

REPORT ON THE ECONOMIC  
BLOCKADE AGAINST VENEZUELA  
May-august, 2019 | Num. 2

# UNUSUAL & EXTRAORDINARY



**Sures**  
ESTUDIOS y DEFENSA en DERECHOS HUMANOS

**OHCHR: 2,075 DAYS WITHOUT  
MAKING A STATEMENT ON THE ECO-  
NOMIC BLOCKADE AGAINST VENE-  
ZUELA AND ITS IMPACT ON HUMAN  
RIGHTS**

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ALL OPTIONS ARE ON  
THE TABLE

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Num. 2. Year 1. May-august 2019

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# EDITORIAL

From May to August 2019, United States, and its European and American allies have expanded and deepened the economic, financial and commercial blockade against the Venezuelan people, with the open intention of affecting the oil industry, decreasing public revenues and hindering the importation of food, medicines and health supplies.

With Executive Order No. 13884 issued by President Donald Trump, the U.S. government has widened the extraterritorial effects of the blockade and began a relentless persecution against any private company that maintains commercial relations with the Venezuelan State. Following up this Presidential instruction, the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) has embarked an intense activity of economic and financial intelligence that has led to 32 formal sanctions against companies and entities that provide goods or services, including food and medicines, purchased by Venezuela. Needless to say, these formal measures have been accompanied by multiple informal threats, general and individualized actions, against any individuals and/or companies that decide to conduct any economy activity with the Venezuelan state.

In this situation, many private companies, especially the one belonging to the international financial system, fearful of being subject to sanctions and confiscation of assets, have chosen to undertake actions of over compliance of US Congress Act 278-113 and Executive Orders related to the blockade against Venezuela. In consequence, have chosen to expand the reach of unilateral coercive measures (MCU) beyond its own content, generating a greater impact on human rights. In this regard, an emblematic recent case is the unilateral closing of banks accounts of human rights organizations, which are clearly in favor of government policies, as well as maintaining confrontational actions in the OAS and the UN, such is the case of CECODAP, Venezuelan organization.

Nonetheless, the most serious measure during this period by the US government have been the

exacerbated public threats over the possibility of using military actions while increasing the economic blockade against Venezuela in order to overthrow President Nicolás Maduro. On several occasions, high-level representatives of Donald Trump’s administration have referred to the possibility of using their military forces to impose a naval blockade to the Venezuelan coast, resembling the infamous action taken against Nicaragua in the eighties, when Elliott Adams directed the actions in Central America. These actions included undercover genocide, missing and torturing people. A blockade finally imposed by OFAC sanctions against private companies that transport goods to Venezuela, and lies within the framework of unconventional warfare.

In this context, the UN High Commissioner for Humans Rights, Michelle Bachelet Jeria, presented to the 41st session of the Human Rights Council a report on the situation of human rights in Venezuela. For surprise of all, the report invisibilized the serious human rights violations to the right to life, health, adequate food and standard of living caused by the economic blockade against Venezuela. Not even a minimum was mentioned on the political violence victims who had the opportunity to present their testimonies. Only in 3 paragraphs, it was made a brief reference to the unilateral coercive measure (UCM) against Venezuela, without pointing out to the actual consequences of the economic, financial and commercial blockade, nor as a direct cause of the difficult situation in accessing medicines and health services in Venezuela.

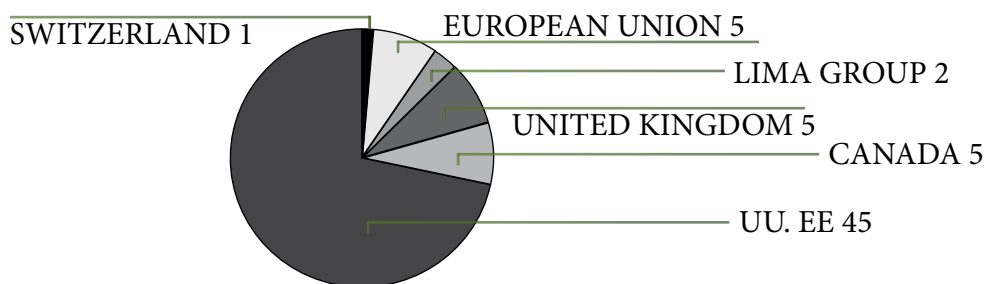
However, in parallel, the Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures (UCM) on the enjoyment of human rights, Idriss Jazairy, presented a report in which it was noted that the UCM against Venezuela started in the beginning of the 21st century, to conclude without ambiguities that they violate the Venezuelan people human rights and currently constitute the fundamental factor of the current economic and social situation, particularly health and food issues.

