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At a an Emergency Press Conference Today, Venezuelan Leaders Denounced the DeSantis-Nuñez Administration for Wednesday Flights of Asylum Seekers, Including 50 Venezuelans From Florida to Martha’s Vineyard

Venezuelan Immigrants Are Not Political Pawns

Miami, FL – Venezuelan leaders and other immigration advocates came together in Doral, FL, city with the most Venezuelans, to denounce this blatant disregard for human life after learning that two flights full of asylum seekers from various countries were sent from Florida to Martha’s Vineyard late Wednesday.

Venezuelan leaders are rightfully outraged. **It has been [confirmed](#) by local media in Martha’s Vineyard that 50 of those migrants are Venezuelan, including children.**

The lies that Governor Ron DeSantis has told to the Cuban and Venezuelan communities as recently as his September [7th press conference \(min. 31:05\)](#) in Miami where he promised that neither Cubans or Venezuelans would be sent out of the state, are plain to see.

The press event was opened with words from Rosa Elera, activist with the Florida Immigrant Coalition:

“Yesterday, we were stunned when we learned along with everyone else that the DeSantis-Nuñez administration has shipped Venezuelan migrants to Martha’s Vineyard, where they have no support system in a cruel political game as he sets his eye on the White House. Using \$12 million federally designated to help Floridians deal with COVID, he sent men, women and small children to an unfamiliar place. He didn’t even alert the local authorities, but had time to alert Fox News.”

Adelys Ferro, Director of Venezuelan-American Caucus, stated,

“Immigrants are at the heart of Florida. One in five Floridians is an immigrant. Stop using Venezuelans as props for your political games! You cannot rail against Nicolás Maduro and then despise Venezuelan immigrants when they seek refuge in your state.”

Maria Corina Vegas, Florida Deputy State Director for the American Business Immigration Coalition said,

“As a bi-partisan business coalition, we find it morally repulsive that on this, the first day of Hispanic Heritage Month, we are talking about how Governor DeSantis sent two planes full of Venezuelan immigrants, to Martha’s Vineyard, effectively trafficking migrant children. As a Venezuelan-American myself, I was heartbroken. These are Venezuelan asylum seekers who are escaping the Maduro regime. This is a new low, even for this governor. Job creators across the state are facing a labor-shortage crisis. Business at the key industries at the core of the Florida economy such as hospitality and agriculture are in dire need of new workers. Look around you here in Doral, where would this city be without the blood and toil of Venezuelans just like me?”

Maria Bilbao with American Friends Service Committee said,

“Yesterday afternoon Governor Desantis sent two planes full of immigrants including children to Martha Vineyards, all of them immigrants who entered this country seeking asylum and protection. Of those immigrants, 50 were Venezuelans fleeing from the regime of Nicolas Maduro, paradoxically a regime that both De Santis and Lieutenant Governor Nunez have denounced. Governor De Santis and Lt. Governor Jeannette Nuñez are two hypocrites! They are using human beings desperate for safety for their political games. While here in Florida we’re tired of seeing rents increase disproportionately, and nobody has the political courage to control it. DeSantis chose to throw red meat to his radical base rather than confront the fact that Florida needs a strong response to the housing crisis.”

Venezuelan activist with the Florida Immigrant Coalition, Yaneth Galvis, stated,

“I am a mother who fled from a narco-dictatorship. The DeSantis-Nuñez administration likes to claim that they protect children, but what do they call this cruel treatment? Venezuelans come to Florida because this is where they have their families and support networks. We ask you to have humanity and not use us as political tokens. We came to work and contribute to this country.”

Yareliz Mendez-Zamora, Federal Campaign Lead with the Florida Immigrant Coalition said,

“Yesterday, Governor DeSantis chose to honor the nickname that Spanish-speaking Floridians have given him by being a “desastre”, a disaster, and sending two flights of immigrants, including Venezuelans, to places where they don’t have support systems. The DeSantis-Nuñez administration is using \$12 million taken from federal Covid relief funds to attack Venezuelan, Cuban, and Colombian asylum seekers instead of using that money to help thousands of Floridians who are struggling to pay their rents, buy their food, and pay utilities. As a daughter of Nicaraguan immigrants, I understand why people are fleeing. Venezuelans find themselves running away from a brutal regime and now find themselves at the mercy of another strong-arm man. I invite the media to do a public’s records request with the Florida Department of

Transportation about the use of our taxpayer money for these purposes. We are not political paws, we are people and deserve dignity.”

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