

REPORTE SOBRE EL BLOQUEO
ECONÓMICO CONTRA VENEZUELA

January-march, 2020 | Núm. 4

UNUSUAL & EXTRAORDINARY



#TheBlockadeKills



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EDITORIAL

It is an inhumane act to maintain for more than 5 years an economic, financial and commercial blockade against Venezuela, a developing country with a little more than 30 million inhabitants. Especially when its main export product, oil, generates more than 95 % of its income, suffers a drastic decrease in prices in the international market.

There is no doubt that the economic blockade constitutes a very serious violation of human rights, which has already been recognized by various organs of the United Nations, including the Secretary General, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Independent Expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order and the Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights. Let's just remember that according to estimates from the Center for Economic and Policy research, based in Washington DC, USA. In a report prepared by Jeffrey Sachs and Mark Weisbrot, between 2017 and 2018 alone, the blockade produced more than 40,000 direct deaths in our country, and put the health of hundreds of thousands of people at risk.

It is clearly an immoral, unfair, illegal and criminal action committed by the US government and its allies. And the impact is being hardly estimated by the Venezuelan state and the international community. Its effects on maternal mortality, infant mortality and infant nutrition were recently made public in the denounce presented by the Venezuelan state to the International Criminal Court against President Trump, classifying the economic blockade as a crime against humanity, in accordance with article 7 of the Rome statute.

However what is even more inhumane, incomprehensible and cruel is that this siege on the Venezuelan economy continues after the World Health Organization announced COVID-19 outbreak a pandemic. At a time when the Venezuelan state and society must have all the public resources at their disposal to prevent and treat this disease, the United States, its allies and the international financial system maintain the economic and commercial siege. During the last

few weeks, our country continues to be unable to dispose of the more than 7,000 million euros that the Venezuelan state has deposited in North American, European and Asian private banks for the purchase of medicines and health supplies. It continues to be a victim of restrictions to make international purchases, while the ships and shipping companies where it transports these goods are being prosecuted by the U.S. Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC), but what is even more serious and alarming is that once again President Trump has reiterated threats to invade Venezuela militarily, while ordering an unprecedented deployment of warships in the Caribbean Sea, under the excuse of control of drug trafficking activities and accuses President Nicolás Maduro, without evidence, of participating in these criminal activities.

Faced with this situation, in the amid of the COVID-19 pandemic that puts at risk the life and health of the Venezuelan people, as well as of the other peoples of the region and the world, we join the requests that the US government and its European allies, immediately cease the unilateral coercive measures imposed against our country. We request the international financial system, particularly the banks where the monies of the State and Venezuelan society are deposited, to allow these resources to be used for the purchasing of medicines and health supplies in order to attend to this world crisis, as well as to alleviate the devastating consequences that are generating in our economy.



THE NAVAL AND MARITIME BLOCKADE AGAINST VENEZUELA

Since 2017 the US government, in addition to deepening the economic, financial and commercial blockade against our country, has threatened to execute a naval blockade and the use of force with the purpose of hindering Venezuelan trade, to prevent the entry and exit of goods, such as food, medicines and industrial supplies.

These actions have been accompanied by different strategies as part of a systematic and generalized plan aimed at affecting the nation's economic and social development. On August 19th, 2019, according to the news portal Axios, President of the United States, Donald Trump, proposed to deploy navy ships along the Caribbean and Atlantic coast of Venezuela.

However, the US Department of Defense would have discarded the proposal because it would entail the use of many forces of the United States Navy and for being inconsistent with international law.



Continuing with these actions in 2020, President Trump, the Department of Defense and the Southern Command, met with the Presidents of Colombia and Brazil in order to increase unilateral coercive measures and plan strategies against the country.

On the other hand, MP Juan Guaidó warned the media about the United States naval blockade on Venezuela, noting: "... they have to understand that this is not a game (...), that there are consequences."

Guaidó thus referred to the statements of the head of the US Southern Command, Admiral Craig Faller, who affirmed that the US Navy is ready to "do what is necessary" in Venezuela. This admiral, during the beginning of the unitas maritime military exercise, executed in Brazil, threatened saying: "I am not going to detail what we are planning and what we are doing, but we remain ready to implement political decisions and we are ready to act".



