January-April 2019 | Nº. 1

UNUSUAL & EXTRAORDINARY

Report on the economic blockade against Venezuela

Sures
ESTUDIOS y DEFENSA en DERECHOS HUMANOS

OHCHR: 1594 days without pronouncement on the Economic Blockade against Venezuela and its impact on human rights

The Economic Blockade generates a massive violation of Human Rights

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Nº. 1. Year 1. January-April 2019

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E D I T O R I A L

The economic blockade against Venezuela began de facto during the first decade of the 21st century, with restrictions imposed from the United States on our country's commercial relations with the rest of the world, among other areas; in the acquisition of inputs for the hydrocarbon industry and in the fulfillment of service contracts in military and citizen security matters. This process was accompanied by transnational private companies that, progressively, abandoned Venezuela to establish their operations in other States, despite the fact that their activities were especially profitable and produced significant gains.

December 18, 2014 marked a milestone in this process because it formally began the economic, financial and commercial blockade against Venezuela, through the approval of Act 113-278 of the U.S. Congress, which prohibits -under severe sanctions- any person or company to carry out transactions and business with the Venezuelan State; including, expressly, the Central Bank of Venezuela, the highest authority in monetary policies, and Petróleos de Venezuela (PDVSA), the state company in charge of the hydrocarbons industry that generates more than 98% of the country's export revenues.

Since then, the governments of the United States, Canada, England and Switzerland, with the support of several European Union countries, have imposed a series of unilateral coercive measures against the Venezuelan State; these measures affect the normal functioning of its economy, hinder productive development and the provision of public services. Thus, the U.S. has issued legal instruments aimed at preventing the commercialization of Venezuelan hydrocarbons and gold, blocking the use of the international financial system, attacking the development of the state's own cryptocoin "Petro", retaining Venezuelan goods and money in U.S. territory and making it impossible to acquire essential goods and services. It is, therefore, an economic fence that has been extended and propped up over more than 4 years.

However, these unilateral coercive measures have generated serious and massive violations of human rights, especially of the most vulnerable people such as: children, adolescents, persons with disabilities and the elderly. These are actions that arbitrarily contravene the Charter of the United Nations, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. These actions are contrary to all the principles of international law that have intentionally caused unjustified suffering to the entire population, thereby injuring their rights to life, personal integrity and health, forming a crime against humanity under Article 7 of the Statute of the International Criminal Court.

The blockade imposed by the political leadership of the United States against Venezuela has the explicit objective of overthrowing President Nicolás Maduro Moros, who was recently democratically re-elected on May 20, 2018 in universal, direct, secret, transparent and competitive elections; however, it also seeks to obtain, appropriate and exploit the wealth of our country, including the large reserves of oil, gas, gold and coltan, as publicly recognized by spokespersons of the administration of President Donald Trump.

The blockade against Venezuela has been invisible in the international community. The United Nations has avoided pronouncing itself on its immorality, illegitimacy and illegality. Even States and international human rights organizations, which condemn the economic blockade and unilateral measures applied in other cases, avoid expressing an opinion on what is happening against Venezuela.

Consequently, *Unusual & Extraordinary* has as its purpose to reveal, with reliable data, the true truth so that it is universally usual and ordinary; likewise, to register and disseminate the nefarious coercive measures (unilateral) and the illegal economic, financial and commercial blockade against the nation of Simón Bolívar. And its healthy ambition is to sensitize national and international public opinion on the serious impact on the human rights of our population.

ECONOMIC BLOCKADE

Barack Obama

December 18, 2014: Economic, Financial and Commercial Blockade Against the People of Venezuela Begins.

March 8, 2015 is issued Executive Order 13.692 which establishes:

"Venezuela poses an unusual and extraordinary threat to national security and U.S. foreign policy, and I declare a national emergency to deal with that threat."

2015

1 — 2014

2 — 2015

3 — 2016

Public Law 113-278

On this date, Public Law 113-278 was passed in the U.S. Congress prohibiting, under severe sanctions and freezing of assets, any natural or legal person in U.S. territory or under its jurisdiction to carry out any type of transaction or business with any person, entity or enterprise of the Venezuelan State, especially with the Central Bank of Venezuela [the highest authority in matters of monetary policy of the State] and Petróleos de Venezuela S., a Venezuelan oil company. A. (PDVSA) main state-owned company.

