

PCDC Sends Public Letter to the Left and Progressive Movements in the U.S.

“Appealing to internationalism, which has historically constituted a core axis of the struggles of the left and progressive movements around the world”, through a public letter, the Citizen Platform in Defense of the Constitution - PCDC- (Venezuela) called on the Left and progressive movements living in the U.S. to launch a solidarity movement with the Venezuelan people demanding that the incoming government, Joe Biden, put an end to the economic sanctions and in general to the policy of interference that in the last few years has been imposed on the Venezuelan people, to launch a movement of solidarity with the Venezuelan people demanding the incoming government of Joe Biden to put an end to the economic sanctions and in general to the interference policy that in the last two decades has been carried out by the US government and particularly by the administration of Donald Trump.

The signatories of the letter, Santiago Arconada, Juan García, Edgardo Lander, Roberto López, Gustavo Márquez Marín, Oly Millán, Esteban Mosonyi, Héctor Navarro and Ana Elisa Osorio, refer to the economic sanctions, not as the only cause of the economic and humanitarian crisis the country is experiencing, but as a factor that has deepened it to the extent that it has contributed to the paralysis of the only source of income which is the oil industry and prevented access to international credit and to the resources of the Republic abroad. This reduction in income has significantly affected the capacity to import food, medicines, equipment and to face the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic. These sanctions are in violation of international law and human rights and are increasing the suffering of our people.

They demand the release of billions of dollars and assets belonging to the Venezuelan State, which have been confiscated or blocked by the U.S. government, as well as access to IMF funds and other multilateral organizations, as well as the respect of the U.S. government for the right of Venezuelans to decide their own destiny, so it must abandon the interferenceist policy of “regime change” and the strategy of “dual government” through the recognition of Juan Guaidó as alleged “interim president”, who lacks institutional legitimacy and has a high rejection of the Venezuelan population because it makes him co-responsible for the serious situation in the country.

According to the PCDC, the solidarity of the U.S. left is fundamental for the achievement of these objectives.

The following is the content of the Letter:

Memorandum

To: Friends of the U.S. Left and progressive movements

From: Citizen Platform in Defense of the Constitution (Venezuela)[i]

Subject: U.S. Government Policy Towards Venezuela

The policy of the US government towards the Bolivarian process that began with the election of Hugo Chávez Frías as President in 1998, from its most democratic and participatory initial moments, to the authoritarian and repressive drifts of the last few years, has been one of direct and indirect intervention, supporting politically and financially the extreme right wing opposition and threatening the country economically and militarily. This has been basically a bi-partisan policy during the last two decades, although with higher levels of aggressiveness during the Republican administrations. George W. Bush’s administration openly supported the failed coup d’état of 2002 and the oil strike of

2003. With the arrival of Donald Trump to the presidency of the United States, the offensive against Venezuela intensified notably, expressed in the attempt to impose a change of regime, by non-democratic means, the threats of military intervention, the progressive imposition of severe economic sanctions and an increased support to the sectors of the Venezuelan extreme right.

Today, the Democratic Party controls both the presidency of the country and both houses of Congress. With the political divisions within the Democratic Party leading to the strengthening of its progressive wing, the extraordinary rise of popular progressive movements such as the Movement for Black Lives, the powerful movements for migrant rights, environmental justice, women's rights and indigenous peoples, among others, there is reason for cautious optimism about the possibilities for change in U.S. government policies. This includes the possibility of changes in the bipartisan policies that have caused and continue to cause so much harm to the Venezuelan population.

Appealing to internationalism, which has historically been at the core of the struggles of the left and progressive movements around the world, we are writing to you to raise the most critical issues for which we need your solidarity:

1. Stop the economic sanctions imposed progressively since 2017, sanctions that although they are not the only cause of the severe economic and humanitarian crisis that the country is experiencing, they have contributed and continue to contribute to make it deeper and deeper.

These sanctions have contributed to the practical paralysis of the oil industry, which was the country's main source of income and on which the Venezuelan economy depends^[ii], blocking access to international credits and the possibilities of renegotiating the foreign debt, placed severe obstacles to the importation of food, basic medicines, as well as equipment

and spare parts necessary for the deteriorated productive apparatus and the maintenance of essential services of the country.

As a consequence of these sanctions and the inefficiency and corruption of the Venezuelan government, the country's economy has been in a steady deterioration for seven years now. Today, the gross domestic product is approximately 30% of what it was seven years ago. There is a severe food crisis in Venezuela today[[iii](#)], child malnutrition has acquired dramatic dimensions. Health and educational services, as well as most of the public services are in a state of collapse. The country's indigenous peoples and the environment have suffered severely as a consequence of both the deepening of extractivist policies, particularly the Orinoco Mining Arc, and U.S. economic sanctions. Faced with all these conditions, and in the absence of prospects for change, more than five million people have emigrated from the country in recent years.