It is clear that these governments do not drop the idea of implementing the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (TIAR), which seeks military intervention in the event of an extra-regional attack. Let us remember that after the call of the Permanent Council of the OAS on September 11, 2019 and this in turn of the Organ of Consultation, the implementation of TIAR to Venezuela was agreed on September 23, 2019.

The TIAR agreement provides, among the courses of action that can be taken according to its article 8, besides breaking diplomatic and consular relations or the defensive military response itself, considers the activation of the blockade, which together entails the cessation of commercial exchanges, the closure of border crossings, access sea routes and even communications in the radio-electric space.

In 2019 the Venezuelan government denounced the US government to the Security Council and the UN Secretary General for the economic blockade and the threats of naval blockades and the use of force against its population. One of the arguments put forward was that the application of a naval blockade can only be contemplated by the United Nations, in accordance with the provisions of article 41 of its Charter, to countries that represent a threat to peace or have committed serious aggression. Being clear that in the case of Venezuela this situation has not been configured.

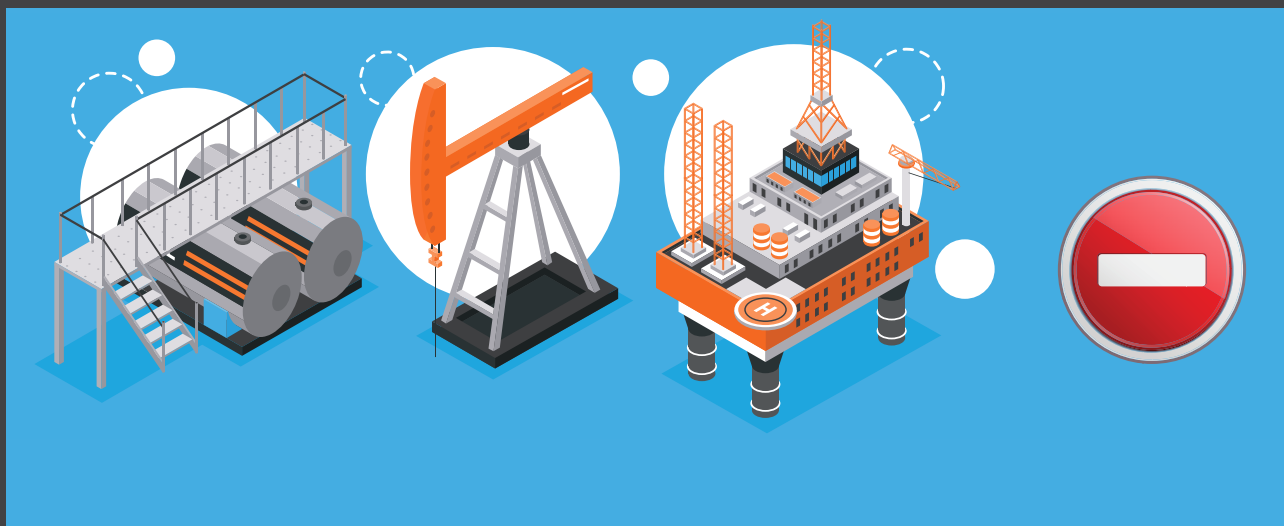
Despite the fact that the naval blockade against Venezuela has not been formally declared, we believe that the application of unilateral coercive measures decreed by the OFAC in practice lead to similar results. That is, the US government maritime blockade began in 2019 through the application of sanctions to shipping companies and ships, both public and private, which transport goods to our country, as described below:

- On April 5, 2019, a first formal measure is issued against 2 ships operating in the oil sec-

tor of the Venezuelan economy, in accordance with executive order 13850. In addition, the OFAC “sanctions” 1 vessel that was transporting oil from Venezuela to Cuba, and 34 ships property of the blocked Petr6leos de Venezuela, s.a. (PDVSA).

- On April 12, 2019, 4 companies operating in the oil sector of the Venezuelan economy were “sanctioned”. In addition, the OFAC identified 9 vessels, some of which were transporting oil from Venezuela to Cuba, as blocked property of the four mentioned companies.
- On May 10, 2019, 2 ships are added to the restricted list carried by the OFAC.
- The Executive Order of August 5, 2019 prohibits the maritime trade of Venezuelan oil, since it reiterates the restrictions applied against PDVSA.
- On December 3, 2019, restrictions are established against 6 vessels related to PDVSA.

