

Trump Prosecutors Make Move to Ensure that Embassy Protectors Are Convicted

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Last April and May we were in the Venezuelan embassy in Washington, DC protecting it from a US coup takeover. We were in the embassy for 37 days and are now being prosecuted by the federal government for ‘interference with protective function.’ The prosecutors have submitted a motion in limine, which restricts what can be said in the trial. If the court approves it the jurors will be sitting in judgment of us based on fantasy facts, i.e. they will be told Juan Guido is the president, Nicolas Maduro will not be mentioned. They will never be told that we were in the embassy with the permission of the elected government of Venezuela, recognized as the government under Venezuelan law and by the United Nations. The Vienna Convention, which forbids the US government from entering foreign embassies in the United States will not be mentioned.

Ajamu and Bahman summarize this ‘Alice in Wonderland’ moment in an article below.

– Kevin Zeese, January 15, 2020

As the trial approaches, the lawyers for the Trump Administration’s prosecution of the four Venezuelan Embassy Protectors who were arrested last May are asking the court to make sure the jury is kept ignorant about the facts and circumstances surrounding the actions of the protectors.

In a recently filed motion by government lawyers, state prosecutors are seeking to severely restrict what can be discussed during the trial scheduled for February 11, 2020. Judge Beryl Howell will hear arguments on the motion at the pre-trial hearing on January 29.

What does the prosecution want to repress? Everything that might give the defenders the ability to challenge the state’s case.

The prosecutors do not want jurors to know that Nicolas Maduro is the democratically-elected president of Venezuela. They also do not want the illegitimacy of the failed coup leader Juan Guaido to be known to the jurors as the eviction and arrest of the four was based on the direction of a fake ambassador, Carlos Vecchio, who is wanted for violent crimes in Venezuela and is allied with Guaido.

The Trump prosecutors do not want the jury to know that the Embassy Protectors were inside the embassy with the permission of the elected government of Venezuela that is recognized under Venezuelan law and by the United Nations.

And, they do not want the Vienna Convention discussed so jurors are unaware that the United States violated international law when police entered the embassy to arrest the four who remained inside.

The parties will also discuss voir dire, i.e., the questions that will be used to pick the jury and ensure they are not biased, as well as jury instructions, which the court will read to the jurors before they deliberate.

The government's motion in limine, if approved by the judge, would leave the jury wearing a blindfold, unaware of the facts, context or why the Embassy Protectors were in the embassy. This will ensure the desired outcome of the state which is to convict the defenders and make them a model for how the state intends to deal with challenges to its illegal policies.

The jurors will also not be told that the protectors were under siege, surrounded by a pro-coup mob that was working with the police, threatening the protectors and blocking food from going into the embassy. And, they will not know the government had the electricity and water turned off in the embassy.

While there were negotiations between the US and Venezuela for a mutual protecting power agreement during the final days of the embassy protection, the jurors will not be told that the negotiations were occurring and that they would have resulted in Switzerland protecting the US embassy in Caracas and Turkey protecting the Venezuelan embassy in DC. The embassy protectors told the police they would leave voluntarily when that agreement was reached. The day before the four were arrested, [Samuel Moncada, the Venezuelan ambassador to the UN, held a press conference](#) where he discussed the negotiations for a protecting power agreement and said the Embassy Protectors were in the embassy with Venezuela's permission.

The government is also urging the court not to allow the four to explain they were exercising their rights under the First Amendment to political expression and criticizing the US government for their continuing efforts to force the overthrow of the democratically elected government of Venezuela.

If Judge Howell grants the Trump government's motion, it will leave the Embassy Protectors virtually defenseless. The government wants the prosecution to be about three things (1) the four were in the embassy, (2) they were given a notice of eviction by the police, and (3) they refused to leave.

The judge has thus far shown she leans toward the government's narrow view of the case and does not want the questionable legality of the state's order to vacate the embassy and its clearly illegal entry into the embassy and arrest of the defenders as part of the trial. When the motion for discovery was argued, the judge ruled against the Embassy Protectors regarding documents and other materials related to some of the above issues. See this article we wrote at the time, [Embassy Protectors Are Being Denied Their Right To A Fair Trial](#).

For more information on the prosecution, this page provides background on the case, [Frequently Asked Questions](#).

You can also show support for the Embassy Protectors by supporting our demand to drop charges against the defenders on the home page of [Embassy Protectors Defense](#)

[Committee](#)'s web site.

- We are still raising money for the defenders legal defense ([Donate here](#)).
- There will be an **international day of action on January 22nd** ([Click Here for More Information](#))
- You can also attend one of the events of the defenders [upcoming January tour](#) on the East Coast if you are in the area.
- We are asking the public to attend the trial in Washington, DC, which begins on February 11.

In this period of normalized illegality and attempts at intimidation, we shall not allow the state to move against these courageous activists without resistance from our movements. While today it is the defenders tomorrow it could be any of us.

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