countrymen his political movement aims to transform Venezuela into socialist state.

8 January 2007: President Chavez announced plans to nationalize Venezuela's electrical and telecommunications companies.

10 January 2007: Chavez formally sworn in as president again, declaring in parliament that he will lead Venezuela toward 21st century socialism and uttering the phrase, "Homeland, Socialism or death!"

31 January 2007: Venezuelan parliament granted powers to President Chavez to legislate by decree for 18 months.

8 February 2007: Government nationalizes Venezuela's largest private electric company, signing agreement to buy controlling stake in Electricidad de Caracas from U.S.-based AES Corp.

12 February 2007: Officials sign agreement to purchase Verizon Communications Inc.'s stake in Venezuela's largest telecommunications company.

24 March 2007: Chavez's United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV) formed.

8 April 2007: President Chavez inaugurated Venezuela's Latin American Medical School (ELAM) in Caracas. The second of its kind, ELAM is modeled after ELAM-Cuba in Havana and is an initiative of the Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas (ALBA) with the stated goal of educating doctors throughout Latin America who will then return to their native countries in order to administer healthcare to the region's poor.

A total of 400 students from Bolivia, Cuba, Peru, El Salvador, Brazil, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Chile, Colombia, Argentina, Panama, Ecuador, Suriname, and Uruguay have undertaken medical study at the new university. The ELAM campus in Venezuela has a capacity to enroll some 1,900 students.

16-17 April 2007: The first South American Energy Summit took place in Isla Margarita, Venezuelan. Ten of the 12 South American presidents attended the summit.

1 May 2007: Venezuela stripped the world's biggest oil companies of operational control over massive Orinoco Belt crude projects, a controversial component in President Hugo Chavez's nationalization drive.

27 May 2007: The terrestrial broadcast license of the Radio Caracas Television (RCTV), a very influential anti-government private network, expired and the Venezuela government did not renew the license for the station's role in the 2002 coup.

15 August 2007: President Chavez proposed an amendment to 33 articles of Venezuela's 350-article Constitution. A constitutional provision allows the president, the National Assembly of Venezuela or a constituent assembly to ask for changes; reform should be approved by a national referendum

14 October 2007: Ailing Fidel Castro called Chavez's radio show, making his first live appearance on Cuban airwaves since falling ill 14 months earlier, in example of how close the two men have become.

2 December 2007: A constitutional referendum was held in Venezuela to amend 69 articles of the 1999 Constitution. Reform was needed, according to President Chavez, to implement his socialist agenda. The referendum was narrowly defeated, giving Chavez the first election loss of his nine-year presidency.

12 January—2 March 2008: United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV) held its founding congress with 1681 delegates participating.

24 February 2008: Raúl Castro was elected President of Cuba by the Cuban National Assembly.

29 February- 7 March 2008: An international week of solidarity with Venezuela observed in protest at the largest oil company in the world, ExxonMobil's, legal actions - freezing up to \$12 billion of Venezuelan state oil company PDVSA's assets- pending arbitration in a dispute over an oil exploration project nationalised by the Venezuelan government last year. The theme of the week: "US/Exxon - Hands off Venezuela - STOP ExxonMobil's THEFT FROM THE POOR". The programme was endorsed by the Australia Venezuela Solidarity Network, Venezuela Solidarity Network (USA), Venezuela Aotearoa Solidarity Network (New Zealand).

14 March 2008: Chavez was proclaimed President of the newly formed PSUV. Many leftist parties merged with the PSUV. However, Communist Party refused to join the new party.

29-30 March 2008: The Latin American Meeting Against Media Terrorism held in Caracas. The "Caracas Declaration", endorsed by participants from 14 countries.

8-13 April 2008: World Peace Council Assembly and World Peace Conference held in Caracas for the first time.

9 April 2008: President Chavez ordered the nationalization of Venezuelan steel mill, Sidor.

23 May 2008: Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) was created with the signing of the Constitutive Treaty at the Third Summit of Heads of State, held in Brasília, Brazil. The Treaty entered into force on 11 March 2011, UNASUR became a legal entity. It includes all of the countries of South America: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, Uruguay and Venezuela. While the group is focused on political and security issues, it also includes the Bank of the South, a multilateral bank used to promote economic and social development projects.

