GlobalResearch
Center for Research on Globalization

'They Choked Me. They Threw Me Down.': CodePink's Medea Benjamin Assaulted by Right-Wing Venezuelan Opposition and Threatened with Arrest

By Jake Johnson
Global Research, November 14, 2019
[Common Dreams](#)

Region: Latin America & Caribbean
Theme: Law and Justice, Police State & Civil Rights

"This intimidation shows how the U.S. security forces work hand-in-glove with the right-wing forces in Latin America who are trying to stop progressive movements that empower the poor."

***

Medea Benjamin, co-founder of anti-war group CodePink, said she was assaulted Wednesday by supporters of the right-wing Venezuelan opposition during a Capitol Hill press conference announcing the creation of the bipartisan Congressional Venezuela Democracy Caucus.

Medea Benjamin is a frequent contributor to Global Research

Benjamin and other members of CodePink protested the event while backers of the effort to overthrow Venezuela's elected President Nicolás Maduro rallied in support of the new pro-regime change caucus, which was launched by Reps. Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-Fla.), Mario Díaz-Balart (R-Fla.), and other lawmakers.

During the press conference, Benjamin shouted for an end to punishing U.S. sanctions in Venezuela and held a sign that read "No Coups in Venezuela or Bolivia."

At one point, Benjamin was standing just outside the circle of lawmakers when she was grabbed and choked from behind by an unidentified individual CodePink said was a supporter of the Venezuelan opposition.

> "When Debbie Wasserman Schultz was speaking, I was standing right next to her, and every once in a while I would say something like, 'Lift the Sanctions!' 'This is all about the votes, Debbie, isn't it? In Florida!'," Benjamin [told](#) journalist Ford Fischer following the event.
>
> "I was pulled by people behind me," she added. "They grabbed me. They choked me. They threw me down, and I was very upset and shaken."

CodePink posted a clip of part of the incident on Twitter:

> We managed to get a clip of the altercation between @MedeaBenjamin and the

supporters of the Venezuelan opposition.

Decide for yourself who assaulted who. pic.twitter.com/oai4m33O7p

— CODEPINK (@codepink) November 14, 2019

Hours after the event, Capitol police—with five vehicles—arrived at Benjamin's home and threatened to arrest her on accusations of assaulting Wasserman Schultz, which Benjamin adamantly denied.

In one clip, it appears that Benjamin grabbed the Florida congresswoman in an effort to maintain balance as she was pulled from behind.

> "Debbie Wasserman Schultz was there. I was standing by the side of her, and the right-wing Venezuelans were dragging me down," Benjamin told a Capitol police officer outside of her home. "I grabbed on to whatever I could find, and now they're saying that I assaulted a congresswoman. I didn't assault anybody."

> At :30, watch a member of Juan Guaido's US-funded DC mafia choke @medeabenjamin for protesting a press conference of fake ambassador Carlos Vecchio & his tool, DWS.

> Medea was then falsely accused of assault, visited by cops and almost arrested. pic.twitter.com/ncf9GSINep

> — Max Blumenthal (@MaxBlumenthal) November 14, 2019

Shortly after Benjamin demanded that the Capitol police produce a warrant for her arrest, the officers told her she was "free to go" following a review of the video footage.

> "Apparently, the Capitol Police had an allegation, did not know if they could substantiate the allegation, but because it involved a congresswoman, it did not matter," reported ShadowProof's Kevin Gosztola. "They sought to quickly coerce a political activist into submitting to their authority, even if there was no basis for that activist to do so before the allegation was corroborated by police."

In a statement following the incident, Benjamin said "this intimidation shows how the U.S. security forces work hand-in-glove with the right-wing forces in Latin America who are trying to stop progressive movements that empower the poor."

CodePink Latin America coordinator Leonardo Flores, who attended the press conference with Benjamin, said the event "was almost like a microcosm of U.S. policy towards Venezuela."

> "We saw U.S. government representatives, flanked by Venezuelan elites, deciding on policy for Venezuela as police silenced the voices of people speaking out about the coup and sanctions," said Flores. "I saw Medea

Benjamin get assaulted and shoved to the ground, while I was threatened with physical violence."

Common Dreams: Our work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 License. Feel free to republish and share widely.

*

Note to readers: please click the share buttons above or below. Forward this article to your email lists. Crosspost on your blog site, internet forums. etc.

Featured image: "I saw Medea Benjamin get assaulted and shoved to the ground, while I was threatened with physical violence," said CodePink Latin America coordinator Leonardo Flores. (Photo: Screengrab via Common Dreams)

The original source of this article is [Common Dreams](#)
Copyright © [Jake Johnson](#), [Common Dreams](#), 2019

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [Jake Johnson](#)