Venezuela's energy sector or oil industry begins to have a negative pact.

The economic bloc generates a massive violation of human rights:

- Life.
- Health.
- Food.
- To economic and social development.
- To the free self-determination of peoples.

The Venezuelan population is a victim of intentional suffering caused by unilateral coercive measures

ECONOMIC BLOCKADE

THE TRUTH BECOMES VISIBLE

There is no humanitarian crisis in Venezuela. There is an immoral, illegitimate and illegal blockade that massively violates human rights.

2017

4

5

6

2018

Donald Trump

"Venezuela is a disaster. That has to be cleaned up and people have to be taken care of [...] all the options are on the table, all of them. The strong ones and the less strong ones. And you know what I mean by strong."

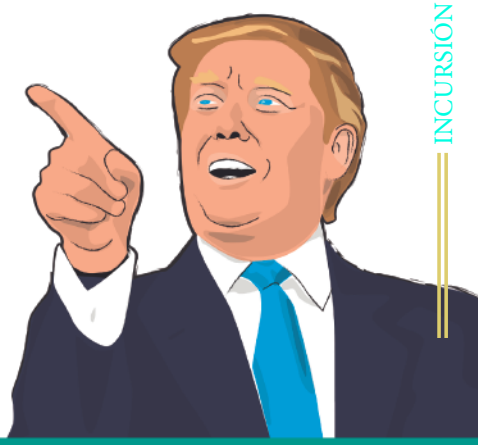
2019

"The sanctions would aggravate the situation of the Venezuelan people, who are already suffering the effects of devastating inflation and the shortage of adequate food and medicine" Idriss Jazairy. [UN Special Rapporteur on the Negative Impact of Coercive Measures on Human Rights].

"The effects of the Obama and Trump sanctions, as well as unilateral measures by Canada and the European Union, have directly and indirectly aggravated the shortage of drugs such as insulin and antiretrovirals. Since economic sanctions have caused delays in distribution and have been aggravating factors in many cases of death, the sanctions are incompatible with human rights obligations among the countries that have imposed them. In addition, the sanctions can be considered crimes against humanity under article 7 of the Rome Statute. It will be appropriate for the ICC to conduct an investigation, but it may not be feasible given the geopolitical submission of that body".

Report of the Independent Expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international "order" during his visit to the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and the Republic of Ecuador, Alfred-Maurice de Zayas.

CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY



INCURSIÓN

AND COUNTING...

43 formal Unilateral Coercive Measures have been applied against Venezuela from 2014 to 30 March 2019

In the period January-April 2019, 16 new formal Unilateral Coercive Measures have been applied against the People of Venezuela, to reach the total number of 43 since 18 December 2014; in other words, in a period of four months, 3 more measures have been applied than the ones in 2018 and 4 more than in 2017.