2-4 July 2008: Two-day 7th Conference of Ministers of Information of the Non-Aligned Countries (COMINAC VII) was held in Margarita Island, Venezuela.

4 August 2008: On the final day of the 18-month period during which the Venezuelan National Assembly granted President Hugo Chavez the power to pass laws by decree, Chavez signed 26 new laws regulating the armed forces, public administration, social security system, banks, agricultural production, and the tourism industry.

The government says the laws seek to increase state management of “strategic” sectors of the national economy and public institutions that are considered vital for ensuring the well-being of all Venezuelans, in the context of progress toward “21st Century Socialism.”

19 August 2008: President Chavez ordered the take-over of a cement plant owned and operated by Cemex, an international cement producer. While shares of Cemex fell on the New York Stock Exchange, the cement plant comprises only about 5% of the company's business, and is not expected to adversely affect the company's ability to produce in other markets. Chavez has been looking to nationalize the concrete and steel industries of his country to meet home building and infrastructure goals.

12 September 2008: President Chavez ordered expulsion of US ambassador for conspiring against the Venezuelan government.

23 November 2008: President Chavez's party won 17 of 24 gubernatorial races.

15 February 2009: Chavez won voter approval to eliminate term limits, allowing him to run for re-election indefinitely; he vows to remain in power for at least another decade.

The 2009 referendum was a vote in which the citizens of Venezuela approved Amendment No. 1 of the Constitution of Venezuela; this abolished term limits for the offices of President, state governors, mayors and National Assembly deputies.

The current constitution, enacted in 1999 by referendum, previously established a three-term limit for deputies and a two-term limit for the other offices. The proposed amendment was endorsed by 54% of the electorate, with approximately 70% of registered voters participating.

16 April 2009: The SUCRE (Spanish: Sistema Único de Compensación Regional/ Unified System for Regional Compensation) is a proposed regional currency to be used in commercial exchanges between members of the regional trade bloc Bolivarian Alliance for the Americas (ALBA), which was created as an alternative to the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA). The SUCRE is named after Antonio José de Sucre, a leading figure in Latin America's independence struggle. Agreement in general terms for the currency was declared in Sucre's birthplace of Cumaná, capital of Venezuela's Sucre state, on 16 April 2009. The formal treaty establishing the regional payments clearinghouse was signed by the six presidents in Cochabamba, Bolivia, on 17 October 2009.

17 April 2009: US President Barack Obama met President Chavez before the opening ceremony of the 5th Summit of the Americas in Port of Spain.

28 June 2009: The Honduran Army on orders from the Honduran Supreme Court ousted President Manuel Zelaya and sent him into exile. It was prompted by his violation of the constitution through attempts to schedule a non binding poll on holding a referendum about convening a constituent assembly to rewrite the constitution. After Zelaya refused to comply with court orders to cease, the Honduran Supreme Court secretly issued a warrant for his arrest on 26 June. Two

days later, Honduran soldiers stormed the president's house in the middle of the night and detained Zelaya.

24 August 2009: U.S. author, renowned intellectual, and Professor of Linguistics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Noam Chomsky met for the first time with Venezuelan President Chavez in Caracas and analyzed hemispheric politics during a nationally televised forum.

Chomsky was accompanied in Caracas by the co-founder of South End Press and ZMagazine and system operator of ZCom, Michael Albert, and the co-founder and editor of Venezuelanalysis.com, sociologist Gregory Wilpert.

26 September 2009: The presidents of Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, Ecuador, Bolivia and Venezuela signed an agreement establishing the Bank of South with an initial capital of US\$20 billion.

26-27 September 2009: The second Africa-South American Summit (ASA) was held in Margarita Island, Venezuela. Heads of state from 61 countries, 49 from Africa and 12 from South America, participated in the summit. The First Africa-South America Summit took place in Nigeria in 2006.

19-21 November 2009: World Meeting of Left Parties held in Caracas, Venezuela. More than 50 left organisations from 31 countries participated. President Chavez in his speech on 20 November called for the formation of a “Fifth International” of left parties and social movements to confront the challenge posed by the global crisis of capitalism. The meeting adopted ‘The Caracas Commitment’.

24 November 2009: Venezuelan National Assembly passed a reform to the Community Council Law transferring the financial management of the councils from communal banks to finance commissions, and aiming to solve the problems that arose during the councils’ prolific expansion over the past three years. The new law establishes more financial regulations so as to prevent corruption, and to assure that the financial officers “privilege social interest over accumulation of capital.”

