



Trump Imposes Full Embargo on Venezuela in Effort to Remove Maduro

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As he signed an executive order on Monday night placing an embargo on Venezuela, President Trump explained why he did so in a letter to Congress:



I have determined that it is necessary to block the property of the Government of Venezuela in light of the continued usurpation of power by the illegitimate Nicolas Maduro regime ... [which includes] human rights abuses, arbitrary arrest and detention of Venezuelan citizens, curtailment of free press, and ongoing attempts to undermine Interim President Juan Guaido of Venezuela and the democratically-elected Venezuelan National Assembly.

The extraordinary escalation exceeds previous sanctions against some 100 individuals associated with Maduro's inner circle. The executive order now blocks anyone — individually or corporately — from doing any business of any kind with anyone associated with the Maduro regime. The escalation applied immediately and is the first time such an embargo has been applied in the Western Hemisphere since President Reagan applied them to the Noriega regime in Panama 30 years ago.

The order threatens supporters of Maduro including Cuba, China, Russia, Iran, and Turkey with asset seizures if they continue to support the tottering totalitarian regime.

In addition, John Bolton, Trump's national security advisor, said failure to comply with the president's EO "could affect repayment of [their] debt after Maduro falls."

Guaidó further defined the far-reaching implications of Trump EO: "Any individual, company, institution or nation that tries to do business with the regime will be seen by the international justice system as collaborating with and sustaining a dictatorship. They will be subject to sanctions and considered an accomplice to [Maduro's] crimes."

There is a carrot hidden among the sticks that Trump has been using to remove Maduro. Last week, Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross rolled out a post-Maduro economic recovery plan for Venezuela that included fresh sources of credit to the new administration, promises of financial help to rehabilitate the country's infrastructure, as well as private sources of investment capital to put the country's oil



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on August 6, 2019

producer, PdVSA, back on line. Energy production has dropped nearly 90 percent from highs a few years ago, thanks not only to previous sanctions but to mismanagement of the company under Maduro. Such a rehabilitation would also entice some, perhaps many, of those who have left the country out of desperation to return to their previous positions essential to the workings of a capitalist economy. For some of those estimated four million who left in desperation, such assistance might be too late. Reports are that many are arriving in Colombia looking like escapees from a concentration camp, suffering from grievous late-stage malnutrition that could shortly take their lives.

Such a rehabilitation would be small comfort to those citizens who have lost their lives under orders from Maduro. He has directly ordered the torture and murder of Navy Captain Rafael Acosta, as reported by *The New American* last month, but Acosta was only one of an estimated 9,000 citizens who have been executed by Maduro's para-military *colectivos* and his Special Action Forces. And this doesn't count those in prison who have been cannibalized by other prisoners due to the acute shortage of food.

The irony is that Maduro has used starvation to subdue his people, while Trump is using the same tactic in an escalating attempt to remove Maduro from power.

Photo: AP Images

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