

REPORT ON THE ECONOMIC BLOC-  
KADE AGAINST VENEZUELA

September-december 2019 | Núm. 3

# UNUSUAL & EXTRAORDINARY

## 2019: THE YEAR OF RESILIENCE



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## E D I T O R I A L

Rethinking each day that comprised the convoluted 2019 is not an easy task, let alone an idyllic exercise. Even though it is true that there are serious elements that explain why we talk about positive results and on the achieved duty in defense and studies of human rights, we would not like to just keep that good feeling and move to evaluate what we stopped doing by various circumstance.

We have found key pieces of this puzzle, interpreted speeches or interventions by eminent representatives of international organizations responsible for promoting and protecting human rights. We are active in presenting formal complaints with peers who guard and monitor the inalienable rights of all human beings, along with the communities that know how to see and read what is happening in a much simpler way and without edges. We have, in short, grown from all sides, to the width and height of the commitment made, from mistakes and successes.

We know that our historical role is defined by favoring the truth, wherever it comes from. That our breathing will be given to the suffocated by the injustice produced by the unilateral coercive measures, and by other similar actions to entire populations; that each research will be available free of charge to all interested parties. We are aware that we have to incorporate more methodologies, add challenges, allies, widen the angles and criteria, and provide common and current responses to our Venezuelan people.

We have a persistent will, a strategic organization and a map without borders or discriminatory walls, since the defenders of rights, of the human, do not distinguish color or categorizations of faith. We have designed a permanent awareness program, adaptability to the time and spaces of each community and institution.

We move as a versatile collaborative network, designed to achieve the highest number in 2020, favoring the peace dialogue, under-

standing the migration phenomenon and the causes of the economic-financial blockade.

We closely monitor the negative impact generated by executive orders that US has imposed, with the support of the European Union and other allies. Understanding that these are the factors that generate most damages, materially and, much more importantly, socially. The latter, in many cases, irreparable.

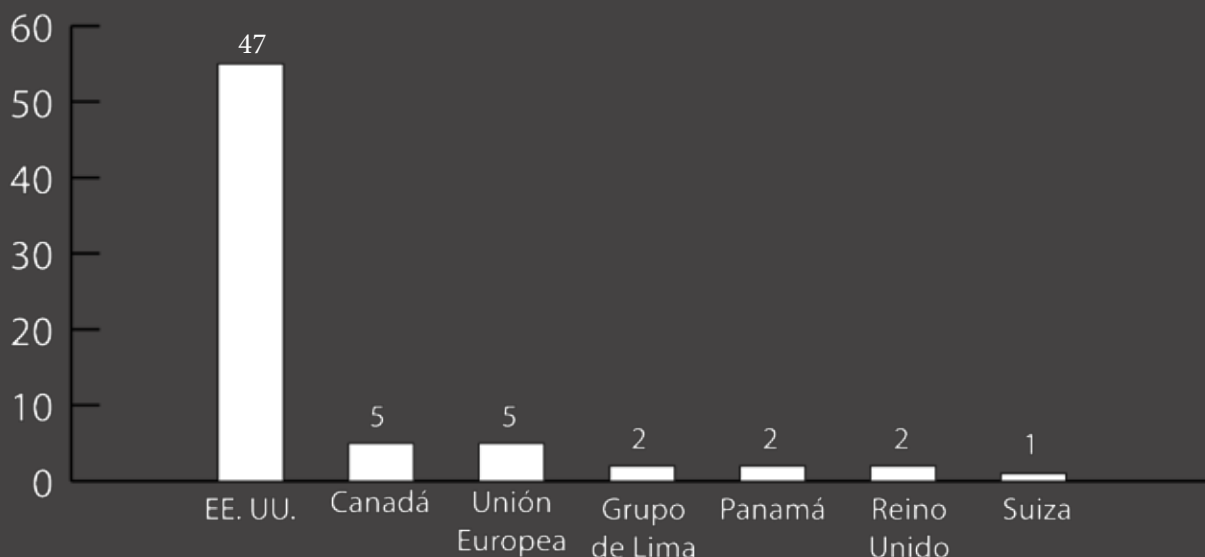
Since the approval of US Congress Act 113-278 imposing strong restrictions on PDVSA and Central Bank of Venezuela, there have six additional measures, listed herewith in chronological order: **Executive Order N.º 13692-2015:** Venezuela as “unusual and extraordinary threat” to national security and US foreign policy”. **Executive Order N.º 13808-2017:** Prohibits the international financial system from participating in any purchase, sale, negotiation or renegotiation of Venezuelan sovereign debt. **Executive Order N.º 13827-2018:** Against the Petro cryptocurrency. **Executive Order N.º 13835-2018:** Against accounts receivable and other Venezuela operations. **Executive Order N.º 13850-2018:** Against Venezuelan Gold Trading Operations. **Executive Order N.º 13857-2019:** which establishes the blocking of PDVSA (CITGO) assets. **Executive Order N.º 13884-2019:** General blockade to all properties of the Venezuelan state in the USA.