January 2010: The Radio of the South (Spanish: La Radio del Sur) an international radio network based in Caracas, Venezuela was launched.

12 January 2010: Devastating earthquake in Haiti. Venezuela was one of the first countries to deliver emergency assistance to Haiti.

23 February 2010: The Rio Group–Caribbean Community Unity Summit in Cancun, Mexico where a regional bloc of Latin American and Caribbean states thought out. President Chavez took part in the summit.

22 July 2010: Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez announced that "for dignity's sake" he was breaking off relations with Colombia as a response to Colombia's allegations that there was evidence showing FARC and ELN guerrilla camps established on the Venezuelan side of the border. A few days later Chavez threatened to cut off oil exports to the United States if Colombia launched a military attack. "If there was any armed aggression against Venezuela from Colombian territory or from anywhere else, promoted by the Yankee empire, we would suspend oil shipments to the United States even if we have to eat stones here." The bilateral relation was restored after Juan Manuel Santos was inaugurated as the new President of Colombia on 7 August 2010.

26 September 2010: The parliamentary election in Venezuela took place on 26 September 2010 to elect the 165 deputies to the National Assembly. Venezuelan opposition parties, which had boycotted the previous election, thus allowing the governing United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV) to gain a two-thirds supermajority, participated in the election through the Coalition for Democratic Unity (MUD). Nationally, the popular vote was split equally between PSUV and MUD, but PSUV won a majority of the first-past-the-post seats and consequently retained a substantial majority in the Assembly, although falling short of the two-thirds majority mark.

Of the 165 deputies, 110 were constituency representatives elected on a first-past-the-post, the system in 87 electoral districts, 52 elected on a party list system (two or three deputies per state of Venezuela, depending on population), and 3 seats were reserved for indigenous peoples, with separate rules. Additionally, 12 representatives were chosen for the Latin American Parliament.

30 November 2010: President Chavez opened up grounds of the Miraflores Presidential Palace to 26 families in Caracas who had lost their homes due to heavy rains, the highest in 40 years.

17 December 2010: The Venezuelan National Assembly approved a law that will grant President Chavez the power to pass laws by presidential decree for 18 months in order to bring rapid relief to 130,000 flood victims and to further engrain 21st Century Socialism in the nation's legal structure.

20 December 2010: The Venezuelan National Assembly reformed the law as the Law of Social Responsibility in Radio and Television and Electronic Media,

21 December 2010: Venezuela rejects appointment of Larry Palmer as U.S. ambassador to Venezuela.

18 January 2011: President Chavez issued a law-decree, the ‘Law for Dignified Refuge’ to “institutionalize the figure of a dignified and humane refuge, and begins by establishing responsibilities of the government, the people, and the different sectors of national life.”

28 February 2011: President Chavez announced the National System of Popular Cultures (SNCP) – a nationwide effort to foment the development of popular culture and the artists behind it. On 5 May, 2011 Venezuelan Minister of Culture, Francisco Farruco Sesto, outlined six areas of cultural development in which the SNCP would focus its efforts: 1) Transferring cultural knowledge and traditions among the Venezuelan people; 2) Strengthening of the nation’s cultural roots and identity; 3) Making cultural groups ignored in the past more visible to the whole of society; 4) Organizing of exhibits, performances, displays, etc; 5) Fomenting of an economy supportive of artists in the field of popular culture; and 6) Supporting those artists with economic difficulties and/or health-related challenges.

4-8 March 2011: Venezuela hosts the Global Grassroots Women’s Conference in Caracas to Mark 100-year Anniversary of International Women’s Day

23 April 2011: Venezuelan authorities arrested Joaquin Perez Becerra at Maiquetia International Airport, outside of Caracas, after a phone call from Colombian President Juan Santos requesting Becerra’s detention and deportation. Becerra, a naturalized Swedish citizen and journalist, of Colombian descent was accused by the Colombian government of “terrorism” because his news site, Anncol, allegedly “supports” the Armed Revolutionary Forces of Colombia (FARC). Perez was deported to Colombia within 48 hours. President Chavez was criticized even by his own supporters for the step against Becerra.