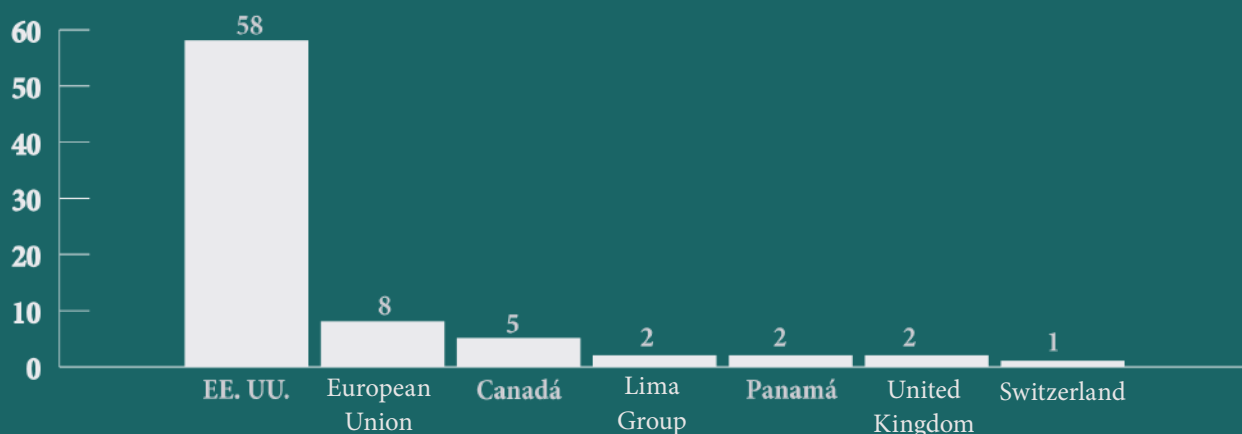
It is important to underline that the application of these measures has a deterrent effect for all other companies and ships, both private and state-owned, to trade with Venezuela. Since it sends a clear message that anyone can be subject to “sanctions”, restrictions and/or confiscation of its patrimony. Reaching the extreme of preventing its free functioning in the countries that execute the North American economic blockade. This is undoubtedly a general intimidation against those who wish to trade with the Venezuelan state. In addition to all these unilateral coercive measures. President Trump recently ordered the deployment of warships throughout the Caribbean Sea, under the excuse of fighting against drug trafficking, actually has among its objectives to impose a naval blockade against our country, to generate greater suffering at a time when the COVID-19 pandemic demands that Venezuela import goods to guarantee health, food and social economic development.



LET'S MAKE A RECOUNT OF ALL IMPLEMENTED MEASURES

Since 2014 a significant number of unilateral coercive measures have been issued against Venezuela, in order to change the government and alter the will of the people expressed in a democratic way in various electoral processes. Counting all the measures imposed from its inception until March 2020, we can see that 74 % were applied by the United States government, followed by the European Union with 8 %.