For this edition of *Unusual & extraordinary*, you will find a succinct sample of what was monitored in the final period of 2019. Let’s not underestimate these data. They contain, more than numbers and graphs, safe routes to reality, reflections of common experts and sensitized to what our people are suffering from senseless statements that revolves around irresponsibility never seen before, testimonies of the beneficiaries to our workshops in the defense of human rights, listing of our publications. All of which left us having an unforgettable year, origins of resilience. We can only invite you to read and spread this effort made for supporting the defense.

# MORE PRESSURE IS EXERTED AGAINST VENEZUELA

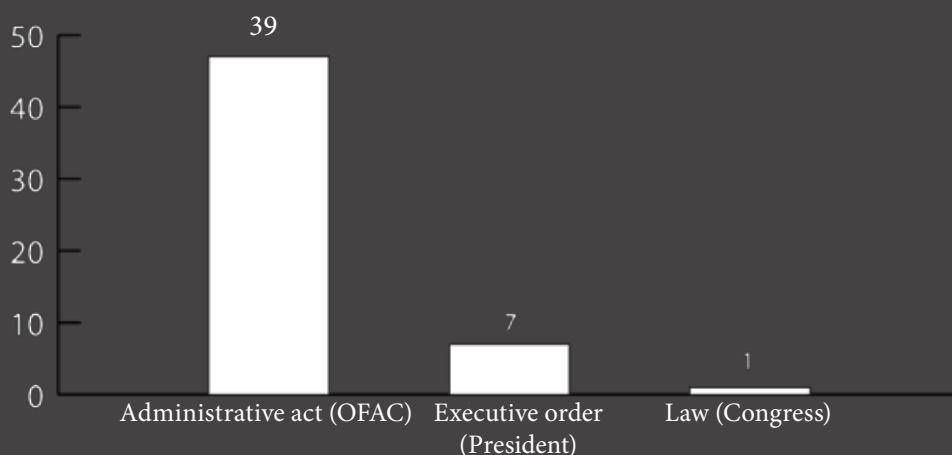
Since 2014, various strategies have been carried out against Venezuela to impose unilateral coercive measures, which has directly impacted the right to food, health and socioeconomic development to the Venezuelan people. Counting all the measures imposed from its beginning until February 2020, we notices that 73% were imposed by the United States government, followed by Canada and the European Union 8% each.

COUNTRIES AND GROUPS THAT ISSUED UNILATERAL COERCIVE MEASURES



In the case of US, the pressure strategies have intensified considerably since President Donald Trump took office. In that sense, in order to apply unilateral coercive measures the following instruments have been issued: 1 Congress Act, 7 Executive Orders by the Presidents Obama and Trump (13692, 13808, 13827, 13835, 13850, 13857 and 13884) and 39 administrative acts by the Department of Treasury to applied restrictions to countries, people, entities, aircraft, ships, among others.