# GREATER PRESSURE EACH TIME ON VENEZUELA

Since 2014, various strategies for the imposition of measures have been carried out against Venezuela Unilateral coercive measures (MCU) by 5 countries (USA, United Kingdom, Canada, Panama and the Helvetic Confederation) and 2 regional groups (Lima Group and European Union). The MCUs that we systematize in this report, what we identified in Sures as “formal” since they were issued through laws, administrative decrees, executive orders, regulations, resolutions and communiqués by different public authorities of the States or structures of decision making of the said multilateral organizations and groups.

From Sures have counted the implementation of 63 measures from December 2014 to August 2019, distributed as follows:

MCU MEASURES TAKEN BY COUNTRIES OR GROUPS



And counting:

- During the period of time analyzed in this report No. 2 (May-August 2019) 13 new formal measures have been issued by the US government and its allies. Taking into account the period January-April 2019 reflected in our previous report, 16 measures had been issued against the people of Venezuela.
- In May 5, 2019 OFAC applied unilateral coercive measures to two oil companies that operate in the Venezuelan economy: Monsoon Navigation Corporation and Serenity Maritime Limited, as well as two (2) ships: Ocean Elegance and Leon Dias, which transported oil from Venezuela to Cuba.
- In May 15, 2019 the US Department of Transportation suspended all commercial and passenger's direct cargo and flights from and to US-Venezuela for considering that the security of passenger's aircraft and crew could be threaten.
- In May 24, 2019 the Bureau of Industry and Security of US Department of Commerce eliminated Venezuela from the Group of Countries B, which grants favorable treatment to certain exported items controlled by National Security, to the Group of Countries D: 1, which represents the countries are consider a national security concern.
- In June 27, 2019 OFAC included in the list of officials subject to special designations (sanctions,

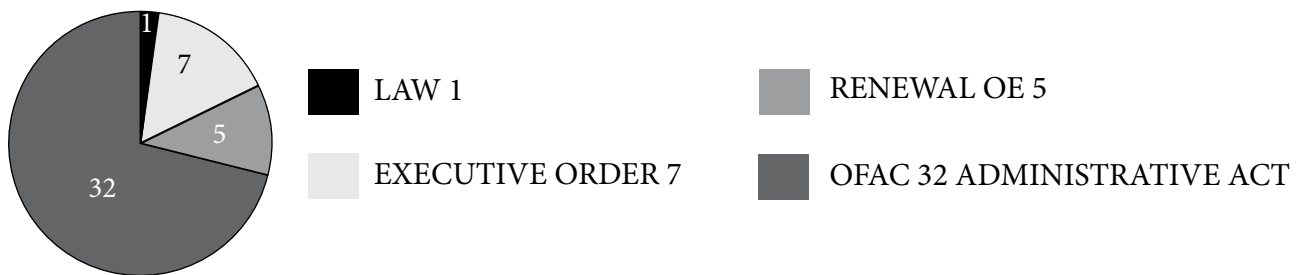
prohibitions and restrictions) former Minister of Electricity and President of the National Electricity Corporation (CORPOELEC), Luis Alfredo Motta Domínguez and Deputy Minister of Finance, Investments and Strategic Alliances, Eustiquio José Lugo Gomez

- In June 28, 2019 OFAC included in their list Nicolás Ernesto Maduro Guerra, son of President Nicolás Maduro and Constituent democratically elected to the National Constituent Assembly
- On 03/07/2019, OFAC applied UCM to Cubametales, the Cuban oil import and export State-company.
- On 07/11/2019 OFAC included in the list of special designations the Directorate General of Military Counterintelligence (DGCIM).
- On 07/18/2019 the European Parliament urged the European Union (EU) to impose more sanctions to Venezuela.
- On 07/19/2019 the OFAC included in the list of designations 4 Officials of the Directorate General of Military Counterintelligence, Rafael Ramón Blanco Marrero, Deputy Director of DGCIM, Colonel Hannover Esteban Guerrero Mijares, Director of Research from DGCIM, Commander Alexander Enrique Granko Arteaga, Head of the Special Affairs Unit DGCIM and Colonel Rafael Antonio Franco Quintero, former Director of Research in the DGCIM.
- On 07/23/2019, most of the States of the Lima

Group decided to apply more actions in different areas against the Government of Venezuela.

