

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2023

**Remarks in an Exchange With Reporters Upon Returning From Milwaukee,
Wisconsin**

December 20, 2023

Release of U.S. Citizens Detained in Venezuela

Q. What more can you tell us about Venezuela?

What can you tell us about Venezuela? Why is it okay for the U.S. to be negotiating with the Maduro Government and sending back people in Justice Department custody?

The President. It's okay because we're freeing Americans, people who were held illegally. And we—I've made a deal with Venezuela that they'll hold free elections. So far, they've maintained their requirements. And that's it.

Q. Do you worry that by giving back——

The President. No.

Q. ——the guy who went back today, other governments won't——

The President. No.

Q. [*Inaudible*]—Republicans are not backing——

Q. [*Inaudible*]—U.N. Security Council resolutions?

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:24 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House after exiting Marine One. A reporter referred to President Nicolas Maduro Moros of Venezuela; and Leonard G. "Fat Leonard" Francis, a Malaysian citizen who was released from detention in Venezuela, where, in 2022, he had fled after escaping from house arrest in the U.S. while awaiting sentencing on bribery and corruption charges. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 21.

Categories: Interviews With the News Media : Exchanges with reporters, White House.

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