

Who Needs Elections? Ask the US About the Government Your Country Should Have

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

Theme: [History](#), [Law and Justice](#)

Would anybody reading this article want to appoint him/herself as prime minister of Canada in front of a friendly crowd? All you need to say is that you don't recognize the elected prime minister as legitimate.

I asked that question to a crowd at a rally organized to affirm the sovereignty of Venezuela a few days ago in Vancouver. No one came forward. Instead, people laughed, and for a good reason. The notion of such an occurrence is ridiculous. But think again. It just happened in Caracas, Venezuela last January 23 with the assent of the government of Canada.

An unknown Juan Guaidó of the Venezuelan opposition party Voluntad Popular appointed himself interim president of Venezuela in front of a multitude without fulfilling a single requirement of the democratic process. Process that may involve registered political parties and a political campaign; and it should definitely have a free and secret ballot with all constitutional guarantees approved by a duly established national electoral institution, leading to an election and the public inauguration of the winning candidate.

A few political analysts have wondered about this event and its implications. [Michel Chossudovsky of Global Research called this a "dangerous precedent" and wrote](#)

"The position of speaker of the National Assembly held by Juan Guaidó (from a constitutional standpoint) is in some regards comparable to that of the Speaker of the US House of Representatives and the leader of the majority party which is currently held by Democrat Nancy Pelosi.

Nancy Pelosi is second in line to the US presidential line of succession, after Vice President Mike Pence. (25th Amendment of Constitution and 3 USC 19, a section of the U.S. Code, established as part of the Presidential Succession Act of 1947)."

Then Chossudovsky concludes,

"Trump's endorsement of Venezuela's speaker of the National Assembly Juan Guaidó is tantamount to stating that Nancy Pelosi could legitimately from one day to the next replace Trump as interim president of the US. A pretty grim prospect for the Donald."

Even Canadian MPs couldn't avoid making a reference to the absurdity of the Venezuelan situation. Erin Weir, Independent MP, addressed Minister of Foreign Affairs, Chrystia

Freeland – a staunch supporter of Juan Guaidó – by facetiously saying,

“I am going to resist the temptation to declare myself Prime Minister of Canada.”

But what happened in Venezuela on January 23 is very serious and we must recognize two things that would convince us to end all interference in the affairs of Venezuela.

First, appointing oneself president or prime minister of a country is unconstitutional. Juan Guaidó has broken the foundation of a constitutional democracy: to be voted by the majority of the population in democratic elections.

In his pretense of following the Venezuelan Constitution of 1999, Guaidó called on Article 233 to appoint himself. That article determines the circumstances that would allow the appointment of a president when the elected one cannot be present for the inauguration.

None of the assumptions to establish the absolute absence of the president has been met: neither death, nor resignation, nor dismissal by the Supreme Court, nor physical or mental incapacity, nor abandonment of office nor recall by the people.

Nicolas Maduro is alive, in power and is the legitimate democratically elected president of Venezuela according to the Venezuelan constitution. He does not need the acclamation of foreign governments.

Speaking of foreign governments, the second thing we must recognize that happened on January 23 in Venezuela is that this was done with the full and overt interference from foreign countries. And this breaks all sorts of international laws. Principally, it goes against the UN Charter and the OAS 1948 Charter. However, foreign intervention in Venezuela is nothing new. The US has tried to destroy the Bolivarian Revolution since the failed attempted coup against Hugo Chavez in 2002.

Fast-forward to 2014 and to this day; Venezuela is confronting severe sanctions from the US, Canada, EU and some Latin American countries. Sanctions are crippling the Venezuelan economy and affecting the population. The new US sanctions of this week further prevent the repatriation of revenues for Venezuelan oil exports to the US.

We must emphasize that sanctions can only be enforced by resolution of the UN Security Council. Any other sanction unilaterally imposed is illegal in the eyes of the community of nations according to the UN Charter. Incidentally, the UNSC has not resolved to recognize the self-proclaimed president.

In the same way that Guaidó appoints himself as the illegal president in Venezuela, the likes of Trump and Trudeau in our continent appoint themselves as judges in the internal affairs of Venezuela that only pertain to the people of Venezuela.

This is reckless.

This tragic farce has been staged under the pretext that the elections of May 20, 2018 won by Nicolas Maduro are not recognized by the US and Canada.

Facts:

- Sixteen political parties participated in the elections last year. Three parties decided not to participate (under US pressure), but that does not make the electoral process illegitimate.
- Maduro won with a wide margin, obtained 6,248,864 votes, 67.84%; Henri Falcón followed with 1,927,958, 20.93%; Javier Bertucci with 1,015,895, 10.82% and Reinaldo Quijada who obtained 36,246 votes, 0.39% of the total. The difference between Maduro and the second contender was 46.91%.
- Close to 200 international observers were present during the elections. The UN refused to send an observer.

But there is also a personal angle to this story.

I was forbidden by the Canadian government to vote at the Venezuelan consulate together with all Venezuelans across Canada. That was my right as a Venezuelan, and it was taken away. The Canadian government deemed the elections “fraudulent” even before they took place!

And here is where the US and Canadian governments fall into ridicule in this whole tragedy: Of the 25 elections at different levels that have taken place in Venezuela over the last 20 years, the only one that they would recognize as legitimate is the election of the National Assembly of 2015 where the opposition won a majority that was immediately recognized by the Venezuelan electoral authorities. All 25 elections were held with exactly the same electoral standard.

However, three candidates committed fraud and another election in the respective districts had to be called again. The National Assembly refused and persisted in swearing in the three members. Consequently, the Supreme Court declared it in contempt in 2016 and remains so to this date.

Interestingly, the National Assembly’s only declared item on their agenda was to topple Nicolas Maduro “within 6 months”. No relevant legislation was ever proposed and discussed. The aim was an all familiar “parliamentary coup” as others occurred in other Latin American countries.

Let me emphasize what I consider the most blatant example of intervention.

Article 19, Chapter IV of the Charter states:

“No State or group of States has the right to intervene, directly or indirectly, and for whatever reason, in the internal or external affairs of any other. The previous principle excludes not only armed force, but also any other form of interference or tendency to threaten the personality of the State, the political, economic and cultural elements that constitute it. “

Canada is a member of the OAS and as such it is called to abide by the OAS Charter of 1948. But, does it? Not in the least.

Repeatedly, the OAS, with arm-twisting by Luis Almagro, the Secretary General, has tried to condemn Venezuela last year but it never reached the sufficient number of votes. And by the way, this week the OAS failed to recognize Guaidó as proposed by Argentina and endorsed by the US.

So while the majority of OAS member countries abide by the Charter, Chrystia Freeland breaks off creating a fictitious splinter group, the “Lima Group”, with no international authority except to force regime change in Venezuela. She has just called for a meeting of the group in Ottawa on February 4th. Agenda topic: Venezuela.

The only conclusion we can draw from this scenario is that the Canadian government is complicit in a US sponsored coup attempt in Venezuela.

It's committing a reckless action and is not speaking for all Canadians. Many Canadians and organizations have endorsed the legitimacy of the Maduro presidency, and have protested in rallies across the country speaking up against the Canadian government's dangerous, illegal, interventionist, colonial and imperial attack on Venezuela.

The future of a Latin America country – that attempts to break away from foreign domination following the example of Cuba 60 years ago – is uncertain under real threats of a military invasion. Venezuelans have hard choices to make and they should be left alone to make them as a sovereign nation. As many all over the world are repeating to their governments: Hands off Venezuela!

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