

The Cruelty of Venezuela Sanctions

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The Trump administration has [imposed sanctions](#) on Venezuela's state-run oil company and moved to block any U.S. revenues from going to Venezuela's government. Like the administration's Iran sanctions, this will do immediate and significant harm to the civilian population:

Such a blow to the government's revenue stream could deteriorate an already dramatic scarcity of food and medicines. Crippling hyperinflation has broken the socialist nation, fueling widespread hunger, spreading disease and prompting a historic wave of Venezuelan migrants. In Venezuela, the government is responsible for a large portion of imports, meaning shortages of food and medicine could deepen as the government loses access to cash from oil sales to the United States [bold mine-DL].

"There's no way the population won't be affected in the short term," said Luis Vicente Leon, head of Datanalisis, a Caracas-based polling and political analysis firm. "If this strategy isn't successful quickly, the effect on the people will be devastating." [bold mine-DL]

Most of the hardship that Venezuelans have endured for the past several years has been caused by the failures and mismanagement of their own government, but this move by the U.S. to strangle the Venezuelan government and the economy will inflict punishment on the entire population and exacerbate the already severe humanitarian crisis in the country. If Maduro has brought the people of Venezuela to the edge of a precipice, the Trump administration's sanctions will push them over the edge. There is no justification for punishing the civilian population for the wrongdoing of their leaders, especially when the administration's official line is that they are supposedly trying to help the people. Much like the administration's empty rhetoric of support for the Iranian people, their professions of concern for the people of Venezuela appear to be similarly vacuous.

Sanctions are a blunt and frequently indiscriminate weapon that the U.S. uses with little thought for the effect that they have on the people in the targeted country. Until now, the administration had refrained from imposing sweeping sanctions on Venezuela that would repeat their mistake in Iran, but their eagerness to force regime change has led them to resort to the same cruel collective punishment. The administration wants to starve Maduro of revenue, but as a result of that they are going to be starving innocent Venezuelan civilians of basic necessities. U.S. policy towards Venezuela amounts to unwarranted, destructive economic warfare against the entire country in a bid to topple the current leadership. This policy is every bit as indefensible as the economic war that the Saudi coalition is still waging against Yemen, and Americans need to stand up and reject a policy

that will lead to loss of life from preventable causes. Instead of helping the people cope with the terrible humanitarian conditions, our government is stepping on their heads as they drown.

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