

Emmanuel Macron, Pedro Sanchez, Angela Merkel and Theresa May Have No Right to Issue an Ultimatum to Venezuela

By [Eric Toussaint](#) and [Joaldo Dominguez](#)

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On Saturday 26 January 2019, Emmanuel Macron, Pedro Sánchez, and Angela Merkel, followed by Theresa May, gave the government of Venezuela eight days within which to call elections. If the government of Venezuela does not comply with this order by then, Macron, Sánchez, Merkel and May have announced that they will recognize Juan Guaidó, who declared himself president of Venezuela on 23 January 2019.

The day following this ultimatum, French President Macron began a three-day official visit to Egypt in order to reaffirm his support for Marshal Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, who is at the head of a dictatorial regime similar to, if not worse than, the Hosni Mubarak regime, which was overthrown by Egypt's people in February 2011. Marshal el-Sisi, a favoured client of the French President, took power in 2013 in a coup, hijacking and strangling the hopes of the people who had risen up en masse to overthrow Mohamed Morsi.

Sisi is responsible for a massive and brutal repression. Tens of thousands of political prisoners languish in Egypt's prisons; hundreds of members of the opposition have been sentenced to the death penalty by military courts; human-rights defence organisations denounce the massive persecution and the hundreds of extrajudicial executions of labour-union militants and other activists, as well as of journalists independent of the regime. The Sisi regime is literally conducting a reign of terror in Egypt and Macron visits him, supports him and sells him weapons. The British, Spanish and German governments also sell weapons to Sisi and support him.

As for the Spanish regime, remember that José María Aznar, head of Spain's government from 1996 to 2004, supported the coup against Hugo Chávez in April 2002. Pedro Sánchez is humiliating the Spanish people by following Aznar's example in threatening the elected president, Nicolás Maduro, and recognising the self-styled "president" Guaidó, who is directly supported by Washington and the most reactionary governments in Latin American.

None of these four European governments are denouncing the systematic murder of social leaders and violations of the peace agreement in Colombia.

The Left has many reasons to express very strong criticisms of the government of Nicolás Maduro. Among the criticisms that need to be expressed are his continuing to repay external debt instead of declaring a moratorium and using the financial resources that would thus be freed up to do more to relieve the humanitarian crisis the Venezuelan people are now suffering. In 2016 the [CADTM had called on the Venezuelan government](#) to conduct an audit of the debt with citizen participation. Other critiques of the Maduro government's

policies coming from the Left are also justified: its failure to combat the capital flight organised with the complicity of the highest authorities of the administration and the government; the continuance of the extractivist exportation model, encouraging exhaustion of the country's natural resources; the repression against trade unionists and other activists; the development of policies of clientelism and a Constituent Assembly whose actual operation does not live up to the hopes its election had raised.

But as militants of the Left who uphold the right of peoples to self-determination, under no circumstances can we accept an ultimatum of the kind issued by Macron, Sánchez, Merkel and May, and we call on everyone to oppose the policy of Washington and the Lima Group which it controls with all possible vehemence. The coup attempt by the "self-styled president" Guaidó must be denounced.

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Eric Toussaint is a historian and political scientist who completed his Ph.D. at the universities of Paris VIII and Liège, is the spokesperson of the CADTM International, and sits on the Scientific Council of ATTAC France.

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