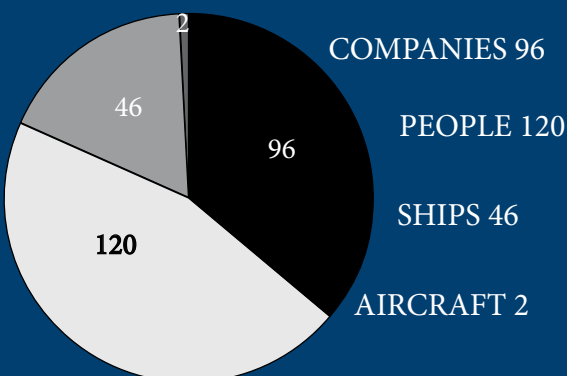
- On 07/25/2019, OFAC included Rafael Enrique Bastardo in the list of special designations Mendoza and Iván Rafael Hernández Dala in their capacity as officers of the security forces of the State.
- On 08/05/2019 Executive Order No. 13884 was issued declaring a general blockade on all properties and assets own by the Venezuelan Government in the United States, as well as prohibiting all commercial relations with any public entity or private company, with extensive extraterritorial effects, at the time that ordered also to increase OFAC vigilance and financial political intelligence.

### TYPES OF UCM ISSUED BY THE UNITED STATES



These measures have focused on financial institutions, banking and oil companies that maintain a commercial and/or financial relations with the Venezuelan State or with US businesses based in Venezuela. Accordingly, unilateral coercive measures have been issued against 43 ships (mostly owned by PDVSA and used for transportation of hydrocarbons), 2 aircraft, as well as, 96 private and public companies, among which stand out 6 state banks, including the Central Bank of Venezuela. Likewise, the restrictions impose includes, the purchase of debt bonds, freight movement, financial transactions, purchase of supplies and diluents for gasoline, among others. Also restrictions have been applied to over 120 individuals or “Special Designated National (SDN)”, forbidding them entry to the US, and in case of having, to their assets.

### RECIPIENTS OF THE MEASURES



It is important to mention that many of the sanctioned companies and ships are not owned by Venezuelans. Hence, extraterritorial liens or secondary boycott are in place, even sanctioning outside US jurisdiction by listing in the OFAC companies or individuals with some ties or connections, as it was the case of BANDES based in Uruguay and Banco Prodem, in Bolivia, among others.

### LEARN HOW THE US WANTS TO LIFT THE BLOCKADE AND THE UNILATERAL COERCIVE MEASURES

The US Government has been open and explicit in its deliberate actions to overthrow the Government of Venezuela, indicating that the most expeditious way to lift these measures is through transferring the control of PDVSA to the President of the National Assembly, Juan Guaidó or a government, they would consider, democratically elected.

Under this guideline, the US has also tried to get public servers and state security forces to abandon their duties and functions, and in exchange of this “collaboration” the sanctions against them would be lifted, and withdrawing them from the Special Designate List. Such it was the case of Manuel Figuera, former General Director of SEBIN, removed in May 7, 2019 from the list.



# ALL OPTIONS

## CRIMINAL BLOCKADE



2014

### THE BEGINNING OF THE UNILATERAL COERCIVE MEASURES

From this year onwards, the US has led Venezuela's economic blockade by issuing seven (7) additional executive orders (13692, 13808, 13827, 13835, 13850, 13857 and 13884) with their respective extensions and restrictions targeting natural and legal persons.

01

TO REMEMBER



### BACK TO RIO TREATY (TIAR)

The approval of returning to TIAR has its first drawback: The National Assembly and its acts have no validity since it was declared in contempt in 2016.

03

2019



2019

### NEW EXECUTIVE ORDER

## AUGUST 5

"All assets and interests in assets that are in the United States (...) are blocked and cannot be transferred, paid, exported, withdrawn or otherwise treated".

02

# ON THE TABLE

ILLEGAL IMMORAL



2019

**04**

SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR  
**IDRISS JAZAIRY**

“Coercion, whether military or economic, should never be used to pursue a change in government in a sovereign State. The use of sanctions by external powers to overthrow an elected government violates all the rules of international law”.