1. On 04/01/2019 the self-named Grupo de Lima, by the Communiqué 001/2019, dictates a coercive measure against high officials of the State of restriction of entrance to the territories of those countries; restrictions of commercialization with natural and juridical persons, and, if the case, of freezing of their funds and other assets or economic resources. They also point to the suspension of military cooperation, as well as the evaluation of overflight permits for Venezuelan military aircraft in cases of humanitarian assistance1.
2. On 01/08/2019 the U.S. State Department directs measures against Venezuelan businessman Raúl Gorrín and includes 24 companies2.
3. On 01/25/2019 the U.S. government issues Executive Order 13.8573.
4. On 01/28/2019 the Office of Foreign Assets Control of the U.S. Department of the Treasury (OFAC) issued a ban on the export of crude oil from PDVSA to the U.S. Likewise, the export and re-export of diluents from the U.S. to Venezuela is prohibited and, finally, the trading of PDVSA bonds is limited4.
5. On 15/02/2019 the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) of the Treasury Department issued coercive measures against 5 senior state officials, including Manuel Quevedo, Minister of People's Power for Energy and Petroleum and President of the state oil company PDVSA5.
6. On 25/02/2019 the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) of the Treasury Department issued measures against 4 governors of the Venezuelan states of Zulia, Carabobo, Vargas and Apure6.
7. On 28/02/2019 the Government of Canada issued a measure amending the Special Economic Measures Regulations7.
8. On 01/03/2019, the U.S. Department of the Treasury issued coercive measures against senior law enforcement officials8.
9. On 5/03/2019 the US government renews the Obama Decree9.
10. On 11/03/2019 the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) of the Treasury Department applies restrictions to a bank based in Russia that attempts to evade U.S. sanctions in Venezuela10.
11. On 03/19/2019 the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) of the Treasury Department applies restrictions to the Mining Company11 of Venezuela A.C. (Minerven) and its president, as well as other persons named therein12.
12. On 22/03/2019 the Office for the Control of Foreign Assets (OFAC) of the Treasury Department issued coercive measures against BANDES with headquarters in Venezuela and Banco Bandes Uruguay S.A. Likewise, measures were applied against Banco Bicentenario del Pueblo, de la Clase Obrera, Mujer y Comunas Universal Bank C.A., Banco de Venezuela, S.A. Universal Bank, with headquarters in Venezuela, and Prodem Bank S.A. located in Bolivia13.
13. On 5/04/2019 the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) of the United States Department of the Treasury lists two companies operating in the Venezuelan oil sector and 34 vessels belonging to the state-owned oil company Petróleos de Venezuela (PDVSA).
14. On April 15, 2019, the Government of Canada issued a coercive measure and amended the Regulation on Special Economic Measures against Venezuela, adding 43 more persons14.
15. On 17/04/2019 the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) of the United States Department of the Treasury implements a measure aimed at restricting the activities of the Central Bank of Venezuela15.
16. On 26/04/2019 April 2019, the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) of the U.S. Department of the Treasury applies a measure by which Chancellor Jorge Arreaza and Judge Carol Padilla16 were added to the list of sanctioned by that instance.

1594 days have passed without a stance on the economic blockade against Venezuela and its impact on human rights:
- The General Assembly of the United Nations.
- The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.

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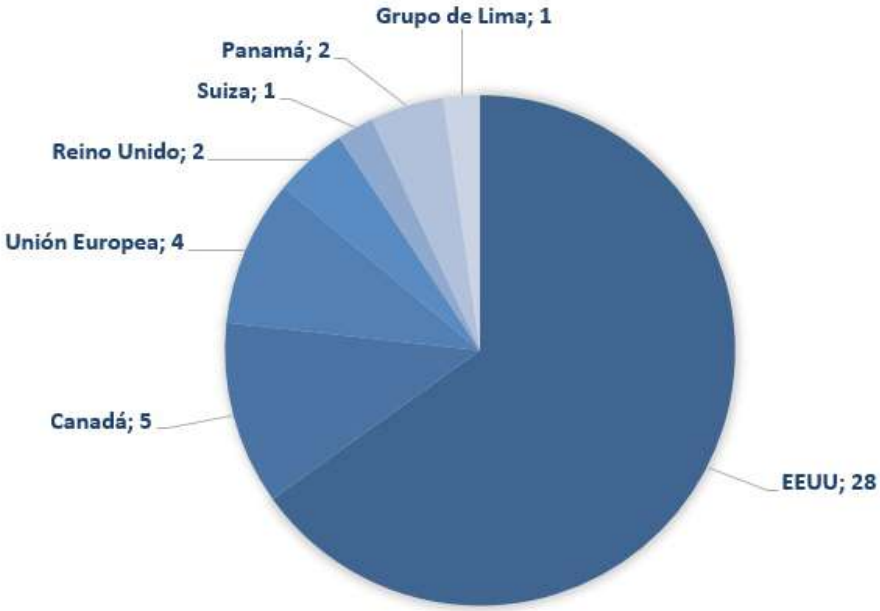
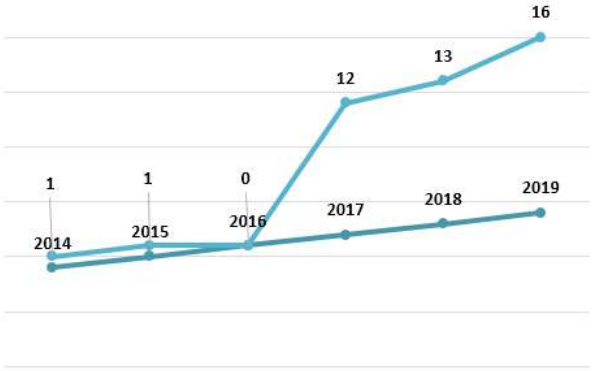


