

US Sanctions Backfire: How Washington's Economic War Against Venezuela Fueled Mass Migration to Its Southern Borders

By [Timothy Alexander Guzman](#)

Global Research, August 04, 2024

Region: [Latin America & Caribbean, USA](#)

Theme: [Global Economy](#)

As predicted, there is another attempted coup in Venezuela following President Nicolas Maduro's victory over the US-Backed Presidential candidate, Edmundo González and opposition leader, Maria Corina Machado. Obviously, Gonzalez and his staunch supporter, Maria Corina Machado, an extremist who in the past asked the Prime Minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu to help [overthrow the Maduro government](#) is the favorite of Washington. But no surprise, the Biden regime now recognizes Gonzalez as the winner.

However, the attempted coup and the mass migration problem of Venezuelan migrants reaching the US southern border was made in the USA. The US government played a significant role in the surge of Venezuelans entering the US illegally especially since the former US President, Donald Trump imposed the some of the harshest sanctions on Venezuela in efforts to force regime change.

An article from the mainstream media that is worth mentioning is from *The [Washington Post](#)*. 'Trump White House was warned sanctions on Venezuela could fuel migration' focuses on Venezuelan migration to the US borders. There were four reports according to some former and current U.S. government officials specifically on Trump sanctioning Venezuela although their economy was in a dire situation at the time,

"The Trump White House was warned that harsh sanctions on Venezuela could accelerate that country's economic collapse and speed an exodus of millions of migrants to neighboring nations."

The classified assessments were delivered by the *Department of Homeland Security* (DHS) office of Intelligence and Analysis from 2017 to 2019. Despite The Washington Post accusing the Maduro government of "human rights abuses, extrajudicial killings and corruption by the regime of dictator Nicolás Maduro" (*notice how the mainstream media likes to use the word "regime" when describing an enemy of the United States). According to the Washington Post observation on the Maduro government:

Today, however, Maduro remains in power, and a [surge in Venezuelan immigrants](#) has emerged as a flash point in the U.S. presidential election. Though Venezuelan mass migration to the United States only began after [President Biden](#) took office, concern among Trump officials about the sanctions' potential effects, including on migration, was more extensive than previously known, according to interviews with more than two dozen current and former U.S. officials.

"This is the point I made at the time: I said the sanctions were going to grind the

Venezuelan economy into dust and have huge human consequences, one of which would be out-migration,” said Thomas Shannon, who served as undersecretary for political affairs at the State Department under President [Donald Trump](#). “The sanctions clearly helped generate faster out-migration,” Shannon said. “And you knew it was only going to be a matter of time before these people decided to migrate north”

Today, it is estimated that more than seven million Venezuelans have left the country due to the severe economic situation that has developed since 2012. Neocons such as John Bolton blame the Venezuelan governments “mismanagement” not US sanctions:

Proponents, such as former top Trump aide John Bolton, defend the sanctions as a critically important, though unsuccessful, effort to force out Maduro, or at least limit the funds at his disposal. Venezuelans had already started fleeing before the sanctions were imposed, they stress, escaping an economic crisis rooted not in U.S. penalties but in mismanagement by Maduro and his predecessor, authoritarian leader Hugo Chávez

However, it was the crippling US sanctions imposed on Venezuela that caused the destruction of its economy:

But other former Trump officials, particularly at the State and Treasury departments, say it is clear U.S. sanctions aggravated an already dire situation with little clear upside. Venezuela’s economy contracted by a staggering 71 percent from 2012 to 2020 — the largest such drop in modern history for a country not at war — as the U.S. impeded its oil industry and curtailed access to international markets

There are Venezuelans who do blame both the Maduro government and US sanctions for their economic situation such as Rosa Grande who was *“optimistic about the sanctions when they were first imposed”* and that she hoped *“Maduro will “go to jail because he destroyed my future, the future of my children, and the future of my country.”* However, by 2020, the US sanctions destroyed her father’s business forcing her to move to the U.S., *“The sanctions “just led to more misery, and more hunger,” said Grande, who now lives in North Carolina.”*

Right-wing news propaganda channel, [Newsmax](#), who aspires to become another Fox news network channel also admitted in an article titled *‘Venezuelan Opposition Says It Has Proof Its Candidate Defeated Maduro’* that US sanctions accelerated the flow of Venezuelan migrants to the US southern borders,

“U.S. oil sanctions sought to force Maduro from power after his 2018 reelection, which dozens of countries condemned as illegitimate. But the sanctions only accelerated the exodus of some 7.7 million Venezuelans who have fled their crisis-stricken nation.”

The *Center for Economic and Policy Research* (CEPR) published a report [‘The Human Consequences of Economic Sanctions’](#) by Francisco Rodríguez, a Venezuelan native and the founder Oil for Venezuela, a non-profit organization dedicated to easing Venezuela’s economic crisis explained the impact of US sanctions and its effects on Venezuela’s oil industry, stated the fact that

“Broad economic sanctions, beginning with limitations on financing, were first imposed on Venezuela in 2017, when the Trump administration barred financing and dividend payments to Venezuela’s government and state-owned oil company, *Petróleos de Venezuela, S.A. (PDVSA)*” but that was not the only sanctions imposed on Venezuela,

the Obama regime also had their hand in destroying Venezuela's economy, "The US also used personal sanctions — first selectively imposed by the Obama administration in 2015 — to target top government officials and political figures as well as private-sector actors believed to be connected with the Maduro government."