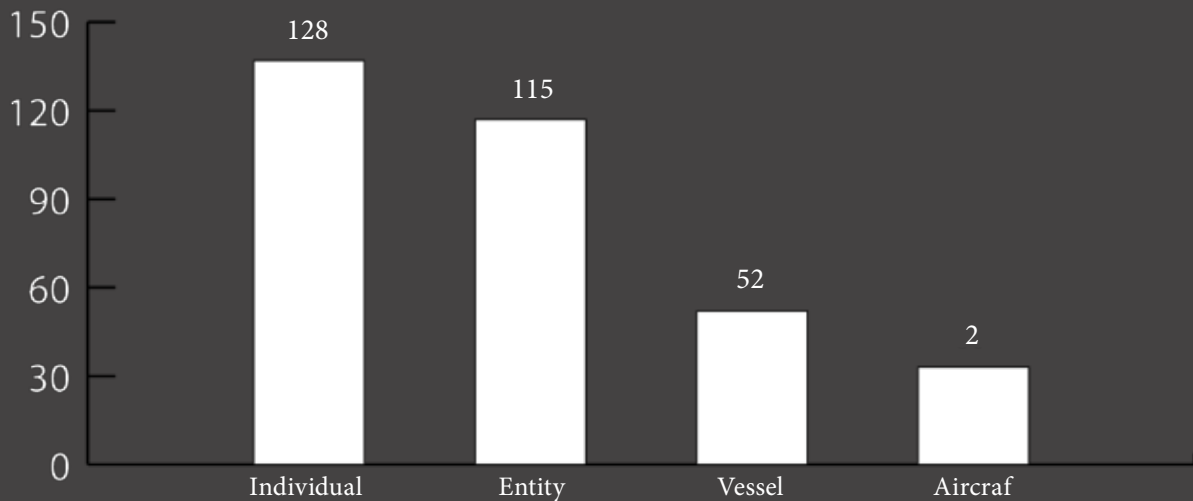
TYPES OF MEASURES ISSUED BY THE USA



From the beginning of these measures in December 2014 until December 2019, we have registered 128 people as a “Special Designated National” (SDN), including the President, prohibiting from entering US and its assets, in case they have them.

In addition, they have focused on financial, banking and oil entities. As a result, coercive measures have been applied against 52 ships (the majority are owned by PDVSA used for the transportation of hydrocarbons), 2 aircraft, as well as 115 private and public companies. Likewise, the restrictions that have been imposed include the purchase of debt bonds, the movement of freight or financial transactions, the purchase of supplies and diluents for gasoline, among others.

## RECIPIENTS OF THE APPLIED MEASURES

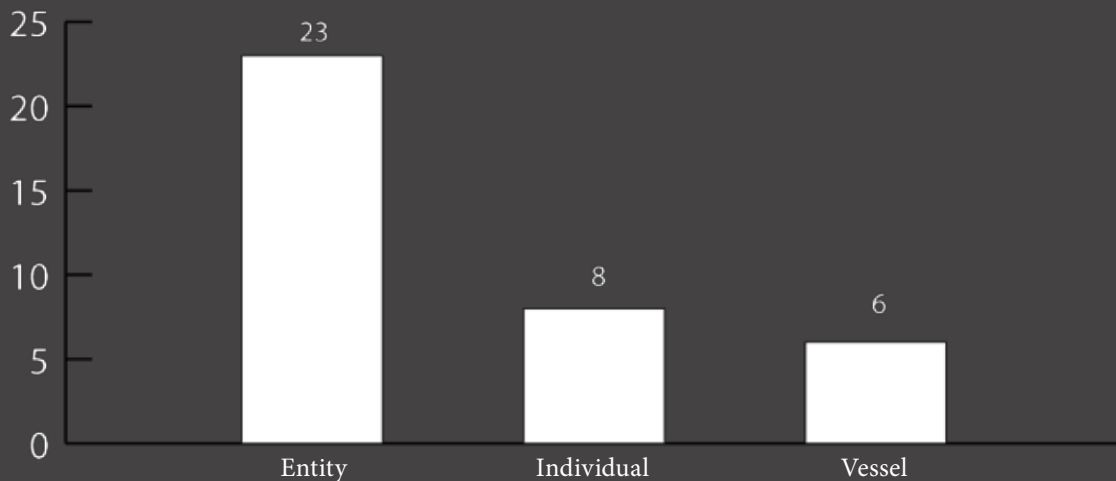


Additionally, it establishes extrajurisdictional embargoes or secondary boycott, sanctioning even outside the US jurisdiction companies, people and ships that are linked to the companies or individuals that appear in the listings of the Office of Foreign Asset Control (OFAC), as it was the case of Colombian companies in charge of importing food to Venezuela for the distribution through the state program called Local Supply and Production Committees (CLAP for its Spanish initials).

