



One Hundred Sixteenth Congress  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Committee on Foreign Affairs  
2170 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515  
[www.foreignaffairs.house.gov](http://www.foreignaffairs.house.gov)

January 24, 2019

The Honorable Mike Pompeo  
Secretary  
Department of State  
2201 C Street, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Mr. Secretary:

As events continue to unfold in Venezuela, the safety of United States personnel and their family members in the country must remain a top priority. To that end, we request that the State Department brief the House Foreign Affairs Committee as soon as possible, and then regularly, over the coming days on security measures and contingency plans that you are putting in place.

We continue to be extremely concerned by Nicolas Maduro's autocratic rule of Venezuela and look forward to working with you in shaping future U.S. policy towards the country. Regardless of the Administration's policy toward Venezuela, we all agree on the need to keep our diplomats in Caracas safe from harm by making staffing decisions for the U.S. Embassy based on the well-being of these individuals and their families.

Yesterday, your Administration rejected Nicolas Maduro's effort to break relations with the United States and declare our diplomats *persona non grata*. You stated, "The United States does not recognize the Maduro regime as the government of Venezuela. Accordingly, the United States does not consider former president Nicolas Maduro to have the legal authority to break diplomatic relations with the United States or to declare our diplomats *persona non grata*."

Even with the Administration's recognition of Juan Guaidó as President, Maduro maintains control over Venezuela's security forces and could use those forces to harm or intimidate American diplomats. Given this potential situation, we want to ensure the safety of our diplomats and not allow it to be compromised in order to reiterate the political point that the United States no longer recognizes Maduro's legal authority.

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We have no greater duty on the House Foreign Affairs Committee than ensuring that the State Department is keeping U.S. personnel and their families serving our country around the world safe. To that end, we request immediate briefings and written materials on all efforts to keep U.S. government employees and their families in Caracas safe and contingency plans for these individuals to exit the country if needed.

We look forward to hearing from you on this urgent matter.

Sincerely,



ELIOT L. ENGEL  
Chairman  
House Foreign Affairs Committee



MICHAEL T. McCAUL  
Ranking Member  
House Foreign Affairs Committee