

# Venezuela: Amnesty International in Service of Empire

By [Roger D. Harris](#)

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*Uncle Sam has a problem in his South American “[backyard](#)” with those uppity Venezuelans who insisted on [democratically electing Nicolás Maduro](#) as their president instead of [bypassing](#) the electoral process and installing the unelected US [asset Juan Guaidó](#). No matter, Amnesty International has come to the rescue with a full-throated [defense of US imperialism](#):*

“Faced with grave human rights violations, shortages of medicines and food and generalized violence in Venezuela, there is an urgent hunger for justice. The crimes against humanity probably committed by the authorities must not go unpunished.” – **Erika Guevara-Rosas**, Americas director at Amnesty International

Amnesty International fails in its broadside to put its claims against the Maduro government in the context of a concerted regime-change campaign, which amounts to war, by the bully from the north. The US is waging an [illegal war](#) against Venezuela and Amnesty International’s broadside leaves out this inconvenient fact, egregiously even omitting any mention of sanctions.

As human rights activist Chuck Kaufman of the [Alliance for Global Justice](#) noted about Amnesty International (AI): “They don’t seem to even care about their credibility anymore.” A more credible and honest account of what is unfolding in Venezuela, than the hatchet job presented in [AI’s](#) May 14th *Venezuela: Crimes against humanity require a vigorous response from the international justice system*, would have also noted along with the alleged transgressions of the Maduro government:

- **Grave human rights violations.** Economists Mark Weisbrot of the Center for Economic and Policy Research and Jeffrey Sachs of Columbia University recently [reported](#) that US sanctions on Venezuela are responsible for tens of thousands of deaths. This is the price being exacted on Venezuela, with a prediction for worse to come, for the [regime change](#) that AI is implicitly promoting.
- **Shortages of medicines and food.** Since 2015, when US President Obama first instituted them, the US has been imposing ever more crippling [illegal sanctions](#) on Venezuela expressly to create misery for the population in the hope that it would then turn against their own [democratically elected](#) government. The sanctions are specifically [designed](#) to suffocate the economy so that Venezuela cannot address its problems. The US government [boasts](#) about the impacts of sanctions. Playing the good cop to the US role as bad cop, AI [laments](#) the very conditions they are tacitly promoting in asking for ever increasing

- “[punishments](#).” New US sanctions on Venezuela were imposed on May 10th.
- **Generalized violence.** The US government has repeatedly and unapologetically threatened [military intervention](#) in Venezuela if the elected government doesn’t abdicate. Short of attacking militarily, the US has [waged war](#) against Venezuela by economic and diplomatic means, not to mention low-intensity [warfare](#) such as [cyber attacks](#). The extreme [rightwing opposition](#) has called for the extra-legal overthrow of the government and has eschewed electoral means for effecting political change. AI is correct in noting that since 2017 new violence has been inflicted on the Venezuelan people but fails to note the role of the opposition in provoking that [violence](#) with their *guarimbas* and other actions. Meanwhile Guaidó, whose popular support in Venezuela is [bottoming out](#), is reported sending his envoy to meet with the US [Southern Command](#) to “coordinate.”

How is it possible that an organization purporting to stand for human rights and global justice can so blithely ignore facts that do not fit into their narrative and so obsequiously parrot the Trump-Pompeo-Bolton-Abrams talking points? Why would AI go so far as to [meet with](#) the [self-appointed](#) Guaidó and then within days issue a [report](#) condemning the Maduro government, without also investigating the other side in the conflict?

Unfortunately, this is not the first time AI has shown an [imperial bias](#) as it has regarding US-backed regime-change projects in [Iraq](#), [Libya](#), [Syria](#), and [Nicaragua](#).

Objectively deconstructing the many allegations (e.g., “more than 8,000 extrajudicial executions by the security forces”) made against Venezuela in the AI [broadside](#) and its accompanying [report](#) remains to be done. Unfortunately, the Empire has a surfeit of resources to churn out propaganda compared to the ability to counter it by genuine humanitarian groups. AI alone has an annual budget of over [\\$300 million](#). According to sources cited by Wikipedia, AI [receives grants](#) from the [US State Department](#), the European Commission, and other governments along with the [Rockefeller Foundation](#).

To conclude, AI’s [broadside](#) calls for justice about as often as it calls for punishment with the subtext that punishment of the Empire’s victims is justice. Were AI truly concerned about justice, rather than justifying another US [regime-change](#) operation, they would champion the following:

- Ending the unilateral sanctions by the US on Venezuela, which are illegal under the charters of the United Nations and the Organization of American States.
- Supporting dialogue between the elected government and the opposition as has been promoted by Mexico, Uruguay, Pope Francis, and most recently by [Norway](#).
- Condemning regime-change activities and interference in Venezuela’s internal affairs and actively rejecting the US government’s aggressive stance as articulated by US VP [Pence](#): “This is no time for dialogue. This is time for action.”
- Respecting the sovereignty of Venezuela and restoring normal diplomatic relations between the US and Venezuela.

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**Roger Harris** is a board member for the 32-year-old anti-imperialist human rights organization [Task Force on the Americas](#). He is active with the Campaign to End US-Canadian Sanctions Against Venezuela (<https://tinyurl.com/yd4ptxkx>).

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