5 May 2011: President Chavez on Thursday enacted three new laws designed “to dignify” the living conditions of Venezuela’s urban residents –(a) The Law against Eviction and Arbitrary Removal, (b) The Special Law for the Dignification of Residential Workers, and (c) The Special Law to Integrally Regulate Land Tenure in Urban and Suburban Settlements.

3-5 June 2011: News agencies from nine Latin American countries gathered in Caracas and created the Union of Latin American News Agencies (ULAN). Venezuela, through the Agencia Venezolana de Noticias (AVN) held the ULAN Secretary General's Office by unanimous decision.

10 June 2011: President Chavez underwent surgery in Cuba for pelvic abscess.

12 June 2011: President Chavez made a phone call from Cuba to the state television in Venezuela saying he was recovering from surgery.

30 June 2011: President Chavez appeared on television to confirm he had a cancerous tumour removed.

30 June 2011: Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez speaks to the Venezuelan people live on national television, referring to recent health issues he has faced that include a cancerous tumor that was successfully removed by medical professionals in Havana, Cuba. President Chavez's Address to the Venezuelan People:

4 July 2011: President Chavez returned to Venezuela from Cuba. But later travels to Cuba periodically for chemotherapy and medical tests.

28 August 2011: Great Patriotic Pole (GPP) formed. GPP is a broad front and a grass root coalition of which comprises all of the popular organisations and political parties, such as the United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV), the Venezuelan Communist Party (PCV), that support the advance of the Bolivarian Revolution. More than 35,000 groups registered across the country as members of the GPP.

GPP is basically the integration of diverse social movements, organisations and collectives in different areas, groups with different political positions, but always oriented towards the socialist revolution.

3 December 2011: Representing roughly 600 million people, the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (known by its Spanish initials as CELAC) was born in Venezuela's capital city of Caracas, when the 33 member states of the new group approved its founding document, the Caracas Declaration.

CELAC is an organization that unites, for the first time, the 33 countries of the region into a single block to make decisions jointly and without the influence of other nations.

This new body, in addition to serving as a forum for political dialogue, aims to strengthen unity, defend democracy, forge cooperation on economic and social development, and promote cultural exchange.

The CELAC was thought out on February 23, 2010, at the Rio Group–Caribbean Community Unity Summit. CELAC is the successor of the Rio Group and the Latin American and Caribbean Summit on Integration and Development (CALC). Absent from the bloc are Canada and the United States, as well as the territories of France, the Netherlands, Denmark and the United Kingdom in the Americas.

It is seen as an alternative to the Organization of American States (OAS), the regional body organised largely by Washington in 1948.

12 December 2011: President Chavez passed a law to create the Great Mission Sons and Daughters of Venezuela. The social program aimed to provide economic help to pregnant women, families with children under the age of 18, and families with children of any age who have a disability. Economic support will go to those in a state of critical poverty, defined by the government as a family income below the minimum wage (Bs 1,548 or US\$ 360).

25 January 2012: Fidel Castro writes an article titled ‘The Genius of Chavez’ published in the Cuba Debate, February 7th 2012.

21 February 2012: President Chavez said his doctors found new lesion in same place where tumor was previously removed, and announced plans to return to Cuba for surgery.

26 February 2012: President Chavez underwent operation that removed tumor from same location in pelvic region.

24 March 2012: President Chavez traveled to Cuba to begin first round of radiation therapy.

11 April 2012: National Alternative Media Network was launched in Venezuela by the Minister of Communication and Information, Andres Izarra.

Named after Venezuelan revolutionary journalist Fabricio Ojeda, the network will be made up of various community television and radio stations and created with the support of the Latin American School of Image and Sound, which will provide

social communications training to potential journalists, photographers and other media-related professions.

4-6 July 2012: The 18th Sao Paulo Forum, held in Caracas. It aimed to “combat the campaign of disrepute against Venezuela by right wing media around the world” through ceremonies, debates, press conferences, and cultural activities organised by progressive organisations around the world. Over 800 representatives from different leftist parties and organizations across the globe met in Caracas. President Chavez addressed the meeting on 6 July. The forum adopted the Declaration of Caracas, which condemns neoliberal economics and claims it is one of the major causes of the world’s lingering economic crisis.