### AND COUNTING WHAT HAS HAPPENED BETWEEN SEPTEMBER AND DECEMBER 2019...

During the period analyzed in this bulleting (September-December 2019) The US Government has applied 5 formal coercive measures (all issued by OFAC) that have reached additionally: 23 companies, 6 ships and 8 people. It is striking that 62% of the measures issued so far has targeted companies, which shows an intensification of the mechanisms to hinder trade towards Venezuela. No foreign government or regional group has imposed measures during these months.

### UNILATERAL COERCIVE MEASURES ISSUED FROM SEPTEMBER - DECEMBER 2019



Below is a detailed analysis of the measures issued and their scope:

- 1) Measure issued on September 17, 2019 by the Office of Foreign Assets Control of the Department of Treasury against three people and 16 companies.
- 2) Measure issued on September 24, 2019 by the Office of Foreign Assets Control against four companies and four ships operating in the oil sector.
- 3) Measure issued on November 5, 2019 by the Office of Foreign Assets Control of the Department of Treasury against five people.
- 4) Measure issued on November 26, 2019 by the Office of Foreign Assets Control of the Department of Treasury against a metal company.
- 5) Measure issued on December 3, 2019 by the Office of Foreign Assets Control of the Department of Treasury against six vessels owned by the PDVSA.

# “DENYING THE EXISTENCE OF THE BLOCKADE IS ABSURD”

INTERVIEW TO LUIS NAVAS MORA, CHAIRPERSON OF THE BLIND NETWORK CIVIL ASSOCIATION

## Is there a blockade against Venezuela?

Of course there is a blockade against Venezuela. It is recognized by the government of the United States, the Venezuelan government and economic analysts of the most diverse trends. Fedecamaras and even a part of the Venezuelan opposition recognize it. Every day we find news about how unilateral coercive measures affect the economic performance of the country, of government institutions and public and private companies, as well as natural and legal persons who are not related to the Venezuelan government. The mere fact of possessing Venezuelan nationality has become a risk for many people who see their accounts closed in the United States. The same is true for non-governmental organizations, partly due to the so-called over-compliance.

It is true that the blockade has not reached the naval blockade phase, which would be its maximum expression. But its consequences are noticeable in the restrictions for international trade, particularly in the oil industry, which must avoid every day the possible sanctions to which its partners are exposed in Russia or India, to give two examples.

Denying the existence of the blockade is absurd, or it is a conclusion that can only be reached through what is known as confirmation bias, which is a certain mental phenomenon that makes us accept the data that confirms our own beliefs, while makes us ignore or deny the data that rejects them.

## In your opinion, how does the blockade affect people with disabilities in Venezuela?

In many ways. In addition to the effects it has on the general population, such as falling oil revenues, difficulties in acquiring food and medicine, among others, people with disabilities face the impossibility of returning or acquiring technical aids for mobility, such as walking sticks or wheelchairs due to its high cost. The alternative is donations made by the Venezuelan state, but they are increasingly difficult as unilateral coercive measures have been deepened.

There are also other substantial effects, such as the increasing failures in the transport system, elevators in public and residential buildings, which turns impossible for people with certain disabilities to lead a normal life. In fact, I consider that in recent years the cases of residential confinement of people with disabilities have increased, which is attributable, at least in part, to the blockade, not so much because the necessary spare parts are not available, but because people cannot afford them.

However, what worries me the most is that in a situation of as many restrictions as we are experiencing, the most likely is that the number of people with disabilities in the population will increase to levels well above what would be expected. Keep in mind that drug restrictions can lead to new disabilities. The same happens with the lack of food. Quite simply, if an older person is forced to go up and down 15 floors to get in or out of his or her apartment, it is very likely that one day their knees will fail, or that a fall will



occur with a disability as a consequence. Note that this can not only happen with an older person. In this way, the blockade may lead to many avoidable disabilities.

**What proposals have been made to mitigate its effects from organizations of people with disabilities?**

The issue of access to food and medicine, which would be fundamental, is beyond any proposal that we can make. However, at Blind Network we believe that progress must be made, say, on two fronts.

The first front is to try to guarantee the accessibility and availability of technical aids for the mobility of people with disabilities. Both the wheelchair and the ramp are essential so that many people with disabilities can lead a normal life, enjoy their rights, solve their problems with a certain autonomy and contribute with their work to overcome the blockade. This involves greater commitment from the State, the private sector, community organizations, families, and ultimately individuals.