Rodriguez described the impact of the US sanctions and the decline of oil prices on Venezuela's economic output:

Each round of sanctions (2017 financial, 2019 primary oil, and 2020 secondary oil) was followed by a decline in Venezuelan oil production, which, as measured by independent agencies, had been stable for an eight-year period starting in 2008. Though it had begun to decline in early 2016, prior to the 2017 economic sanctions, this decline appears to have been a consequence of the collapse in oil prices that occurred at the time and affected most other high-cost producers. But even when oil prices began to recover in 2017, Venezuela's oil production accelerated its decline even as production stabilized or recovered in comparable economies

This essentially contributed to a decrease in the importation of food, equipment and supplies that supported its agricultural sectors:

The resulting decline in oil exports severely circumscribed the ability of a traditionally import-dependent economy to buy imports of food as well as intermediate and capital goods for its agricultural sector, driving the economy into a major humanitarian crisis. Total imports fell by 91 percent, while food imports declined by 78 percent. The decline in the economy's capacity to import made it impossible to maintain past levels of essential goods

Another problem that US sanctions and the Venezuela's decline of oil production in regard to the revenue it once earned from its oil sales is that it had a negative impact of health and food security that contributed to the increase in child and adult mortality rates in the country:

Venezuela's deep deterioration in indicators of health, nutrition, and food security occurred alongside the largest economic collapse, outside of wartime, since 1950. The collapse in oil revenues drove the economic contraction, which caused the deterioration in socioeconomic indicators. By contributing to lowering the country's oil production, sanctions also contributed to lowering per capita income and living standards and are a key driver of the country's health crisis, including its increase in child and adult mortality

Since Maduro declared victory over Edmundo González, the US, its European allies and Venezuela's right-wing extremists want to get rid of the Bolivarian Revolution, but that won't happen because the Venezuelan people and the world know that the US government and Big Oil want control of Venezuela's oil.

In Trump's State of the Union [speech](#) on February 6, 2019, he declared

"We stand with the Venezuelan people in their noble quest for freedom—and we condemn the brutality of the Maduro regime, whose socialist policies have turned that nation from being the wealthiest in South America into a state of abject poverty and despair."

Anti-Maduro forces all claim that Venezuela was once a wealthy country, but for who? Trump and others make it sound like all of Venezuela was once wealthy, but that claim is a myth because before the late Hugo Chavez got into office, Venezuela was a basket case of poverty according to Venezuelanalysis.com, a think tank that focuses on Venezuela's economic history:

In reality, when Chávez was first elected in 1998, Venezuela had a 50% [poverty rate](#), despite having been a major oil exporter for several decades. It [started exporting](#) oil in the 1920s, and it was only in the early 1970s that the biggest Middle Eastern oil producers, Saudi Arabia and Iran, [surpassed](#) Venezuela in production. In 1992, the New York Times ([2/5/92](#)) reported that “only 57% of Venezuelans are able to afford more than one meal a day.” Does that sound like “one of the richest countries in the world”? Obviously not, but it is worth saying more about the statistics that can be used to mislead people about Venezuela's economic history

Washington's sanctions have contributed to Venezuela's economic crisis which is an excuse for Washington to blame it on the Maduro government and call for regime change to install a government that will be subservient to their interests that includes the control of its oil resources and preventing them from joining the BRICS alliance.

The US wants its hegemonic power to remain a dominant force in its “backyard,” so the Maduro government and its supporters will have to remain vigilant. So far, the coup has failed, but the US and its allies won't go away quietly, the regime change forces will continue until the people of Venezuela stops them in their tracks and that day will come sooner or later.

Many other countries from around the world besides Venezuela has also suffered from the same US sanctions, wars, regime change and economic exploitation under the US government's foreign policies especially since the September 11th attacks under both the Democrats and Republicans. Washington is to blame for their massive illegal immigration at their southern border caused by their reckless foreign policies that have produced nothing but unintended consequences.

*

Click the share button below to email/forward this article to your friends and colleagues. Follow us on [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#) and subscribe to our [Telegram Channel](#). Feel free to repost and share widely Global Research articles.

[Spread the Truth, Refer a Friend to Global Research](#)

Timothy Alexander Guzman writes on his own blog site, Silent Crow News, where [this article](#) was originally published. He is a regular contributor to Global Research.

Featured image is from SCN

The original source of this article is Global Research
Copyright © [Timothy Alexander Guzman](#), Global Research, 2024

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

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [Timothy Alexander Guzman](#)

About the author:

Timothy Alexander Guzman is an independent researcher and writer with a focus on political, economic, media and historical spheres. He has been published in Global Research, The Progressive Mind, European Union Examiner, News Beacon Ireland, WhatReallyHappened.com, EIN News and a number of other alternative news sites. He is a graduate of Hunter College in New York City.

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca

www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca