



Sean Penn has defended Hugo Chávez as a model democrat and said those who call him a dictator should be jailed. The Oscar-winning actor and political activist accused the US media of smearing Venezuela's socialist president and called for journalists to be punished.

"Every day, this elected leader is called a dictator here, and we just accept it, and accept it. And this is mainstream media. There should be a bar by which one goes to prison for these kinds of lies." Penn, who has visited Chávez in Caracas, said Venezuela's poor majority had willingly embraced his leftist revolution, but that this view was concealed from Americans.

"We are hypnotised by the media. Who do you know here who's gone through 14 of the most transparent elections on the globe, and has been elected democratically, as Hugo Chávez?"

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