

Like Old-Time Piracy: The US Seizes Venezuelan Oil and Sells It

Venezuela faces gasoline supply problems due to arbitrary sanctions whereby the U.S. seeks to destabilize the Bolivarian revolution.

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The U.S. Justice Department announced on Thursday that President Donald Trump's administration sold over 1.1 million barrels of refined petroleum that were onboard the Luna vessel, which was seized by the United States from Iran on August 14, 2020.

"The ships' owner transferred the petroleum to the government, and we can now announce that the United States has sold and delivered that petroleum," the Assistant Attorney General for the National Security Division John Demers said.

The Trump administration justified its action by arguing that the money from the oil sale to Caracas would supposedly benefit the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC)-Quds Force, which is considered a terrorist organization.

In recent years, Venezuela has faced gasoline supply problems because of the arbitrary and unilateral sanctions that the U.S. government established as a mechanism to destabilize the Bolivarian revolution and President Nicolas Maduro.

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In this context, the United States even threatened to send troops to the Caribbean to prevent the supply of fuel to the South American country.

On May 23, the first of the ships loaded with fuel from Iran arrived in Venezuela's territorial waters. Almost three months later, the Department of Justice reported that Washington had achieved "the largest seizure of fuel shipments from Iran," for a total amount of 1,116 million barrels of oil, which Venezuela had already paid for.

"The U.S. insisted on chasing the gasoline we were importing. It even stole three million barrels from us," President Maduro said on October 28.

The day before, the main Venezuelan refinery was attacked by a missile, an act labeled as terrorist by the Oil Minister Tareck El Aissami.

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Featured image: Assistant Attorney General for the National Security Division John Demers, Washington DC, U.S., 2020. | Photo: EFE

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