24 July 2012: Around the world over 100 cities showed their solidarity with President Hugo Chavez and the Bolivarian revolution, on 24 July, the 229th anniversary of the birth of Liberator Simon Bolivar.

The day was called by the 18th Sao Paulo Forum, held in Caracas in early July 2012 . It aimed to “combat the campaign of disrepute against Venezuela by right wing media around the world” through ceremonies, debates, press conferences, and cultural activities organised by progressive organisations around the world.

The forum created a group called The Peoples of the World United for Venezuela, which united progressive political parties, organisations, social movements, and personalities who supported the Bolivarian revolution and was “preparing to provide solidarity in defence of the Venezuelan people ...and against the strategies aimed at not recognising Chavez’s inevitable triumph on 7 October”.

26-31 August 2012: The 16th Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement held from 26 to 31 August 2012 in Tehran, Iran decided to hold the 17th NAM Summit in Venezuela in 2015.

7 October 2012: The presidential elections were held in Venezuela with a historically high rate of voter turnout of over 80 percent.

President Chavez won third six-year term with slightly more than 55% of the vote over rightwing coalition candidate, Henrique Capriles Radonski by an 11-point margin.

10 October 2012: President Chavez criticized the US government for problems in Syria in his first press conference after the election victory.

13 October 2012: Chavez appointed Foreign Minister Nicolas Maduro Vice President of Venezuela.

8 December 2012: President Chavez returned from a trip to Cuba to say cancer had returned. In a national address flanked by Maduro and national assembly head Diosdado Cabello, Chavez announced Maduro as his successor.

10 December 2012: President Chavez flew back to Cuba for more treatment. It was his last public appearance.

11 December 2012: President Chavez underwent a six-hour operation.

16 December 2012: President Chavez's allies swept gubernatorial elections, winning in 20 of 23 states.

18 December 2012: Venezuelan government reported that Chavez has a respiratory infection but said it had been controlled. He is said to be in stable condition.

29 December 2012: Maduro flew to Cuba to visit Chavez.

10 January 2013: President Chavez could not return to Caracas for a swearing-in ceremony to start his third six-year term. One day earlier, the Supreme Court said the event was a formality and that Chavez remained head of state.

15 February 2013: The Venezuelan government published photos of Chavez propped up in his Havana hospital bed with his daughters, reading the Cuban newspaper Granma.

17 February 2013: The letter written to Hugo Chavez by Fidel Castro just before Chavez's return to Venezuela in the early hours of Monday 18 February.

“Dear Hugo,

I am extremely satisfied that you have been able to return to that piece of American land which you love so much, and to our brother people who support you so much.

A long and agonising wait, as well as your astonishing capacity for physical resistance and the total dedication of a team of doctors, as has been the case over the last 10 years, were necessary to achieve this objective.

It would be totally unfair not to mention the insurmountable dedication of your closest family members, your colleagues in the revolutionary leadership, the Bolivarian Armed Forces, who were re-armed and re-equipped by you, and the honest people of the world who have shown their support.

The breath the Venezuelan people offered you also deserves a special mention, who saluted you with their daily demonstrations of enthusiastic and unshakeable support. It is to this which your happy return to Venezuela is owed.

You learned a lot about life, Hugo, in those difficult days of suffering and sacrifice. Now that we will not have the privilege of receiving news of you on a daily basis, we will go back to the method of correspondence which we have used for many years.

We will always live to fight for justice for human beings, consciously and humbly, without fear of the years, months, days or hours that we might have left to live in the most critical era of the history of our humanity.

Our people, who are also your people, will know tomorrow of your return to Venezuelan via this message. Everything had to be done with much discretion, so as not to give an opportunity to the fascist groups to plan any of their cynical actions against the Bolivarian revolutionary process.

When the socialist camp collapsed and the USSR disintegrated, and imperialism with its sharpened knife tried to drown the Cuban Revolution in blood, Venezuela, a relatively small country in divided America, was capable of preventing that. Due to time restraints, I have not mentioned the numerous countries in the Antilles, Central and South America that Venezuela has helped, on top of its great economic and social programmes. That is why all honest people of the world have followed closely the “health and news of Chavez”.

Until victory always!

A firm hug!

Fidel Castro Ruz

8.35 p.m.

