

Ottawa's Attitude Towards Venezuela: "The Venezuelan Ambassador is No longer Welcome in Canada"

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On Christmas day of 2017 the Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Chrystia Freeland, released a statement "announcing that the Venezuelan Ambassador to Canada ... is no longer welcome in Canada." She continued, "I am also declaring the Venezuelan chargé d'affaires persona non grata." The mean-spirited attitude of the Canadian government against Venezuela has taken no Christmas break.

Freeland's statement is totally a sore tit-for-tat reaction to Venezuela's declaration of Canada's chargé d'affaires in Caracas as persona non grata on December 23 "for his permanent and insistent, gross and vulgar interference in the internal affairs of Venezuela ... despite a call to respect the Vienna Convention on diplomatic relations," in the words of Delcy Rodriguez, the president of the Venezuelan National Constituent Assembly.

However, Venezuela's action seems to have some foundation, at least based on one account. Canada has programs managed directly by its embassy in Caracas that can only be considered as intervention in domestic affairs of Venezuela.

In 2014, under the Canadian Funding to Local Initiatives program, targeting Venezuela and managed by the Canadian Embassy in Caracas, Canada distributed \$125,212 to unspecified recipients. The goal of that expenditure of Canadian taxpayers money is stated in an official report:

"The Canadian Funding to Local Initiatives (CFLI) provided flexible, modest support for projects with high visibility and impact on human rights and the rule of law, including: enabling Venezuelan citizens to anonymously register and denounce corruption abuses by government officials and police through a mobile phone application in 2014-15." [1]

Ms. Freeland should know that "funding of local initiatives" with the intention of undermining the elected government is blatant intervention. She should also accept that combating corruption in Venezuela is the task of the Venezuelan government, its justice system, and citizens according to their sovereign constitutional mandate.

Imagine for a moment the Venezuelan embassy in Ottawa asking Canadians to report to the Venezuelan embassy cases of corruption in Canada by government officials or by corporations avoiding taxes by stacking their profits in tax haven countries. Would Chrystia Freeland accept that as part of the Venezuelan diplomatic mission work? That would be

immediately condemned as an undiplomatic activity!

Chrystia Freeland has been quite outspoken against Venezuela and president Nicolas Maduro. She is entitled to speak her mind. However her hostility goes beyond her words. The Canadian government whose foreign relations she represents has been on a mission to interfere in and destabilize Venezuela for several years now. Canada has condoned extreme violence by the Venezuelan opposition, has issued several sets of sanctions against Venezuelan officials, has spearheaded OAS "revolts" against Venezuela, has created and hosted the Lima Group of 12 countries to instigate Venezuela, and has organized meetings in Canada with fugitives from the Venezuelan law.

Despite all evidence that the Venezuelan government is acting within its constitutional and sovereign right, and despite the three major democratic and transparent elections in 2017 with a sizeable majority for the governing party, the Canadian government continues the escalation of provocative aggression for the sake of regime change in Venezuela.

The Venezuelan government is not ready to be pushed around.

Note

[1] http://www.international.gc.ca/gac-amc/publications/plans/dpr-rmr/dpr-rmr_1415.aspx?lang=eng

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