

## Lawless US Sanctions on Venezuela

By [Stephen Lendman](#)

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Region: [Latin America & Caribbean](#)

Theme: [Law and Justice](#)

*On December 8, US Senate members passed "S. 2142: Venezuela Defense of Human Rights and Civil Society Act of 2014."*

"A bill to impose targeted sanctions on persons responsible for violations of human rights of antigovernment protesters in Venezuela, to strengthen civil society in Venezuela, and for other purposes."

Passed by voice vote. Unanimously. Disgracefully. House members expected to follow suit. More on the bill below.

The world's leading human rights abuser targeted one of its staunchest defenders. Constitutionally guaranteeing fundamental rights. Enforcing them. Chapter I, Article 19 stating:

"The State shall guarantee to every individual, in accordance with the progressive principle and without discrimination of any kind, not renounceable, indivisible and interdependent enjoyment and exercise of human rights. Respect for and the guaranteeing of these rights is obligatory for the organs of Public Power, in accordance with the Constitution, the human rights treaties signed and ratified by the Republic and any laws developing the same."

Article 21 stating in part:

"All persons are equal before the law, and, consequently:

1. No discrimination based on race, sex, creed or social standing shall be permitted, nor, in general, any discrimination with the intent or effect of nullifying or encroaching upon the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on equal terms, of the rights and liberties of every individual."

Article 23 states:

"The treaties, pacts and conventions relating human rights which have been executed and ratified by Venezuela have a constitutional rank, and prevail over internal legislation, insofar as they contain provisions concerning the enjoyment and exercise of such rights that are more favorable than those established by this Constitution and the laws of the Republic, and shall be immediately and directly applied by the courts and other organs of the Public Power."

In Venezuela, all persons are considered "equal before the law." Democratic rights are

inviolable. Polar opposite US policy.

America's founders passed Bill of Rights protections for themselves only. Not others. It shows. Democracy is pure fantasy. None whatever exists.

Monied interests control things. Fundamental international law affirmed freedoms are ignored. Routinely breached.

America's human and civil rights record is deplorable. Far and away the world's worst. Committing every imaginable crime and then some. At home and abroad.

Letting cops kill with impunity. Politically persecuting thousands. Running the world largest homeland gulag. A blight on the national conscience.

Supplemented by dozens of global torture prisons. Approved by Obama. Still operating. Out of sight and mind. Guantanamo the tip of the iceberg.

Imprisoning whistleblowers exposing government wrongdoing. Targeting a free press. Other fundamental freedoms.

America's social contract. Destroying what matters most. Ruthlessly. Maliciously. Systematically.

With congressional and judicial support. Heading toward full-blown tyranny. One major false flag attack away.

Senate Foreign Relations Committee chairman Robert Menendez (D. NJ) applauded what demands condemnation. Stating one Big Lie after another, saying:

"Today, the United States Senate sent a clear and unequivocal message to the Government of Venezuela. For too long, Venezuelans have faced state-sponsored violence at the hands of government security forces and watched their country's judiciary become a tool of political repression. Venezuelan leaders like Leopoldo Lopez and Maria Corina Machado have become the target of vicious government-led campaigns that seek to silence them for speaking out in defense of democracy and the rule of law. We in the United States have an obligation to shine a bright spotlight on Venezuela's abuses and must object to the severe human rights violations committed by the Maduro government and his paramilitary thugs. Targeted sanctions to include asset-freezes and additional visa bans against the individuals involved in this violence are a necessary and long overdue response. We must always stand against human rights violations, political persecution and recrimination anywhere in the world, and certainly in our hemisphere. The Venezuelan people deserve a brighter future, not the dismal nightmare they're enduring at the hands of President Maduro. Our fight to deliver hope and renewed opportunity to Venezuela has only begun."

White House Deputy National Security Adviser/Deputy Secretary of State nominee Tony Blinken expressed support.

Saying the administration "look(s) forward to working with (Congress on imposing) additional sanctions" on Venezuela.

In August, US travel bans targeted 24 Venezuelan officials. Wrongfully accused of human rights violations.

During anti-government protests. Leaving dozens dead. Many more injured and arrested.

Since Chavez's 1998 election, relations between both countries remained tense. Washington bears full responsibility.

Wanting hardline rule replacing Venezuelan democracy. Control of its vast oil reserves. Targeting Maduro's government extrajudicially.

Fact: Sanctions imposed are illegal.

Fact: No nation may impose them unilaterally.

Fact: Only Security Council members may do so.

Fact: No nation in human history did more harm to more people over a longer duration than America.

Fact: Millions of corpses attest to its brutality.

Fact: State terror is official policy. So is torture. Under Obama like Bush.

Fact: The Senate's torture report changes nothing.

Fact: Guilty parties remain unaccountable.

Fact: America supports some of the world's most ruthless despots.

Fact: Saudi Arabian beheadings and other human rights abuses go unmentioned.

Fact: Daily Bahraini human rights abuses are ignored.

Fact: Fascists running Ukraine, Honduras, Mexico and other nations are supported.

Fact: Israeli slow-motion genocide against millions of Palestinians. Including naked aggression at its discretion.

Fact: Aided and abetted by annual billions of dollars in US aid. The latest weapons and technology.

Venezuelan fascists initiated violent street protests. From February to June. In upscale areas. Middle and upper class.