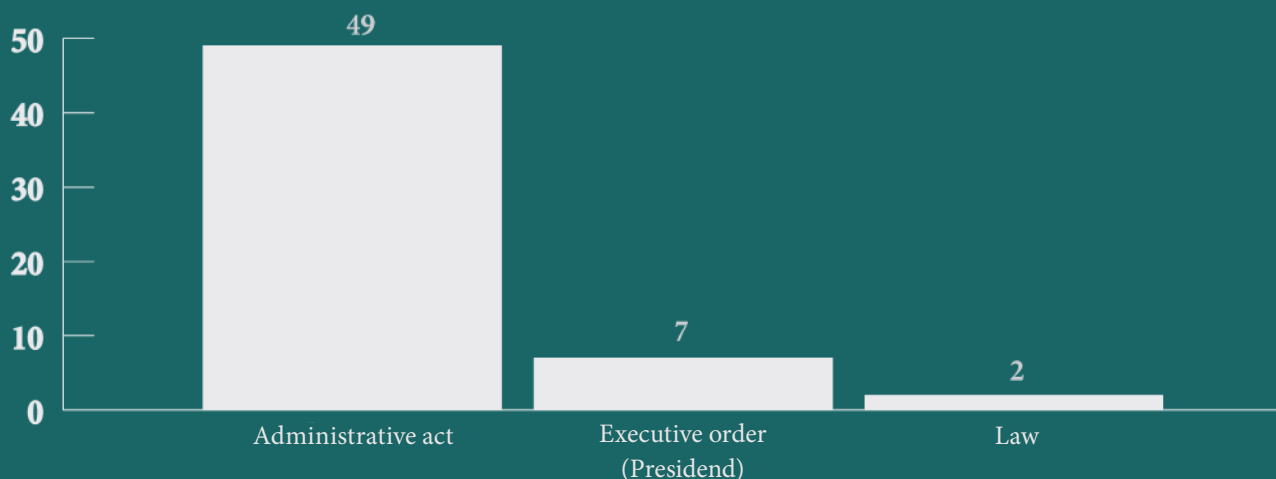
COUNTRIES AND GROUPS THAT HAVE ISSUED UNILATERAL COERCIVE MEASURES



Strong political pressure from the United States.

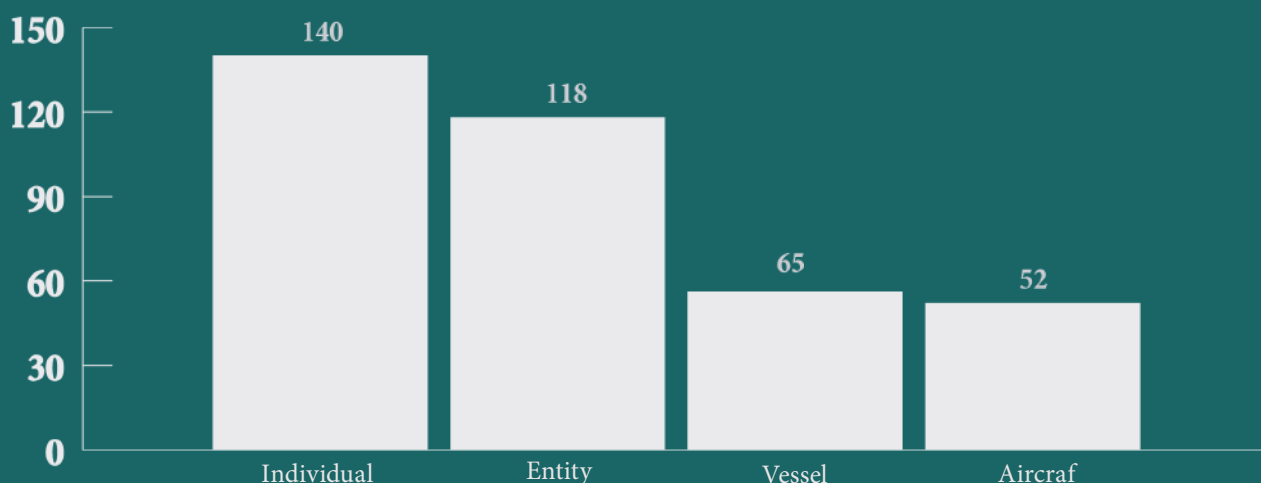
The pressure strategies have been intensifying considerably since President Donald Trump took office. To date, the following unilateral coercive measures have been issued: two (2) Acts of Congress, seven (7) executive orders by Presidents Obama and Trump (13692, 13808, 13827, 13835, 13850, 13857 and 13884), and forty-nine (49) administrative acts that apply some restriction to countries, people, entities, aircraft and ships by the Department of Treasury.

TYPES OF UNILATERAL COERCIVE MEASURE ISSUED BY THE UNITED STATES



Since the issuing of these measures in December 2014 until March 2020, we, as in from SURES, have registered one hundred and forty (140) people as "Special Designated National" (SDN). In addition, they have focused on financial, banking and oil entities. As a result, coercive measures have been applied against fifty-two (52) ships (the majority are owned by PDVSA and are used for the transportation of hydrocarbons), fifty-six (56) aircraft (mostly by Conviasa), as well as one hundred eighteen (118) private and public companies.