2019

HIGH COMMISSIONER  
**MICHELLE BACHELET**

“these sanctions are extremely broad and do not contain sufficient measures to mitigate the impact on the most vulnerable sectors of the population”

**05**

INCURSION



# PLURALITY, NEVERTHELESS

MEDEA BENJAMIN. June 2019

CODEPINK Founder, Global Exchange and author of nine books

“The oil industry provides 95% of Venezuela’s foreign earnings, so strangling its oil industry and isolating Venezuela from international public indebtedness, sanctions have caught the people of Venezuela in a predictable and intentional deadly downward economic spiral.”

DENIS HALLIDAY. June 2019

Former UN Humanitarian Coordinator in Iraq from September 1, 1997 to 1998.

“Comprehensive sanctions, when imposed by the UN Security Council or by a State to a sovereign country, are a form of war, a blunt weapon that inevitably punishes innocent people. If they extend deliberately, when its deadly consequences are widely known, the sanctions could be considered genocide.”

FRANCISCO RODRÍGUEZ. July 2019

Chief Economist of Torino Economics and former Research Director of the Human Development Report Office for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

“The 2017 unilateral coercive measures have prevented potential foreign partners from financing operations in the Venezuelan oil sector and froze the refinancing of the internal debt. My research shows that, after the first round of economic sanctions, Venezuelan oil production suffered the worst collapse that has suffered an oil-producing economy without being at war or in an oil strike.”

HASSINE ABASSI. July 2019

Nobel Peace Prize

“Who sanctioned and who blocked Venezuela? Any country can have an opinion contrary to another, but take unilateral coercive measures to block assets and its resources ... Is the blame on the Venezuelan people? Why blaming the Venezuelan people? Is ok to blame the sick who are unable to find medicines or the migrants who have left in a massive exodus due to the deterioration of the economic situation?”



A woman with curly hair and red face paint is looking upwards. In the background, there are other people and a sign with some text. The overall scene appears to be a protest or a public demonstration.

# BLOCKADE EFFECTS

The implementation of the economic, financial and commercial blockade intentionally cause against Venezuela people's suffering and a massive violation of their humans rights, especially vulnerable groups. Following some specific cases:

- Breaking the Norm (Rompiendo la Norma), a LGBTQI human rights organization along with another 20 LGBTQI Venezuelan organizations have denounced on May 17, 2019 before the Ombudsperson's Office that coercive measures unilateral imposed by the US to Venezuela have impacted the State's ability to buy and distribute free antiretroviral treatment for people living with HIV. After the approval of US Congress Act 113-278 the prohibitions have blocked the access to the imports of these essential medicines by the Venezuelan health system, making more difficult to preserve the lives of people living with HIV. On the same, it was also reported that recently the access to the medicines has been regularized. Unfortunately, the reality is that it remains an imminent threat to the life of 90,000 people living with HIV in Venezuela who depend on this free access to HIV treatment provided by the Government.
- Gender with Class Foundation (Fundacion Genero con Clase), a social organization dedicated to the promotion and defense of women rights, has presented a report on the "The Blockade Effects in the Sexual and Reproductive Rights in Venezuela: Challenges and Consequences", which recorded the impact of these measures have had in the access to contraceptives methods and its consequences, in the increase of teenage pregnancies, unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases. It is inferred that the few public policies aimed to a free distribution of contraceptive methods have been virtually suspended due to the difficulties that the health system has had in order to import these supplies.



# SURES DEMANDS

Sures demands that the US governments, Canada, United Kingdom and the Swiss Confederation, as well as the European Union:

- Unblock Venezuela immediately.
- Respect the human rights of the Venezuelan People to its self-determination and economic and social development.
- Comply with international law, its fundamental principles and standards, especially UN Charter.

Sures demands the US government to:

- Unblock immediately oil activities of the Venezuelan State, which represents more than 95% of foreign exchange earnings to our country.
- Repeal US Congress Act 113-278 adopted in December 14, 2014, which prohibits, sanctions and confiscates goods of individuals and companies that carry out economic operations with the State-owned company PDVSA.
- Revoke Executive Order No. 13692, 13808, 13827, 13835, 13850, 13857 and 13884 issued by President Donald Trump against PDVSA, which restrict, prohibit and sanction PDVSA activities, as well as its industrial commercial, financial and credit operations.
- Return the property, control and management of CITGO, US based Venezuelan company, to the Venezuelan Government, which estimated net income is around 30 million dollars, and it was handed to outsiders to the constitutional government of Venezuela.
- Cease public and continued threats of armed actions against the people of Venezuela, especially those undertaken from the arbitrary and illegal application of TIAR to the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

