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Responses to Information Requests

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17 April 2014

VEN104851.E

Venezuela: The Alianza Bravo Pueblo (ABP) political party, including its mandate, objectives, structure, leadership, regions of influence, number of members, and activities; treatment of ABP members (2006-April 2014)

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

1. Mandate and Objectives

The *Political Handbook of the World 2013 (PHW)* indicates that the ABP was formed in 2000 as a political splinter of the Democratic Action (Acción Democrática, AD) party (2013, 1603). The website of the ABP indicates that the party was created in 2000 by Antonio Ledezma, one of the leaders of the AD, and his AD supporters (ABP n.d.a). The statutes of the ABP define the party as a [translation] "social democrat movement" that seeks to develop the basic concepts of "social justice, freedom, peace, solidarity, equality of opportunities, and progress" (ibid. n.d.b, Art. 1).

The ABP website explains that its [translation] "mission" is "[t]o be a popular political option that improves public governance through democratic power to address the social needs of the Venezuelan population, by promoting citizen participation" (ibid. n.d.c). The statutes further indicate that the party seeks to obtain power through democratic means to [translation] "realize" its principles (ibid. n.d.b, Art. 3).

2. Structure

The structure of the ABP as outlined in its statutes is attached to this Response.

The ABP website identifies, in addition to 22 political coordinators, the members of the National Directorate as follows:

President	Antonio Ledezma
First Vice-President	Richard Blanco
Second Vice-President	Rosaura Sanz
Secretary General	Edwin Luzardo
Secretary of the Organization	Alcides Padilla
In-exile Secretary of Policy and Coordination	Óscar Pérez
Foreign Affairs Coordinator	Antonio Sánchez García

Public Policy Coordinator	Cipriano Heredia
Social and Communal Action Coordinator	Jim Albornoz
Youth Alliance Coordinator	Josmir Gutiérrez
Legal Affairs Coordinator	Pedro Segundo Blanco
Women and Family Affairs Coordinator	Adriana Aguilera
Labour Alliance Coordinator	Francisco Canache
Political Training and Leadership Coordinator	Mayra Contreras
Culture and Sports Coordinator	José Molina
(ibid. n.d.d)	
The website also identifies the following regional presidents by state:	
Amazonas	Roger Galavis
Anzoátegui	Francisco Abad
Apure	Horacio Hernández
Aragua	Ramón Rengifo
Barinas	Víctor Aponte
Bolívar	Ana Franco
Carabobo	Luis Prieto
Cojedes	Rubén Mireles
Delta Amacuro	Isidro Suárez
Distrito Capital	Luis López
Falcón	Olaguer Castillo
Guárico	Alberto González
Lara	Alexis Lamazares
Mérida	Alirio Carrero
Miranda	Cipriano Heredia
Monagas	Juan Manuel Mota
Nueva Esparta	Jaime Duarte
Portuguesa	Geramel de Armas
Sucre	Max Castillejo
Táchira	Vincenzo Pallotini
Trujillo	Henry Pereira
Vargas	Luis Suniaga
Yaracuy	Jorge Paiva
(ibid. n.d.e)	
Further information on the ABP regions of influence or on the number of members could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.	

3. Activities

Sources report that Antonio Ledezma [President of the ABP (ABP n.d.d)] first obtained the position of mayor of Caracas in 2008 (*El Universal* 11 July 2012; Globovisión 9 Dec. 2013). On 8 December 2013, he was re-elected mayor of Caracas as a representative of the Democratic Unity Table (Mesa de la Unidad Democrática, MUD) (*El País*.cr 8 Dec. 2013; Globovisión 9 Dec. 2013). The MUD is a coalition of 50 parties that was created in 2009 and ran for the 2010 legislative elections (*PHW* 2013, 1602). A document produced by the MUD indicates that the ABP is one of its members (MUD 26 Sept. 2011).

The webpage of the National Assembly of Venezuela lists Richard José Blanco [First Vice-President of the ABP (ABP n.d.d)] as the only ABP member of parliament (Venezuela n.d.).