RECIPIENTS OF THE IMPLEMENTED MEASURES

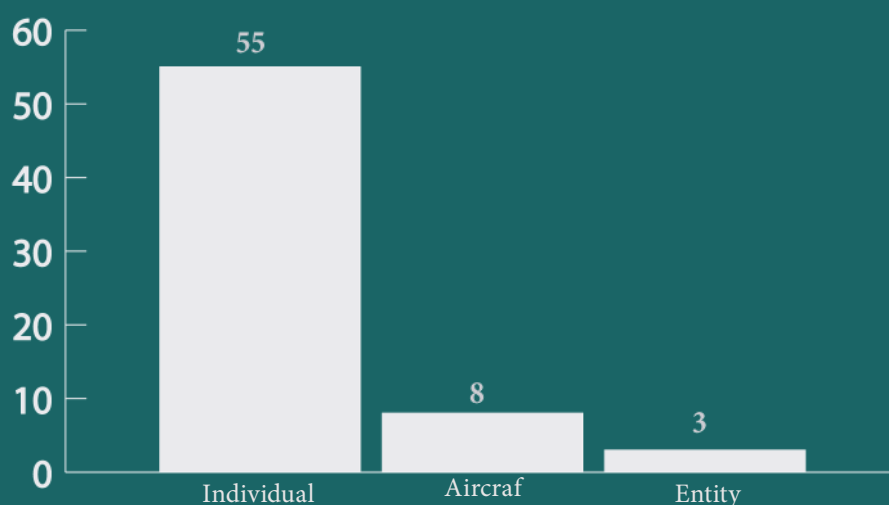


And counting what has happened between January and March 2020...

During this period the US government has issued six (6) formal coercive measures (all by the OFAC) that have reached: fifty-five (55) aircraft, eight (8) people and three (3) companies.

It is important to mention that most of the measures were directed against the state company “Venezuelan Consortium of Aeronautical Industries and Air Services CONVIASA”, trying to cause a strong air blockade against our country. No other foreign government or regional group has imposed measures during these months.

MEASURES ISSUED BY THE US GOVERNMENT FROM JANUARY TO MARCH 2020



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

- 1) Measure issued on January 13, 2020 by the Office of Foreign Asset Control (OFAC) of the Department of Treasury, designating seven (7) additional SDN.
- 2) Measure issued on January 21, 2020 by the Office of Foreign Asset Control (OFAC) of the Department of Treasury against fifteen (15) aircraft.
- 3) Measure issued on February 7, 2020 by the Office of Foreign Asset Control (OFAC) of the Department of Treasury State Asset Control Office of the Treasury Department against CONVIASA and forty (40) of its aircraft.
- 4) Measure issued on February 18, 2020 by the Office of Foreign Asset Control (OFAC) of the Department of Treasury against the oil company ROSNEFT
- 5) Renewal of Executive Order 13.962 dated March 5, 2020.
- 6) Measure issued on March 12, 2020 by the Office of Foreign Asset Control (OFAC) of the Department of Treasury against TNK Trading International S.A.

CENSORSHIP AND SANCTIONS IN TIMES OF COVID-19

THIS ARTICLE WAS OBTAINED FROM THE INTERVIEW TO ALFRED DE ZAYAS IN THE GEOPOLITICAL AND IMPERIO CHANNEL PODCAST ON MARCH 24, 2020.

Alfred de Zayas is a leading specialist in the field of human rights and international law. From 2012 to April 2018, he was an independent expert from the United Nations on promoting a democratic and equitable international order.

In an extensive interview, he made important conclusions and recommendations regarding the “sanctions” in the context of the world coronavirus outbreak, stating that in this context it is necessary to join forces and multilateralism plays a very important role. He recalled his report presented to the 2017 General Assembly, when he explicitly: “condemned the conditionalities imposed by the IMF that led to a decrease in state investment, particularly in health care system.” Also questioning: “How many countries could fight COVID-19 more efficiently if they had had the opportunity to invest more in the health sector? Or in all hospital equipment, including enough beds?