February 17 2013”

[<http://venezuelanalysis.com/analysis/7823>]

18 February 2013: Chavez returned to Caracas from Cuba after more than two months.

5 March 2013: Chavez died at 4.25pm local time.

11 March 2013: Fidel Castro, described Hugo Chavez as “the best friend the Cuban people have had in their history”. Prensa Latina posted the full letter:

“We have lost our best friend

The best friend the Cuban people have had throughout their history died on the afternoon of March 5. A call via satellite communicated the bitter news. The significance of the phrase used was unmistakable.

Although we were aware of the critical state of his health, the news hit us hard. I recalled the times he joked with me, saying that when both of us had concluded our revolutionary task, he would invite me to walk by the Arauca River in Venezuelan territory, which made him remember the chance to rest that he never had.

The honor befell us to have shared with the Bolivarian leader the same ideas of social justice and support for the exploited. The poor are the poor in any part of the world.

"Let Venezuela give me a way of serving her: she has in me a son," proclaimed National Hero José Martí, the leader of our independence, a traveler who, without cleansing himself of the dust of the journey, asked for the location of the statue of Bolívar. Martí knew the beast because he lived in its entrails. Is it possible to ignore the profound words he voiced in an inconclusive letter to his friend Manuel Mercado the day before he died in battle?

"...I am in daily danger of giving my life for my country and duty – for I understand that duty and have the intention of carrying it out – the duty of preventing the United States from extending through the Antilles as Cuba gains its independence, and from falling, with that additional strength, upon our lands of America. All that I have done thus far, and will do, is for this purpose. I have had

to work silently and somewhat indirectly because, there are certain things which, in order to attain them, have to remain concealed...."

At that time, 66 years had passed since the Liberator Simón Bolívar wrote, "...the United States would seem to be destined by fate to plague the Americas with miseries in the name of freedom."

On January 23, 1959, 22 days after the revolutionary triumph in Cuba, I visited Venezuela to thank its people and the government which assumed power after the Pérez Jiménez dictatorship, for the dispatch of 150 rifles at the end of 1958. I said at that time:

"...Venezuela is the homeland of the Liberator, where the idea of the union of the peoples of America was conceived. Therefore, Venezuela must be the country to lead the union of the peoples of America; as Cubans, we support our brothers and sisters in Venezuela.

"I have spoken of these ideas not because I am moved by any kind of personal ambition, or even the ambition of glory, because, at the end of the day, ambitions of glory remain a vanity, and as Martí said, 'All the glory of the world fits into a kernel of corn.'

"And so, upon coming here to talk in this way to the people of Venezuela, I do so thinking honorably and deeply, that if we want to save America, if we want to save the freedom of each one of our societies that, at the end of the day, are part of one great society, which is the society of Latin America; if it is that we want to save the revolution of Cuba, the revolution of Venezuela and the revolution of all the countries on our continent, we have to come closer to each other and we have to solidly support each other, because alone and divided, we will fail."

That is what I said on that day and today, 54 years later, I endorse it!

I must only include on that list the other nations of the world which, for more than half a century, have been victims of exploitation and plunder. That was the struggle of Hugo Chávez.

Not even he himself suspected how great he was.

Until victory forever (Hasta la victoria siempre), unforgettable friend!

Fidel Castro Ruz
March 11, 2013”

[<http://venezuelanalysis.com/analysis/8275>]

14 April 2013: Venezuelans elected Hugo Chávez’s vice-president, Nicolás Maduro, president. Maduro defeated Henrique Capriles Radonski, Chávez’s unsuccessful challenger in last October’s presidential election. The voter turnout rate was 79.17%. This vote, the 18th in just over 14 years, was yet another example of the country’s steadfast commitment to democracy.

Maduro, who served as acting president since the death of the leader of the Bolivarian Revolution Hugo Chávez, won the election with 50.75% of the vote (7,563,747 votes).

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Compiled by: Anjan Bera

NOTE: The timeline is NOT based on any original research work. However, we tried our best to crosscheck and verify the facts and information referred hereto. The timeline is prepared primarily for the peace and solidarity activists. Relevant information are collected from various online sources, such as, Venezuela Analysis, Wikipedia, websites of the Government of Venezuela, Peoples Democracy, Granma etc. We may miss some of such online sources unintentionally. We are thankful to the people and organization who run those websites.

We will be happy if this timeline encourages its readers to study the topic more deeply.