

# *ALBA Presidents Expected at Social Movement's Summit in Panama*

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Panama City, March 25 (teleSUR-RHC) Organizers with the grassroots People's Summit, to be held along with the Summit of the Americas in Panama, announced Tuesday that they have invited presidents from the Bolivarian Alternative for the Peoples of America (ALBA) bloc to participate in their activities.

Invitations have been extended to the presidents of Ecuador, Venezuela, Cuba, Nicaragua, and Haiti, who have confirmed that their respect heads of state will be attending the Summit of the Americas. According to the program of the People's Summit, Bolivian President Evo Morales is already scheduled to participate.

ALBA is a bloc comprised of countries currently headed by leftist governments, which have based domestic and international trade on solidarity and cooperation over competition and exploitation. The group met earlier this month to express its solidarity with the Venezuelan government of Nicolas Maduro against the sanctions and threats imposed by the U.S.

The People's Summit was born as a response to the historic role of the Summit of the Americas in a request for free trade, neoliberal policies and the so-called Washington Consensus.

The late Venezuelan president, Hugo Chavez, participated in the People's Summit held in Mar del Plata, Argentina at the 4th Summit of the Americas where he and late Argentine leader Nestor Kirchner declared the Free Trade Area of the America (FTAA) dead.

This year's People's Summit will celebrate 10 years after FTAA's defeat. The People's Summit will also host workshops and presentations on 15 different topics, ranging from the threat to peace in the region posed by the United States to fight to end the economic blockade against Cuba.

This year's Summit of the Americas will be the first to include a delegation from Cuba, which announced last year that it would normalize relations with the United States. Washington had previously opposed the participation of the Caribbean nation.

Both the People's Summit and the Summit of the Americas are set to feature a discussion on the unilateral sanctions imposed on Venezuela by the U.S. The People's Summit will begin on April 9, while the Summit of the Americas will begin on April 10, both run until April 11, 2015.

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