The expert points out that there are two priorities that must be recognized: “It is not about interfering in the internal affairs of other countries miles away [...] The responsibility to protect refers to protecting your own population from a pandemic, of the course of war”. De Zayas, regarding sanctions and human rights, regretted that they have been kidnapped by lobbyists, donors and NGOs. To the question of why the office (of the High Commissioner for Human Rights) does not oppose the illegal sanctions imposed by the United States to Iran, Syria, Cuba or Venezuela ?, he is emphatic in his response, stating: “because observing that these sanctions are imposed by the big do-

nors: the United States, Canada, the European Union, the office is inhibited from fulfilling its mandate for fear of losing funding [...] it is clear to me that if comprehensive sanctions are imposed on countries such as Iran, Cuba or Venezuela, these will have an impact on human rights because it will prevent access to medicines, machinery, among others”. The expert, regarding the impact of the coercive measures, states: “not only are they imposed on US companies [...] but it is extended to other companies that face large fines that could reach up to US \$ 500,000.”

De Zayas points out that the countries that are blocked face a higher risk of mortality from the COVID-19 pandemic, as is the case of Iran, Cuba or Venezuela, since they cannot receive the medications or the tests to make the diagnoses. They are more exposed to contagion and to slow the pandemic.

The interviewee recalled that for 2018 “Professor Jeffrey Sachs, from Columbia University in the United States, estimated at 40 thousand the direct deaths caused by the sanctions imposed on Venezuela by the United States”, so from 2014 until 2020 those deaths must have exceed 100,000 people.

De Zayas coincided with the action presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs Jorge Arreaza to the International Criminal Court so that, under Article 7 of the Rome Statute, the imposition of unilateral coercive measures be investigated as a crime against humanity: “what the United States is doing is besieging an



“What the United States is doing is besieging an entire country”

entire country. It is not directly attacking but [...] here (Venezuela) there is a war situation in which a country is being besieged with the purpose of the government collapsing.”

The expert reiterated, in the framework of COVID-19 and with the humanitarian crisis, his questioning of the application of unilateral coercive measures: “is it not a crime against humanity to maintain this regime of sanctions and suffocating policies against Venezuela, now that there is this global threat from COVID-19? How many Venezuelans will die from these sanctions? What is the capacity of Venezuela to fight, to face the COVID-19?”

Lastly, he indicated that in addition to the mandate of the International Criminal Court to see this matter, the International Court of Justice also has jurisdiction. In particular, this being the organ capable of estimating the damage and establishing reparations. “The United States has an obligation to make reparations (to sanctioned countries, such as Cuba, Nicaragua, Venezuela, Iran and Syria), not only to lift the measures, but an amount must be estimated for the payment of reparations” [...] “People should be upset because in the midst of this pandemic the sanctions must be lifted. There are people dying from sanctions” he concluded.

During the 43rd session of the United Nations Human Rights Council, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, expressed her concern about the economic blockade imposed against Venezuela: “regarding economic and social rights, the imposition of new economic sanctions, especially those that affect the airline CONVIASA, as well as sanctions against the oil industry, reducing the Government’s resources destined to social spending”.

She also referred to the application of unilateral coercive measures that violate the rights to health and food of the Venezuelan people. In this regard, she concluded: “despite the exceptions established to allow imports of medicines, food and supplies for humanitarian action, public services and the population in general continue to suffer the impact of the strict scrutiny of the financial sector”.

A situation that deserved her special attention was the blockade and interruption of the state subsidy program maintained by PDVSA through its Citgo subsidiary, which made possible the financing of bone marrow transplantation to Venezuelan patients in Argentina and Italy. Calling for its continuity: “Urgent attention remain to the situation of Venezuelan children in need of transplantation. Until today thirty-eight (38) are still

KEY ELEMENTS AND **COMMENTS** TO THE REPORT **OF MICHELLE** BACHELET

on the waiting list in Venezuela and six (6) are still pending to be attended in Argentina.

According to the information received, the sanctions have hindered the transfer of resources for treatment. “We consider it very positive that the High Commissioner for Human Rights continues to make visible and recognize the serious impact that unilateral coercive measures have on the enjoyment of human rights. However, we continue waiting for her to issue a firm and unequivocal condemnation of the economic, commercial and financial blockade that affects the Venezuelan people.

