

LASA rejects the campaign against CENDES and academic freedom in Venezuela

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The Center for Development Studies (CENDES) of the Central University of Venezuela, together with prominent academics associated with this institution, have been subjected to a smear campaign promoted by Venezuelan government agencies. This campaign, driven by the government of Nicolás Maduro, accuses CENDES of fomenting destabilizing activities in collaboration with national and international actors, as diverse as the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation, USAID, and the German government. These accusations are part of a [new wave of repression that began on July 28, 2024](#), following the disputed results of the presidential elections.

The Latin American Studies Association (LASA) strongly rejects campaigns such as this, which attack academic freedom, the right to dissent and to express differences of opinion, as well as the principle of university autonomy. These are essential attributes for institutions dedicated to producing knowledge and fulfilling their social mission, which is indispensable for societies to develop in peace, with inclusion and well-being for all their members. The practices of authoritarian governments directed against figures in academia and human rights defenders—such as those currently being deployed in Venezuela—conspire against democratic coexistence and increasingly erode the conditions necessary for stability and development in our countries.

At this difficult time, we wish to express our solidarity and support to the professors directly targeted by the Venezuelan government: [Francisco Javier Velasco, Alexandra Martínez, Edgardo Lander, and Emiliano Terán Mantovani](#). We also extend this support to the members of the Center for Development Studies (CENDES) and, more broadly, to the entire academic community of the Central University of Venezuela, in the face of attacks seeking to undermine academic freedom and university autonomy.

About LASA

The Latin American Studies Association (LASA) is the world's largest professional association constituted by individuals and institutions devoted to the study of Latin America and the Caribbean. LASA currently has over 12,000 members from around the world and a committee that defends academic freedom and human rights.

If you wish to interview a LASA Executive Council member, you can contact the LASA communications office at (412) 648-7929 or send an email to lasa@lasaweb.org.

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