Around 18 of 334 municipalities. Most Venezuelans opposed them. At the time, government officials denounced violence. Including by Bolivarian supporters. Maduro addressing a peace rally last February saying:

"I want to say clearly: someone who puts on a red t-shirt with Chavez's face and takes out a pistol to attack isn't a Chavista or a revolutionary. I don't accept violent groups within the camp of Chavismo and the Bolivarian revolution. If you want to have arms to fight...get out of Chavismo."

Washington manipulated anti-government activities. Continues supporting extremists. Wants Bolivarian rights eliminated.

President Maduro ousted. Maybe murdered. America killed Chavez. Chavismo lives. Bolivarianism is too precious to lose.

According to the Council on Hemispheric Affairs (COHA):

“...Washington has been bent on reversing the gains of the Bolivarian advance towards regional independence for more than a decade.”

Throughout Chavez’s tenure. Continuing under Maduro. Wanting fascist control replacing Venezuelan democracy.

Bolivarian rights ended. Neoliberal harshness replacing them. US human rights concerns ring hollow.

Maduro blasted Senate legislation. Saying “(w)ho (gives) the US Senate (the right to) sanction the nation of Bolivar. We don’t accept insolent imperialist sanctions.”

Earlier he denounced Washington’s “imperialistic vision.” Driven by extremists believing “they can rule and conquer us by force through blackmail and their economic power.”

[Venezuela Analysis](#) explained State Department documents. FOIA obtained.

Showing “sustained support from the US Embassy for Venezuelan student leaders such as Gaby Arellano and Freddy Guevara, as well as Leopoldo Lopez, all of whom played leading roles in the violence.”

WikiLeaks obtained cables revealed US financed opposition groups. Fascist ones. Responsible for months of street violence. Wrongfully blamed on Maduro.

A [Congressional Research Service](#) S. 2142 summary includes duplicitous wording. Polar opposite US policy.

Conditions in Venezuela. A model democracy by any standard. Unlike America’s sham system. Stating:

“Section 3 -

Expresses the sense of Congress that:

(T)he United States aspires to a mutually beneficial relationship with Venezuela based on respect for human rights and the rule of law, and a productive relationship on issues of public security, including counter narcotics and counterterrorism...

(T)he United States supports the efforts of the people of Venezuela to realize their economic potential and advance representative democracy...

(T)he government of Venezuela’s mismanagement of its economy has produced conditions of economic hardship...

(T)he government's failure to guarantee public security has led Venezuela to become one of the most violent countries in the world...

(T)he government continues to remove checks and balances on the executive, politicize the judiciary, undermine the independence of the legislature, persecute its political opponents, curtail freedom of the press, and limit the free expression of its citizens; the people of Venezuela have turned out in demonstrations throughout the country to protest the government's inability to ensure their political and economic well-being...

(T)he use of violence by the National Guard and security personnel is intolerable and the use of unprovoked violence by protesters is also a matter of serious concern.

#### Section 4 -

States that it is US policy to:

(S)upport the people of Venezuela in their aspiration to live under peace and representative democracy, work with the Organization of American States (OAS) and the European Union (EU) to ensure the peaceful resolution of the situation in Venezuela and the cessation of violence against antigovernment protestors, hold accountable government and security officials in Venezuela responsible for or complicit in the use of force against antigovernment protests, and support the development of democratic political processes and independent civil society in Venezuela.

#### Section 5 -

Directs the President to impose US asset blocking and US exclusion sanctions against any person, including a current or former government of Venezuela official or a person acting on behalf of such government, who has:

Perpetrated or is responsible for otherwise directing significant acts of violence or serious human rights abuses against persons associated with the antigovernment protests in Venezuela that began on February 4, 2014...

(D)irected or ordered the arrest or prosecution of a person primarily because of the person's legitimate exercise of freedom of expression or assembly; or knowingly materially assisted or provided significant financial, material, or technological support for the commission of such acts.

Sets forth related penalty requirements. States that:

(1) asset blocking sanctions shall not authorize the imposition of sanctions on imported goods, and

(2) US exclusion sanctions shall not apply if necessary to permit the United States to comply with the Agreement regarding the Headquarters of the United Nations or other applicable international obligations.

Authorizes the President to waive sanctions if in US national security interests, and with congressional notification.

Terminates the requirement to impose sanctions on December 31, 2016.

#### Section 6 -

Directs the Chairman of the Broadcasting Board of Governors to report to Congress:

(A)n evaluation of the governmental, political, and technological obstacles faced by the people of Venezuela in their efforts to obtain accurate news and information; an assessment of efforts relating to broadcasting, information distribution, and circumvention technology distribution in Venezuela by the US government and otherwise...

(A) strategy for expanding such efforts in Venezuela.”

According to COHA:

“...Venezuelan Committee of Victims of the Guarimba (violent anti-government demonstrations)...tell a story that does not appear to have entered into the political calculations behind the Senate’s sanctions bill.”

Last week, detailed information was sent to US and Spanish embassies. Washington systematically ignores Venezuelan Fourth Republic crimes (1958 – 1998).

Honduran state-sponsored violence. Disappeared Mexican students. Abducted by police. Their bodies found incinerated. In a garbage dump.

Colombian human rights abuses. Targeting human rights defenders. Trade unionists. Independent journalists. Indigenous leaders.

Longstanding US civil and human rights abuses. Including killer cops. State-sponsored repression. Permanent wars on humanity.

A nation unfit to live in. Supporting wealth, power and privilege exclusively. At the expense of beneficial social change.

Venezuela is polar opposite. A model democracy. Bolivarian fairness.

Washington wants what Venezuelans value most eliminated. Not as long as Chavismo lives.

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