“

IT IS STILL URGENT
MATTER TO ADDRESS
THE SITUATION
OF VENEZUELAN
CHILDREN IN NEED
OF A TRANSPLANT

”



KEY ELEMENTS OF THE **REPORT** OF **IDRISS** JAZAIRY

The report of the Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights, Mr. Idriss Jazairy, to the 42nd session of the United Nations Human Rights Council in 2019.

PARAGRAPH 16.

[...] International observers generally agree that the unilateral economic sanctions adopted by the United States and other countries, coupled with a multifaceted “economic war”, have played non-negligible role in crippling the economy of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (see A/HRC/42/46).

PARAGRAPH 34.

Economic sanctions are preventing the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela from addressing the dire economic situation and the humanitarian crisis in the country. Global banks voluntarily comply with United States sanctions that prohibit transactions involving certain debts or equities, and certain other transactions and services involving the Government, thus effectively impeding the latter’s access to financial markets. The Government has already pointed to the serious financial consequences of the previous sanctions restricting access by Petr leos de Venezuela to financial markets [...].

PARAGRAPH 35.

Concerns have been expressed about the possibility that the stronger sanctions on Petr leos de Venezuela “will further exacerbate Venezuela’s difficult humanitarian crisis, already marked by shortages of food and medicines and mass migration, by limiting the country’s key source of revenue”. In 2018, the former Ambassador of the United States to Venezuela, William Brownfield, said: “If we are going to sanction [Petr leos de Venezuela], it will have an impact on the entire people, on the ordinary citizen. The counter-argument is that the people suffer so much from the lack of food, security, medicines, public health, that at this moment perhaps the best resolution would be to accelerate the collapse, even if it produces a period of suffering of months or perhaps years”.

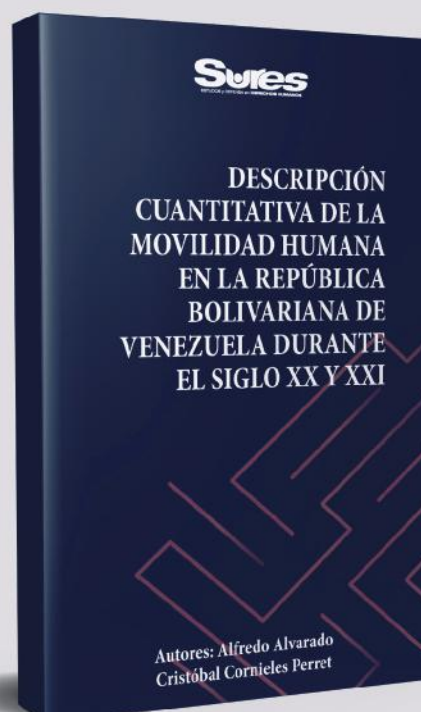
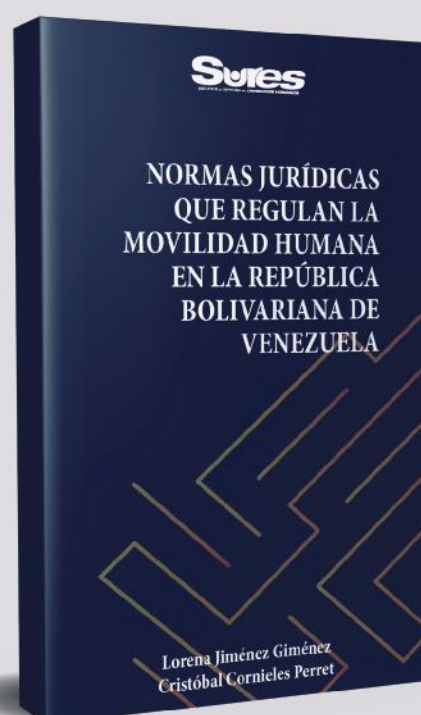
Sures

ESTUDIOS y DEFENSA en **DERECHOS HUMANOS**

PUBLICATIONS

Series: Round Trip

Theme: human mobility and migratory policies



BEYOND AWAY FROM US

Conversations that came

Hoscas

Searching for us

People of the dream and

People of the wind

windy trees and

blows in the heart

and at the end

we were flying

talking about already trees

and people of the dream and winds

with the wrong soul and a wandering tree

Furious, incorporeal,

circling around to life

and unraveling us

unraveling beyond ourselves.