Elaboración propia



	1	2	3	4	5	6
TOTAL DE MEDIDAS	1	1		12	13	16
AÑO	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019

CONTRA-VENIR

REPORT OF THE

CENTER FOR ECONOMIC AND POLICY RESEARCH

The Report entitled Economic Sanctions as Collective Punishment: The Case of Venezuela, published in April 2019 by the Americans Mark Weisbrot and Jeffrey Sach of the Center for Economic and Policy Research, records the terrible impact of the economic, financial and commercial blockade against Venezuela on the human rights of its population.

This is a controversial report that requires special attention, as one of its authors is a liberal economist who has held high positions in the U.S. government and the United Nations, who is not condescending to the government of President Nicolas Maduro Moros; also because the authors acknowledge having received guidance and collaboration from Venezuelan Francisco Rodríguez, who is economic advisor to former presidential candidate Henry Falcón, who participated, on behalf of the opposition, in the elections held in May 2018; therefore, it is an outside source, not associated with and adverse to the Venezuelan government.

In the report the authors realize that:

> **"One result of the sanctions [...] is to deprive the Venezuelan economy of many billions of dollars of foreign exchange needed to pay for essential and vital imports. The sanctions implemented in 2019, including the recognition of a parallel government, accelerated this deprivation and also cut Venezuela off from most of the international payment system, thus ending much of the country's access to these essential imports including medicines and food, even those that could normally be bought with available dollars. There is no doubt that all these sanctions, since August 2017, have had severe impacts on human health and life."**

Expressing its concern that:

> **"More than 300,000 people were estimated to be at risk because of lack of access to medicines or treatment. This includes an estimated 80,000 people with HIV who have not had antiretroviral treatment since 2017, 16,000 people who need dialysis, 16,000 people with cancer, and 4 million with diabetes and hypertension (many of whom cannot obtain insulin or cardiovascular medicine).**
> **These numbers by themselves virtually guarantee that the current sanctions, which are much more severe than those implemented before this year, are a death sentence for tens of thousands of Venezuelans. This is especially true if the projected 67 percent drop in oil revenue materializes in 2019."**

To conclude that:

> **"the death toll going forward this year, if the sanctions remain in place, is almost certainly going to be vastly higher than anything we have seen previously…"**

MORE THAN 40,000 DEATHS FROM 2017 TO 2018

The application of the economic, financial and commercial blockade against Venezuela causes, intentionally, the suffering of the People and the massive violation of their human rights; to show just a few examples:

- In April 2019 a private European bank prevents and withholds the payment of 4,851,252 euros made by the Venezuelan State, through PDVSA, aimed at ensuring the treatment and transplantation of bone marrow to 26 Venezuelan patients served by the Associazione per il trapianto de midollo oseo in Italy, violating the human rights to life and health of these people.
- Citibank, a U.S. private financial company, decided untimely, without prior notice and arbitrarily, to close the bank accounts of the Central Bank of Venezuela (highest monetary authority) and the Bank of Venezuela (public company); it temporarily made it impossible for the State to pay for imports and other patrimonial commitments, but it also made it more difficult and onerous to carry out these commercial operations.
- Since 2017, Citibank has refused to carry out Venezuelan government transactions, including one aimed at paying a foreign private company with bank accounts in that financial institution to import a shipment of more than 300,000 doses of insulin, a drug that must be imported by Venezuela to guarantee the life and health of people living with diabetes. As a result, the cargo was frozen in an international port and could not reach our country.
- The economic blockade has been intentionally aimed at preventing imports for one of the State's key food supply assistance programs called Local Supply and Production Committees (CLAP), which involves the direct delivery of non-perishable food to more than 6,000,000 households. For example, in 2017, the US financial system interrupts the payment and delivery of 18 million boxes of food from the CLAP programme, corresponding to approximately 3 months of supplies from that assistance programme. In the same year, Venezuelan government operations were returned from European banks for USD 29.7 million to different suppliers, whose destination was the payment of food through the CLAP food program.
- During this year, the government of Spain, without explanation, blocks a shipment destined for the acquisition of 200,000 units of medicines for chronic illnesses, such as hypertension and insulin, which were headed for Venezuela, violating the human right to health of the people who require these medicines to survive.