These economic sanctions constitute an open violation of international law, human rights and the Geneva Conventions. They are not an alternative to war, but a form of war. The objective of blockades and economic sanctions is to produce the greatest possible harm and suffering to the population of the country subjected to such policies. In this, sanctions have been extremely successful. Recognizing these impacts, opinion polls consistently record that a large majority of the population rejects sanctions. While a significant proportion of the population agrees with personal sanctions against government officials, only 5% express support for sanctions against the country's economy[[iv](#)].

As international experience has shown repeatedly, sanctions are very ineffective instruments in terms of the supposed objectives of political change. However, they allow, among other things, governments subject to sanctions to evade their responsibility for the failures of their management, by

attributing to them all the problems faced by the population.

2. Withdraw recognition of Juan Guaidó as legitimate president of Venezuela since he lacks both institutional legitimacy and popular support. The term of office of the National Assembly of which he was president ended in January 2020. He currently does not hold any popularly elected office. He is a former congressman. According to the latest Datanálisis survey 67.4% of the population has a negative opinion of Guaidó's contribution to the country's welfare. (Idem.)
3. Release the billions of dollars and assets belonging to the Venezuelan State that have been confiscated or blocked by the U.S. government. Mechanisms can be created so that, at least initially, these funds can be managed jointly with the United Nations to respond to the humanitarian crisis. In the context of this severe crisis, which has been deepened by COVID-19, the withholding of these resources constitutes a blatantly criminal act.
4. To remove the blockade on access to funds in international organizations such as the IMF and other multilateral organizations, funds to which the Venezuelan State has a legitimate right.
5. Abandon the policy of regime change. It is not up to the U.S. government to decide what government there should be in Venezuela. This is a sovereign decision that belongs only to Venezuelan men and women. Beyond the speeches, the history of U.S. policy toward Latin America can be characterized by anything but democratic orientations. Time and again democratic governments with popular orientations such as that of Jacobo Arbenz in Guatemala or Salvador Allende in Chile were overthrown with the direct intervention of the United States, while authoritarian and genocidal governments such as that of Pinochet in Chile and the Argentine military junta

(taking into account only recent history) were fully supported by the United States. The policy of regime change is not guided by democratic motivations, but by the objective of crushing, both in the Venezuelan population, as well as in the populations of Latin America, any idea that changes that contradict the interests of hegemonic groups of the United States are possible. The idea of regime change seeks not only the replacement of a president, but the defeat of any imaginary of possible transformation.

6. Stop defining U.S. government policies towards Latin America in terms of domestic political expediency, as has happened with the search for votes from the Cuban and Venezuelan immigrant community in Florida.
7. Recognize that the Venezuelan population has the right to sovereignly decide its own destiny. The systematic intervention of the U.S. government, pressuring the radical opposition to reject any negotiated solution, to not participate in elections in order to precipitate the fall of the government, has systematically blocked any possibility of negotiation. Today the majority of the Venezuelan population wants a change of government. 92% of the population has a negative perception of the situation of the country, and 82% have a negative evaluation of Nicolás Maduro as president (Idem). But not just any change is sought. Any violent solution is rejected, be it through a coup d'état, a civil war or an external military intervention. The experiences of Iraq, Syria, Libya, and Afghanistan are painfully present. All opinion polls indicate that the aspiration of the majority of the Venezuelan population is to reach a political agreement, a democratic, constitutional and electoral solution to the current Venezuelan crisis. Every time this possibility appears on the horizon, as was the case in the negotiations sponsored by the Norwegian government, it has been blocked by the U.S. government.

We believe that the solidarity of the U.S. left is fundamental to the achievement of these objectives.

For the Citizens' Platform in Defense of the Constitution

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i] The Citizens' Platform in Defense of the Constitution is a leftist political collective that for the last five years has been working for the recovery of the 1999 Constitution, which has been systematically ignored and violated by both the government of Nicolás Maduro and sectors of the right-wing opposition, with the support of the United States government.

[ii]

<https://www.wola.org/2020/10/new-report-us-sanctions-aggravated-venezuelas-economic-crisis/>

<https://www.wola.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Oliveros-Resumen-FINAL.pdf>

<https://cepr.net/images/stories/reports/venezuela-sanctions-2019-04.pdf>

[iii] <http://www.fao.org/3/cb1907en/CB1907EN.pdf>

[iv] Datanálisis. Encuesta Nacional Ómnibus, Caracas, October 2020.

https://p7adpx5pkjd6.cdn.shift8web.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Informe-0e%CC%8Cmnibus-0ctubre-2020-PROFIT_compressed.pdf