The other front is the prevention of disabilities. Many things can be done apart from guaranteeing medications. Promoting a better diet, not necessarily so caloric, an effort to comply with and enforce traffic regulations more rigorously, in order to avoid disabling accidents.

Lastly, it would be necessary to ensure a more innocuous environment for living beings, which involves guaranteeing the quality of air, water for human and animal consumption, land for cultivation and urban spaces in general. Measures in

this sense would allow us to reduce the acquisition of disabilities by the population, somehow offsetting the effects of the blockade.





SURES REITERATES BIAS

IN THE REPORTING

OF THE HIGH

COMMISSIONER

ON THE SITUATION

OF VENEZUELA

On September 9th and December 18th, 2019, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet Jeria, presented oral updates to her first report of July 5, 2019, to the United Nations Human Rights Council.

On this last occasion, Sures formally addressed the High Commissioner, and congratulated firstly the signing the Memorandum of Understanding between the Venezuelan State and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to establish, among others, an office in Caracas. We are convinced that this first approach will allow both instances to advance in the promotion and protection of all human rights in our country.

In this regard, we support that in the framework of the Memorandum of Understanding, the on-site visit of the Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of Unilateral Coercive Measures on the enjoyment of Human Rights and the Special Rapporteur of the United Nations on the right to development.

At the same time, we advocate for a similar invitation to be extended to the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, in order to raise awareness on the weaknesses and strengths in nutrition and food security, as well as the impact of the unilateral coercive measures imposed by the United States and a group of countries, have had on the Venezuelan population.

However, the direct effects of unilateral coercive measures on the exercise of the human rights of the Venezuelan people continue to be underestimated. In that regard, we also request their reports to highlight the blockade started with the approval of US Congress Act 113-278 in December 2014 and not in 2017 as repeatedly stated. In addition, it separates the current economic situation from the systematic blockade that has taken place in all Venezuelan activities, such as oil, gold and financial areas since 2014.

Finally, we reiterate our concern for the promotion she has done for the definitive or provisional release of some people prosecuted as responsible for serious human rights violations and coups. We believe that while it is important that these people are guaranteed due process, this should not lead to impunity.



# THE LORDS OF THE BLOCKADE

In our interpretation, unilateral coercive measures, erroneously indicated as “sanctions”, have been openly requested by a handful of Venezuelan political actors. And currently they are the main cause affecting the entire Venezuelan society, in their health, food, economic and cultural development, public tranquility, etc. We believe that such “request” are illegal, immoral and unfair. Below we present excerpts of some political actors who have called for the economic, financial and commercial blockade against Venezuela.

March 2018

“Venezuela has already become an internal problem (...) We believe that countries, beyond convictions, take concrete actions to put international and democratic pressure to Venezuela.”

**JULIO BORGES,  
DEPUTY. NATIONAL  
ASSEMBLY, PRIMERO  
JUSTICIA PARTY  
(FIRST JUSTICE PARTY)**

**LESTER TOLEDO,  
DEPUTY, NATIONAL  
ASSEMBLY, VOLUNTAD  
POPULAR PARTY  
(POPULAR WILL PARTY)**

December 2017

“Venezuelan officials responsible for the violation of human rights, for the last 130 deaths, 5,000 wounded and more than 300 political prisoners from the last 7,000 peaceful protests, must pay and be punished.”

September 19, 2018

“We have come to the Canadian Parliament to clearly raise more sanctions, the activation of the principle of humanitarian interference and support to the OAS report of Secretary General, Luis Almagro, to the International Criminal Court.”

**ANTONIO LEDEZMA,  
FORMER METROPOLITAN  
MAYOR OF CARACAS.**

# SURES PUBLICATIONS

Sures presented our series *Historic time on the blockade* in the 15<sup>th</sup> International Book Fair of Venezuela [2019], held in November in Caracas. Our research were presented in order to provide a detailed analysis on the blockade from various perspectives: food, the impact on the oil sector and the blockade, as a crime against humanity. The titles exhibited by their authors Luis Navas, Lorena Giménez and Erick Gutiérrez, researchers from Sures, were as follows:

- *Crime against humanity. The economic-financial blockade against Venezuela*
- *Everything is for oil. The Economic Blockade to the Venezuelan Oil Industry and its Impact on Human Rights*
- *Blockade and plunder. Questions & answers about the coercive unilateral measures against Venezuela*
- *The Hunger's Strategy. Unilateral coercive measures against food supply to the Venezuelan population*



# THE HANDS

Two kinds of hands face each other in life,  
Spring from the heart, burst through the arms,  
jump, and flow into the light, wounded by blows, by claws.  
the hand is the tool of the soul, its message,  
and the body has in it its fighting branch.  
Lift up, move your hands in a great surf,  
men of my seed.

