Venezuela Leads the World in Celebrations for Hugo Chavez's Birthday

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Sixty years ago today in Sabaneta, Barinas, one of Venezuela's plain-land states, former President Hugo Chavez was born. Since his passing away last year people have mourned, commemorated and celebrated his life and legacy. This week is no different as Latin America and the world remember his countless contributions to humanity and envision how they will continue the work he began more than 15 years ago as a popular movement leader and president.

Isis Villamizar, coordinator for the School of Socialist Formation on Equality and Gender Ana Maria Campo (EFOSIG, acronym in Spanish) in Los Teques, Miranda explains, "I am not just speaking for me, but for Venezuelan women, this day means something greater than words. Of course it is a day full of pain but that pain has transformed into an eternal struggle. Our eternal leader Chavez declared the Bolivarian Revolution feminist and as such, he gave us so many opportunities and we are eternally grateful."

Part of the Minister of Popular Power for Gender Equality and Women, EFOSIG facilitators and participants participated in celebrations starting this weekend at the Cuartel de la Montaña, where Chavez's remains rest in the popular neighborhood 23 de Enero. The EFOSIG will also hold workshops and community forums on Chavez's life throughout the country.

Countless collectives, community councils, communes, social movements and the Venezuelan government have organized an array of events including military acts, documentary screenings

and musical events along with media publications and specials.

Internationally, solidarity organizations and Venezuelan embassies are hosting events in honor of the former president as well. In Ecuador, the Venezuelan Embassy will host a free concert open to the public that showcases traditional Venezuelan music.

Uruguayan President José Pepe Mujica announced last week that he will participate in events happening in Caracas July 28. Events will also take place in Chavez's hometown with the presence of international leaders such as Bolivian President Evo Morales.

Chavez is remembered in Venezuela for his political platform prioritizing social welfare programs after nationalizing the country's oil reserves and redistributing wealth. He spearheaded the creation of universities, international exchange programs, strengthened labor rights and challenged impierialist powers globally.

Regional blocs that favor integration and solidarity in political, economic and social terms such as the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA) and Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) were also part of his initiatives as President.