

## Commemorating the Independence of Venezuela

Canada on the Wrong Side of History. Speech delivered in Vancouver, Canada at a street rally on April 19, 2018 commemorating the 208th anniversary of the independence of Venezuela (1810)

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Region: [Canada](#), [Latin America & Caribbean](#)

Theme: [Law and Justice](#), [Media Disinformation](#)

*The main reason that brings us here today is to speak about Independence and its related notion of sovereignty. But why are we on the street to speak about such important values?*

The reason is that we are speaking of independence and sovereignty of a special country: Venezuela. It happens that Venezuela is not a friend of the government of this country [Canada]. And we would not be heard otherwise because the Canadian government and the corporate media will never tell our side of the story.

Today is a special day for Venezuela and all Venezuelans, and is celebrated because it marks the beginning of a successful struggle for independence and therefore sovereignty.

A day like today, **April 19 of 208 years ago, that is 1810, Venezuela established a temporary government by the will of the people who wanted to be independent of the colonial power of Spain. The real independence was declared on July 5, of the following year 1811.**

What is remarkable is that the Declaration of Independence of Venezuela is the first case of a Spanish Colony of the Americas declaring its absolute independence from Spain.

By the way today is also an important anniversary for our dear Cuba. On April 19, 1961 the Cuban Revolution defeated in about 70 hours an invasion by mercenaries organized and supported by the CIA at Playa Giron (Bay of Pigs). We congratulate the people of Cuba today both for that victory and for the election of the new president **Miguel Diaz-Canel**. The Revolution continues. Congratulations Cuba!

I will not bore you with a talk on the history of Venezuela. All I want to do is give you the flavour of the struggle of a nation being born, struggle that continues today 200 years later.

April 19, 1810 marks the beginning of the First Republic of Venezuela. Now we have in Venezuela the Fifth Republic since Hugo Chavez became president in 1999. That gives you a temporal perspective.

That First Republic only lasted 2 years and 3 months. It was short lived, but it accomplished a lot. It set an example for other independent movements in the region and for that Venezuela received the solidarity of other colonies. But most importantly, the first republic abolished the slave trade that was established by Spain in all colonies.

Getting to the point I want to make, let me quote a single paragraph from the Venezuelan Act of Independence of 1811. This is a paragraph meant to explain the reasons why Venezuelans wanted independence back then. Remember this is 200 years ago.

“Despite our protests, our moderation, our generosity, and the inviolability of our principles, against the will of our brothers in Europe, we are declared in a **state of rebellion**, we are **blocked, harassed**, agents are sent to us **to instigate mutiny** against each other, and to **discredit us** among the nations of the world asking for their **aid to oppress us.**”<sup>[1]</sup>

This statement explicitly refers to the foreign intervention in force in 1811.

Today we could use that same statement in regards to US, Canada and EU interference in Venezuela. Let’s take some of the wording from that paragraph.

**State of rebellion.** **Chrystia Freeland** [Canadian minister of foreign affairs] says that the Venezuelan government is breaking the constitutional order. That is false. The government of Canada is actually supporting the opposition to break the constitutional order with violence, calling the military to mutiny and more recently boycotting the upcoming election of May 20.

**Blocked and harassed.** The US has imposed a financial blockade against Venezuela. Also, the US, Canada and EU have imposed sanctions. Sanctions harass people not the government. US threats of military intervention are also a form of harassment.

**Instigate mutiny.** Canada has called to the Venezuelan military to rebellion and mutiny. The Venezuelan opposition has joined in that call. Dissident **Luisa Ortega Diaz** said just that in a tweet last April 17. [2]

**Discredit us.** The corporate controlled mainstream media has just been doing that almost daily.

**Aid to oppress us.** Chrystia Freeland has been the main instigator against Venezuela within the OAS with her “Lima Group” partners. The rightwing Venezuelans have been touring the world asking for “aid” (read, intervention) against Venezuela.

All these same elements are in place today as they were 200 years ago. Isn’t that remarkable?

At that time, 200 years ago, **Simon Bolivar**, referring to the duration of the Spanish oppression, exclaimed: “Isn’t 300 years enough?”

Today we shout with the Bolivarian Venezuela, “Isn’t 500 years enough?”

Venezuela and its Bolivarian Revolution are still under attack.

Latin America is under attack.

This attack by the US Empire and Canada aims at regime change and at ending the revolutionary process, embraced by the majority of Venezuelans, in order to re-colonize Venezuela. That is blatant intervention.

We cannot lose Venezuela. That would mean a return to the hegemonic and colonial domination this time by the US and Canada.

The majority of Canadians does not agree with the Canadian government policy against Venezuela.

Venezuela will have democratic and free elections next May 20 *"trueno o relampaguee"*, as **Nicolas Maduro** said, rain or shine.

Venezuela has already had 24 elections. What else do they want?

We must be alert and act urgently at any sign of intervention in Venezuela.

Finally, my concluding statements are addressed to Prime Minister of Canada **Justin Trudeau** and **Chrystia Freeland**.

- When we say Hands Off Venezuela, we mean end all Sanctions on Venezuela.
- When we say Hands Off Venezuela, we mean stop Interfering in Venezuela.
- When we say Hands Off Venezuela, we mean abide by Article 19 of the OAS Charter that clearly states no interference in any other country for any reason whatsoever.
- When we say Hands Off Venezuela, we mean respect the democratic process and independence in Venezuela. And,
- When we say Hands Off Venezuela, we mean stop all support to the rightwing opposition. It is none of your business.

Mr. Trudeau and Ms. Freeland, as we spoke of the history of Venezuela, we say to you, Canada is on the wrong side of history today as Spain was 200 years ago.

## **HANDS OFF VENEZUELA!**

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### **Notes**

[1] <http://blog.chavez.org.ve/wp-content/uploads/2010/07/ACTA-DE-LA-INDEPENDENCIA.pdf> [in Spanish]

[2] <https://twitter.com/ortegadiaz/status/986306468793208832>

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