MIGUEL HERNÁNDEZ



**I liked the workshop because it is the first time that I clearly identify the compelling reason behind the malfunction of public transportation. This is directly related to the criminal blockade. We should discuss it with the other people in the community so that we understand what is going on well.”**

*Neida, from the Maca Sector East, Petare, Miranda state.*

## TALKING WITH THE COMMUNITIES ABOUT THE BLOCKADE AGAINST VENEZUELA AS A CRIME AGAINST HUMANITY

From September to December 2019, in order to provide analysis and discussion tools related to the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights, Sures have strengthened the strategies for approaching communities and students.

We discussed with communities how the imperial strategies of intervention and blockade against Venezuela have been affecting our daily life. In this sense, through workshops and discussions on The Blockade: a crime against humanity, we have approached 850 students, 790 people in organized communities and 450 public servants.



# UNILATERAL COERCIVE MEASURES

From Sures we believe that we should speak of unilateral coercive measures (UCM) and not of sanctions. If we use the term sanctions, it would imply that there is a legally reprehensible act against the state, which results in the application of a punishment; that is, from an administrative or criminal sanction. From this perspective, in the case of Venezuela, there is no breach of a duty or a rule by the state, but these measures have been applied as a result of unilateral acts of states that adverse the government and do not agree with its political orientation. Political-social, and, of course, that they have a particular interest in the change of government in the country. In this case, it is a general attack against a town, it is not an attack for a specific group or just for one state.

## US CONGRESS ACT 113-278 APPROVED IN 2014

### EXECUTIVE ORDER N.º 13692-2015:

Venezuela as “unusual and extraordinary threat” to national security and US foreign policy”.

### EXECUTIVE ORDER N.º 13808-2017:

Prohibits the international financial system from participating in any purchase, sale, negotiation or renegotiation of Venezuelan sovereign debt.

### EXECUTIVE ORDER N.º 13827-2018:

Against the Petro cryptocurrency.

### EXECUTIVE ORDER N.º 13835-2018:

Against accounts receivable and other Venezuela operations.

### EXECUTIVE ORDER N.º 13850-2018

Against Venezuelan Gold Trading Operations

### EXECUTIVE ORDER N.º 13857-2019

Which establishes the blocking of PDVSA (CITGO) assets.

### EXECUTIVE ORDER N.º 13884-2019

General blockade to all properties of the Venezuelan state in the USA.

AFTERWARDS IT WILL COME (UNTIL THE END OF DECEMBER 2019)

## ESTRATEGIES FOR THE ECONOMIC, FINANCIAL AND COMMERCIAL BLOCKADE

64 FORMAL UCM: Acts, executive order, administrative acts.

More than 250 non formal UCM: de facto actions, negative reports, country risk reports, shutdown of commercial trade, threats to states, companies, among others.

# **THE BLOCKADE VIOLATES THE RIGHT TO FOOD**

Since 2015, the unilateral coercive measures against Venezuela have affected the import of food, affecting also Republic international operations banking. Such obstacles have increased the prices due to the need to purchase food through intermediaries, delays in deliveries, given by the action of hostile governments; and confiscation of products purchased by the authorities of producer countries, such is the case of Colombia and Mexico. Following some examples of the food blockade aimed at the Venezuelan people:

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**Attacks to the Local Committees of Supply and Production (CLAP for its Spanish name).**

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**In 2018 Colombia blocked the shipment of 400,000 kilos of food for CLAP.**

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**In 2018, 104 million euros were retained in the international financial system for payment to suppliers of CLAP.**

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**2019 ships and shipping companies are sanctioned.**

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**Legal proceedings to companies in Mexico. Blocking violates the right to food.**

**1,200 MILLION USD IN GOLD RETAINED BY THE  
ENGLAND BANK IS THE EQUIVALENT OF 6 MILLION  
HOUSEHOLDS RECEIVING CLAP FOR 6 MONTHS**