SURES DEMANDS

Desbloquear Venezuela, Unblock Venezuela y Débloquer Venezuela

Sures demands the governments of the USA, Canada, England and the Swiss Confederation, as well as the European Union:

- Immediately unblock Venezuela.
- To respect the human rights of the Venezuelan people to self-determination and to economic and social development.
- Comply with the fundamental principles and norms of international law, especially the UN Charter.

Sures demands the Human Rights Council and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights:

- To declare that the unilateral coercive measures imposed against the population of Venezuela constitute a massive violation of their human rights and the intentional application of suffering that threatens their life, health and integrity.
- Strongly condemn the economic, financial and commercial blockade against Venezuela as a crime against humanity, contrary to international order and the UN Charter.
- To adopt all the decisions available to them so that the governments of the United States, Canada, England and the Swiss Confederation unblock Venezuela and recognize the right of the State to use its economic resources to guarantee the human rights of the Venezuelan population.
- Initiate an investigation to determine the responsibilities for human rights violations of private financial companies that arbitrarily and illegally apply operations of retention and appropriation of Venezuelan public resources aimed at satisfying the human rights of our population.

Sures demands the immediate unblocking of the amount of 4,800 million dollars, owned by the Venezuelan people, arbitrarily and illegally held by: the Bank of England, Clearstream, Citibank, Novo Banco, Sumitoro Bank, UnionBank, BanqueEni, Delubac and Euroclear.

CONVOCATION

To all organizations, movements and individuals to express their concern about the impact of the economic bloc against the Venezuelan population that violates human rights. We respectfully ask for the active solidarity of all.

Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate.
Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure.
It is our light, not our darkness
That most frightens us.

We ask ourselves
Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous?
Actually, who are you not to be?
You are a child of God.

Your playing small
Does not serve the world.
There's nothing enlightened about shrinking
So that other people won't feel insecure around you.

We are all meant to shine,
As children do.
We were born to make manifest
The glory of God that is within us.

It's not just in some of us;
It's in everyone.

And as we let our own light shine,
We unconsciously give other people permission to do the same.
As we're liberated from our own fear,

Our presence automatically liberates others.

POEM BY MARIANNE WILLIAMSON

FINANCIAL BLOCKADE: THEFT OF THE CENTURY

The blockade and threats imposed by the U.S. government on the international financial system have prevented the Venezuelan state from using its economic resources to guarantee the human rights of the population, specifically in basic areas such as medicines, supplies and health services.

Banks and other financial institutions, under the threat of unilateral coercive measures by the U.S. government, have chosen to withhold or confiscate the money of the Venezuelan state and people. As a result, the following cases of economic, financial and commercial blockade have been recorded and recognized by high authorities of the Venezuelan government:

BANK OF ENGLAND

1.323 millions $

clearstream

517 millions $

SUMITOMO BANK

507 millions $

NOVO BANCO

1.547 millions $

BANQUE DELUBAC & CIE

Fondée en 1924

38.698.931,70 $

citibar

458 millions $

140.519.752,26 $

230.024.462,00 $

53.084.499,92 $

JOIN

#TrumpDesbloqueaVenezuela
#TrumpUnBlockVenezuela

Let the world know the consequences of the criminal blockade against the Venezuelan people; let us raise our voices to denounce with facts, evidence and figures the damage caused.

Retained or confiscated VENEZUELAN FUNDS
9 banks: $4.8 billion