



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on July 14, 2010

Freedom Activist Arrested in Venezuela on False Charges

Long-time freedom advocate and former Venezuelan presidential candidate Alejandro Pena Esclusa was arrested on July 12 by the Chavez regime on trumped-up explosives charges, according to various Latin American sources. His arrest adds to the growing list of political prisoners being held in Venezuela including journalists, opposition politicians, and judges who don't bow down to the regime.



Minions of socialist "President" Hugo Chavez claim a recently arrested Salvadorian man, wanted for alleged connections to bombings in Cuba, informed Venezuelan authorities that he was working with Esclusa. The alleged "terrorist," Francisco Abarca, was arrested in Venezuela last week for supposedly plotting to destabilize the government. He is now in Cuba facing charges, ensuring that no independent confirmation of Abarca's alleged testimony against Esclusa will be allowed. Experts also question Abarca's involvement in the 1997 Cuban bombings.

The day of his own arrest, Esclusa posted a video online explaining that he feared being jailed on fake charges because the government was trying to link him to Abarca. But, he noted, "I don't believe in violence. I believe in opinion." That is the same message he shared with [The New American](#) in an interview earlier this year.

The controlled Venezuelan media, however, has been quick to condemn him. "Alejandro Pena Esclusa is a dark character of the Venezuelan opposition linked to fascist sectors and with a thick file of conspiratorial activities against the government of President Hugo Chavez," [reported](#) the Chavez regime's official propaganda organ, ABN. "Fascist" in Chavez-speak means anyone opposed to the utter destruction being wrought on Venezuela's economy through the regime's "revolution."

But those who know Esclusa, as well as opponents of the socialist revolution and even unbiased observers, are certain that the charges were politically motivated. His wife, for example, denounced the arrest and said authorities had framed her husband.

"These people dared to plant those explosives in a very crude way because they put some explosives in the drawer of our 8-year-old girl's desk," Indira de Pena told a Colombian radio station, adding that agents had planted the fake "evidence" while Esclusa was already handcuffed.

Esclusa has served as one of the most important players battling the [resurgence of communism and socialism throughout Latin America](#) — he is the founder and president of [UnoAmerica](#), an umbrella



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organization for over 200 pro-freedom groups in the region. The organization issued a [statement](#) rejecting Esclusa's "absurd and illegal" detention, calling for his immediate release. The set-up "is part of a Cuban operation that looks to link opposition leaders with terrorist acts," the organization said.

Famed Brazilian author, philosopher, and journalist Olavo de Carvalho — a personal friend of Esclusa and another key figure in the opposition to the socialist revolution sweeping Latin America — called the charges "ridiculous, false, and absurd." In an e-mail to *The New American*, he said accusations were "entirely manufactured by Chavez's police" and noted that the idea of finding explosives in Pena's apartment was "laughable, to say the least."

"Pena, who has never shown any sign of mental unbalance, would have to be completely insane to plot bomb attacks against a government which he has filed suit against in the International Court of Justice," Carvalho explained. "The goal of the farce set up against Pena is to create an appearance of connection between him and 'violent right-wing organizations,' which, in the current Latin American scene, stand out especially because of their spectacular non-existence."

The arrest is simply "more proof of Hugo Chavez's utter contempt for the fundamental rights of his political opponents," Carvalho explained, noting that Esclusa spoke with sadness about the situation in his country, but without any sign of hatred.

Carvalho also noted that he is worried about Esclusa's fate at the hands of the Venezuelan regime. "Nobody knows where Alejandro Pena is, nor what his health condition is after some hours of fondling by the hands of Hugo Chavez's political police, widely known by their matchless tenderness," he said, calling on the Catholic Church in Venezuela "to send a priest to meet with Pena Esclusa in prison immediately, in order to ensure that the excess of humanitarianism of the Chavez government will not lead the prisoner to death from emotional exhaustion or from unknown or unthinkable causes."

Esclusa is widely known and respected for his activism in Latin America and the United States, even prompting the Alabama state legislature to pass a [resolution](#) praising him and his efforts to promote liberty.

"At great personal risk to himself, Alejandro Pena Esclusa has stood firm in opposition to the spread of Marxism and totalitarianism in Latin America," notes the resolution. "He continues to serve as an ideological and symbolic counterweight to Chavez's grievance driven exploitation of the people of Venezuela and of broader Latin America in furtherance of the fomentation of authoritarian movements in the region."

Myriad international bodies and human-rights groups have condemned the socialist regime's political arrests and appalling behavior. For example, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, part of the Organization of American States, recently released a scathing report about Chavez's government [saying](#) it routinely violates human rights. "The commission also finds that the punitive power of the state is being used to intimidate or punish people on account of their political opinions," the report noted.

Chavez has [shut down](#) dozens of media outlets in radio, television, and newspaper. He regularly [arrests critics](#), including the head of the last remaining balanced television station (on charges of "insulting the chief executive"), [politicians](#) who disagree with his power grabs, and [even judges](#) who don't unhesitatingly do his bidding. He also [frequently steals private property](#) in the name of his "revolution," driving the economy into the ground.

As reported by [The New American](#) magazine earlier this year, Chavez and his "petro-dollars" are part of



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a vast network of governments, terrorists, drug traffickers, and organizations that have been working in the shadows to spread “revolution” throughout the region. Under the banner of the Foro de Sao Paolo (Sao Paolo Forum), socialism is steadily advancing to the point where the FSP now dominates most Latin American governments.

The group was founded by Fidel Castro, the Sandinistas, Brazilian President Luiz Inacio da Silva (Lula), and other radical totalitarians. It includes among its members Marxist guerilla groups like the FARC, ELN, MIR and others, as well as over 100 political parties. Its allies include Russia, China, and even various European and American groups. And people like Esclusa were on the front lines exposing the FSP and its authoritarian aims.

When Esclusa spoke to *The New American* in a telephone interview earlier this year, he acknowledged the dangers of living in Venezuela under Chavez’s rule. He knew it was dangerous and that the authorities were watching him, but he remained optimistic nonetheless.

“[The FSP] has built within it the seeds of its own destruction,” he told *The New American* from the jungles of Colombia. “Once they are in power, they are not able to create wealth, so eventually, the movement will be defeated.... But even though it is destined to fail, in the meantime, it can destroy a lot.” And unfortunately, it appears possible that Esclusa may become the latest victim of the FSP’s destruction.

Photo of Hugo Chavez: AP Images



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