Media list the following ABP activities:

- The citizen journalism website Informe21.com reports that Richard Blanco questioned the legislative power's use of the funding for hospitals (Informe21.com 8 July 2013). He said that the health system is in a [translation] "coma" and hospitals lack basic operational resources while the government purchases weapons (ibid.).
- The newspaper *El Diario de Caracas* reports that the National Directorate of the ABP considered the withdrawal of Venezuela from the Inter-American Court of Human Rights as [translation] "irresponsible" (*El Diario de Caracas* 9 Sept. 2013). Blanco indicated that it created a [translation] "void" that limits Venezuelans' access to justice (ibid.).
- *El Diario de Caracas* reports that Richard Blanco denounced the [translation] "government's militarization of all levels of the state to silence Venezuelans" and the creation of the Strategic Centre for the Security and Protection of the Homeland (Centro Estratégico de Seguridad y Protección de la Patria, CESPPA) as "it establishes a censorship in advance ... that limits dissidence" (ibid. 14 Oct. 2014). One of the objectives of the CESPPA, according to Venezuela's *Gaceta Oficial*, is to coordinate the collection of information by government and private sources related to [translation] "activities of the enemy, both internal and external" (Venezuela 7 Oct. 2013).

4. Treatment of ABP Members

The *PHW* indicates that "some ABP members faced politically-motivated arrests in 2009 [and] 2010" (2013, 1603). Sources report that Richard Blanco was arrested in August 2009 after organizing a demonstration against the government's education reforms (ibid.; AI 23 Dec. 2009). An Amnesty International (AI) document indicates that Richard Blanco, who was still in detention in December 2009, was arrested for "inciting violence and injuring a police officer" during the 22 August 2009 demonstrations (ibid.). According to AI, the video footage of the demonstration that they examined does not show Blanco inciting such violence or injuring the police officer (ibid.). Blanco was released on 6 April 2010 (Globovisión 6 Apr. 2010).

Media report that on 17 September 2009, Oscar Pérez claimed political asylum in Lima, Peru, alleging [translation] "political persecution" by the Venezuelan government (*El Universal* 17 Sept. 2009; AFP 18 Sept. 2009). On 27 August 2009, an arrest warrant was issued in Caracas against Pérez for his participation in the 22 August 2009 demonstrations against the education reforms; he was charged with "inciting violence and conspiracy to commit a crime" (ibid.; *El Universal* 17 Sept. 2009).

Sources report that on 10 September 2011, Juan Carlos Marquina [Political Secretary of ABP (La Patilla 10 Sept. 2011)] was killed in Caracas (La Patilla 10 Sept. 2011; Últimas Noticias 11 Sept. 2011). La Patilla, a Venezuelan news source, reports that Marquina had been shot after trying to flee an attempted theft of his car (10 Sept. 2011). However, Últimas Noticias, a Caracas-based newspaper, reports that, according to sources close to the investigation, authorities suspect an attempted kidnapping (11 Sept. 2011). Further information on this incident could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

Globovisión, a Venezuelan television news station, reports that the house of Richard Blanco's mother and his car were shot at by a group of motorists on 4 November 2011 (Globovisión 5 Nov. 2011). The article reports that there were no injuries as a result of the attack (ibid.). Further information on this incident could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

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Oral sources: Attempts to contact representatives of Alianza Bravo Pueblo were unsuccessful.

Internet sites, including: ecoi.net; Factiva; Freedom House; Human Rights Watch; International Federation for Human Rights; *La Nación*; Noticierodigital.com; Organisation of American States; Peru – Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores; United Nations – Integrated Regional Information Networks, Refworld, Reliefweb; United States – Agency for International Development, Central Intelligence Agency, Department of State; Venezuela – Ministerio del Poder Popular para Relaciones Interiores, Justicia y Paz; Venezuela al Día.

Attachment

Alianza Bravo Pueblo (ABP). N.d. "Estatutos." Translated by the Translation Bureau, Public Works and Government Services Canada. <<http://www.alianzabravopueblo.com/nosotros/estatutos/>> [Accessed 2 Apr. 2014]

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