

Dear {{FirstName or 'WOLA Supporter'}},

As the United Nations prohibitionist drug control system comes under renewed criticism from Latin American leaders and from UN human rights bodies, WOLA is excited to announce that we have launched the first issue of the [Coca Chronicles](#).

Our new series will describe how the coca leaf came to be banned under UN drug treaties and highlight the opportunity to lift the ban, now that Bolivia has initiated a long overdue UN review. Coca has been cultivated by Indigenous communities in the Andes and Amazon region for thousands of years, and has come to play a central role in regional customs and traditions.

We hope you join us as we work alongside The Transnational Institute (TNI), a longstanding WOLA partner, to end the ban on coca, vindicating the rights of Indigenous peoples, while fortifying Andean economies and bringing coca's benefits to increasing numbers of people around the world.

In other news, it was also a historic week for Venezuela as the government of Nicolás Maduro signed an agreement with opposition leaders from the Unitary Platform, almost a year after negotiations were stalled. The agreement is partial but represents an important first step towards a democratic solution to the Venezuelan crisis.

WOLA Director, [Carolina Jiménez Sandoval](#) and our Venezuela Director, [Laura Dib](#) have been busy talking to the press about what this means for the future of Venezuela.

Thanks for staying with us as we navigate these complex but interesting times.

Best,



**John Walsh**

Director for Drug Policy and the Andes

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## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- 🌿 WOLA and the Transnational Institute (TNI) have launched their first issue of the [Coca Chronicles](#) that answers four important questions about Bolivia's decision to change how the coca leaf is classified at the UN.
- 🇻🇪 We are closely following ongoing negotiations between the Venezuelan government and members of the opposition. WOLA released a [statement](#) welcoming this latest step but warning that some candidates have been prevented from running in the 2024 presidential elections.
- 🇲🇽 In an effort to advocate for judicial independence and access to justice in Mexico, WOLA is excited to announce its [collaboration](#) with civil society collective *La Justicia Que Queremos*.
- 🇬🇹 Senior Fellow Jo-Marie Burt testified as an expert witness in a case against the State of Guatemala regarding the forced disappearance of four Mayan community leaders involved in informing rural Guatemalans of their right to not participate in army-controlled civil defense patrols during the civil war. Check out [clip 1](#) and [clip 2](#) from the hearings.
- 🇨🇴 Alongside international partners, WOLA continues to [advocate](#) for the Biden administration to support the full implementation of the 2016 peace accords in Colombia.



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## WOLA IN THE NEWS



'A roadmap for greater electoral guarantees' ahead of the 2024 presidential elections is one of the highlights of the Barbados agreement. *This quote was translated as this article is in Spanish.*

**Carolina Jiménez Sandoval, WOLA President**

– *Voice of America*, [The "sticking points" of the Barbados agreement on Venezuela](#)



"The upcoming electoral season will only increase pressure for authorities to announce short term results or policies that project an image of being 'tough' on drugs and border control, which tend not to align with the measures needed to actually advance the well-being of the affected populations."

**Stephanie Brewer, Director for Mexico**

– *The Dialogue*, [How Well Are the U.S. & Mexico Cooperating?](#)





"But she insists on the importance of 'recognizing the value of this moment and its potential to continue building a peaceful and democratic solution to the situation facing Venezuela.'"

*This quote was translated as this article is in Spanish.*

**Laura Dib, Director for Venezuela**

– *Deutsche Welle*, [Venezuela: ¿rumbo a elecciones democráticas en 2024?](#)

## WEEKLY CULTURAL RECOMMENDATIONS

-  [In the Mouth of the Wolf: A Murder, a Cover-Up, and the True Cost of Silencing the Press](#), by Katherine Corcoran.
-  [Homelands: Four Friends, Two Countries, and the Fate of the Great Mexican-American Migration](#), by Alfredo Corchado.

📍 WOLA is [looking](#) for it's next **Finance and Operations Coordinator** who will support the Vice President of Finance and Operations with day-to-day bookkeeping, accounts payable and receivable, and general virtual and in-person office support.

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