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

- Declare that the financial, financial and commercial blockade against the people of Venezuela constitute a massive violation of humans rights to the right to life, health, food and adequate standard of living.
- Strongly condemn the economic, financial and commercial blockade against Venezuela as a crime against humanity, contrary to international order and the UN Charter.
- Adopt all decisions at your disposal to immediately cease economic aggressions against the people of Venezuela.
- Start an investigation to determine the responsibilities for human rights violation of financial companies and private parties that de facto apply the economic blockade against the people of Venezuela.



# THE JUST

A man who, as Voltaire wished, cultivates his garden.

He who is grateful that music exists on earth.

He who discovers an etymology with pleasure.

A pair in a Southern café, enjoying a silent game of chess.

The potter meditating on colour and form.

The typographer who set this, though perhaps not pleased.

A man and a woman reading the last triplets of a certain canto.

He who is stroking a sleeping creature.

He who justifies, or seeks to, a wrong done him.

He who is grateful for Stevenson's existence.

He who prefers the others to be right.

These people, without knowing, are saving the world.

**JORGE LUIS BORGES**





# SURES CONDEMNS

# THE BLOCKADE AT THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

On July 5, 2019, the High Commissioner of Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet Jeria, presented at the 41st session of the UN Human Rights Council the report entitled “The situation of human rights in Venezuela”, after a personal in loco visit in June 19-21, 2019 and a team from her office on March, 2019.

During both visits, Sures, along with the Venezuelan Network of Human Rights (Red Venezolana de Derechos Humanos), held meetings with the High Commissioner and her team, in which concrete complaints were brought on the economic, financial and commercial blockade imposed against Venezuela by the US and its allies, and its impact on human rights. In addition to providing a wide information about the application form and effects of these unilateral coercive measures, an important group of victims denounced cases of human rights violations as a direct consequence of the economic blockade. Among them, people receiving leukemia treatments in Italy whose treatments were suspended due to money retention by co-responsible Banks; people living with HIV who have received irregularly antiretroviral treatment, as a result of the commercial blockade that prevents the purchasing of international supplies by the health system; and people with disabilities that require prostheses, orthotics and other technical aids, since due to economic blockage, imported items made by the Venezuelan government have been hampered and paralyzed.

In these situations, the Venezuelan Network of Human Rights requested the High Commissioner to:

- Express concern on how the economic blockade impacts Venezuela and the fulfillment of human rights for all;
- Condemn strongly the economic blockade imposed to Venezuela as a serious and massive violation of human rights;
- Take all actions necessary within its purview to cease immediately all unilateral coercive measures imposed against the Venezuelan people.

Therefore, Venezuelan Network of Human Rights valued positively the statement made by the High

Commissioner at the end of her in loco visit, when she expressed concern over the economic blockade, particularly to the ones impose on the oil activities.

However, to everyone’s surprise, the report presented by Mrs. Michelle Bachelet Jeria to the UN Human Rights Council disregarded the serious violations of human rights and the right to life, health, adequate food and living standards caused by the economic blockade against Venezuela. Likewise, it failed to refer the victims who presented their testimonies before her, while only making very concise and general paragraphs about the unilateral coercive measures. Without claiming that as an economic, financial and commercial blockade is the cause of the difficult situation in Venezuela. It was not included either the lack of access to medicines and health services nor naming the States, in contravention of the international law and UN Charter, have applied these unilateral coercive measures.

Evidently, de facto pressures led the High Commissioner to drastically change her opinion on the economic blockade against Venezuela and its impact on human rights. Since what it is shown in the report are far from the statements made at the end of her in loco visit and meeting exchanges with Sures and the Venezuelan Network of Human Rights. However, above all, it differs greatly from resolution “Strengthening of international cooperation” approved on the 41st session of the Human Rights Council (July 18, 2019), in which the referred report was presented.



# IMPOSING OIL BLOCKADE AGAINST VENEZUELA

- The severest measure taken against the Venezuelan oil industry was on January 28, 2019 (sixth Executive Order 13857).

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- All PDVSA assets were blocked under US jurisdiction with the purpose of handing them over to a “new Government” in Venezuela.

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- The measures blocked 7 billion dollars in PDVSA property, as well as 11 billion dollars in losses.