RAMÓN PALOMARES

Venezuelan poet

7 may 1935-4 march 2016

Rome Statute. International Criminal Court

ARTICLE 7

Crimes against humanity

1. For the purpose of this Statute, “crime against humanity” means any of the following acts when committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against any civilian population, with knowledge of the attack:[...]

k) Other inhumane acts of a similar character intentionally causing great suffering, or serious injury to body or to mental or physical health.



THE ECONOMIC BLOCKADE IS A CRIME AGAINST HUMANITY

THE ECONOMIC, FINANCIAL AND COMMERCIAL BLOCKADE AGAINST VENEZUELA IS A CRIME AGAINST HUMANITY BECAUSE:

1. It constitutes an “attack against the civilian population”: the unilateral coercive measures imposed by the US and its allies directly affect the entire Venezuelan population, especially those who are most vulnerable, such as boys, girls, and teenagers, the elderly, elderly women and people with disabilities.
2. It is committed as “part of a widespread or systematic attack”: the US government has declared publicly and repeatedly, through its highest spokespersons, that the economic blockade is a foreign policy aimed at intervening in Venezuela’s internal affairs, particularly to depose President Nicolás Maduro. These planned actions have been carried out over five (5) years, since December 2014, and which to date have reached more than seventy-eight (78) unilateral coercive measures.
3. It is carried out “with knowledge of that attack”: there is no doubt that the US government and its allies are fully aware of the impact of the unilateral coercive measures and its serious effects on the Venezuelan people. It suffice to recall the measures adopted by the US Department of Treasury and its Office of Foreign Assets Control are published through the state media and in their official internet portals.
4. They cause “intentionally great suffering or seriously undermine physical integrity or mental or physical health”: the economic blockade constitutes a serious and massive violation of human rights, which has directly caused great suffering to the Venezuelan population, generating dozens of thousands deaths, innumerable health conditions and increased disabilities. This has been evidenced in the reports of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Independent Expert for the Promotion of a Democratic and Equitable International Order and the Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of the unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights.

THE UN GENERAL SECRETARY CALLS FOR THE LIFTING OF SANCTIONS TO INCREASE THE CAPACITY OF STATES AGAINST COVID-19

The Secretary-General of the United Nations, in a meeting with the G-20, held on March 26, 2020, noted the need for countries to work together to limit the social and economic impact of the crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Explicitly calling for the lifting of sanctions that may harm the countries' response capacity to the pandemic.

At the same time, he highlighted a stimulus program to help developing countries and the need to take care of people, keep households afloat, and provide economic capacity to companies so they can retain jobs.

Lastly, he called for working together from now on "to lay the foundations for a recovery that builds a more sustainable, inclusive and equitable economy," guided by a shared goal: the 2030 agenda for sustainable development and its 17 goals.

“
CEASEFIRE
Antonio Guterres”

“
IMMEDIATE
LIFTING OF THE
UNILATERAL
COERCIVE
MEASURES
International Association of
Democratic Jurists”

THE INTERNATIONAL DEMOCRATIC JURISTS ASSOCIATION (AIJD) DEMANDS THE LIFTING OF THE BLOCKADE

The AIJD, founded in 1946, is a non-governmental organization with Economic and Social Council and UNESCO consultative status. Since its inception, AIJD members have protested against racism, colonialism, and economic and political injustices wherever they occur. In a resolution from March 27, 2020, the AIJD recognizes that the COVID-19 pandemic represents a major threat to the population around the world and that it will especially affect countries that suffer sanctions, blockades, occupation and siege, as is the case of Venezuela, Iran, Cuba and other countries. AIJD expresses its deep concern at the serious effects of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights by broad sectors of the world population, and urges the government of the United States and its allies to its immediate end.

WE DEMAND THE **ENGLISH BANK** TO
RETURN THE **14 TONS OF GOLD** OF ALL
VENEZUELANAS



MORE THAN **1,200**
MILLION POUNDS