

Support the Venezuelan people and President Maduro. No war for oil!



British workers must side firmly with the masses of Venezuela in their struggle to forge their own destiny without outside interference.

On Friday 4 January 2019, the Lima group of nations, at a conference in which US president [Donald Trump](#)'s secretary of state, Mike Pompeo, made an appearance by video-link, issued a declaration that the Venezuelan government is illegitimate, denounced it for human rights violations, questioned its territorial legitimacy, and imposed [sanctions](#) on [Venezuela](#). President [Nicolás Maduro](#) has characterised this move as an imperialist-sponsored attack on the constitutional and democratic order of Venezuela, and a move towards a coup d'état and direct military intervention, with the aim of gaining control of the natural resources of the Venezuelan people.

What is the Lima group of nations?

In 2017, the US cobbled together the 'alliance' (President Maduro refers to it as a cartel) of 11 of the most reactionary, neoliberal, pro-imperialist governments on the combined American continents, including those of the newly formed right-wing regimes in [Brazil](#) and Argentina. These deeply unpopular governments (many, like the Honduran and Brazilian governments installed illegally by the US itself) were brought together specifically to attack and isolate the progressive government of Venezuela, and cover the colonial policy of the Monroe doctrine in an apparently indigenous Latin-American form. The Lima group was formed because the official regional body, the Organisation of American States (OAS) can no longer be relied upon to follow Washington's diktat.

Territorial integrity

To demonstrate that this offensive is all about [oil](#), Venezuela's eastern neighbour, Guyana, has attempted to encroach on the territorial rights of Venezuela – allowing Exxon Mobil to conduct oil exploration in the waters of the Orinoco Delta, which are an integral part of Venezuelan territorial waters. Guyana's president David Granger, we note, is himself barely clinging to power in the face of his own parliament's vote of no confidence in his leadership, which he is seeking to flout unconstitutionally. This is a move reminiscent of Kuwait's infringement of Iraq's

sovereignty prior to the 1991 Gulf war. President Chávez nationalised the Orinoco reserves 10 years ago, and the oligarchs of the US oil industry have been plotting their reconquest ever since. Maduro and the PSUV [United Socialist Party of Venezuela] are continuing and deepening the legacy of former president Commandante [Hugo Chávez](#), and the Lima declaration is simply the USA's latest offensive. As Trump [pulls out of Syria](#), the US military-industrial complex is stepping up its campaign against the peoples of [Latin America](#) and the Caribbean. Venezuela and [Cuba](#) are the key links in the chain of the popular democratic resistance to the hegemonic interests of US finance capital.

Venezuela has chosen its path

On Thursday 10 January, Comrade Nicolás Maduro will be sworn in for his second term as the president of Venezuela, having been duly re-elected by an overwhelming majority in elections held in May 2018, polling more than two thirds of the votes cast. It is usual diplomatic etiquette to send congratulations on the constitutional inauguration of a nation's president, but the US is hell-bent on using the occasion to pile further diplomatic pressure on Venezuela, with a view to furthering its long-established programme of destabilisation and economic attack, thus creating the conditions for military intervention, direct or proxy.

Criminal destabilisation

President Maduro's landslide victory was remarkable given the severity of the combined US and [EU](#) blockade – severe trade and financial sanctions which prevent Venezuela from entering into equal trade relations, or even dealing with many companies internationally, which face financial penalties for dealing with the Venezuelan government. Both former US president Barack Obama (in 2014) and current president Donald Trump (in 2017) declared a "national emergency" in Venezuela, sighting the destabilisation they themselves maliciously instigated and maintained, as infringing the human rights of Venezuelans – and, perversely, blaming this on the Venezuelan government. The latest round of sanctions alone has cost Venezuela an

estimated \$6bn per year, and prevented Venezuelan citizens buying basic medical supplies including insulin and anti-cancer medication. It is international banking quarantine and industrial sabotage that have caused hyperinflation in Venezuela, to the huge detriment of the population, not the Venezuelan government's 'mismanagement'. The truth is that the US is channelling hundreds of millions of dollars to far-right groups seeking to overturn Venezuela's democracy. All of these constitute illegal acts of aggression, and are crimes of mass violence and intimidation directed against the Venezuelan people.

Democracy only 'valid' if the US-sponsored candidate wins

The US-sponsored opposition, staring defeat in the face despite its year-long campaign of violence and intimidation of the Venezuelan people, attempted to stage a 'boycott' of the 2018 presidential elections. Ultimately, two opposition candidates did stand, but were roundly defeated. The US and EU have repeatedly stated that the election was invalid – without sighting any evidence, and despite the strong presence of impartial international observers, who verified the transparency and integrity of the electoral process.

Why does the US care about Venezuela – and why should we?

- Venezuela's proven oil reserves are recognised as the largest in the world, totalling 297bn barrels. - In the Orinoco Arc, Venezuela has the second-highest gold reserves in the world. - Venezuela is a major producer and exporter of bauxite, coal and iron ore. In 2003, its estimated reserves of bauxite totalled 5.2m tons. - Since Hugo Chávez was elected in 1999, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has implemented huge programmes of nationalisation of the country's mineral, agricultural and industrial wealth. - In 2007, President Chávez's government took a majority stake in four oil projects in the vast Orinoco heavy crude belt, worth an estimated \$30bn in total. - In 2008, President Chávez's administration implemented a windfall tax of 50 percent for prices over \$70 per barrel, and 60 percent on oil priced over \$100. - Venezuela holds huge foreign currency reserves, and is seeking to repatriate \$550m of its own gold currently held in the Bank of England. Declaring the government illegitimate would serve as a pretext for seizing her assets – as the imperialists robbed [Libya](#) in 2011.

Achievements of the Bolivarian Republic

of Venezuela

- The Venezuelan state, on behalf of the Venezuelan masses, now controls most of the country's vast mineral reserves. - Nationalisation of much of the nation's wealth has allowed funding of great social projects. - Housing: two million homes were built for the poorest working-class Venezuelans between 2011-17 and another two million homes will be built by 2019. - Health programmes: universal medical care has been established, in cooperation with doctors from Cuba. - Literacy: Venezuela eliminated illiteracy in just two years. - Social equality: Venezuela has made great advances in reducing racism and promoting women's rights. - The government has further plans to nationalise factories and industrial units. The US and EU imperialists are hell-bent on sabotaging the right of the Venezuelan masses to enjoy the fruits of their own labour, and to use the natural resources of their own country for their own benefit. We realise that freedom is indivisible. When one nation is enslaved, we are all enslaved. When one nation breaks the bonds of slavery and asserts its independence, we are all closer to our own freedom of action. What is at stake are the rights of the billionaire oligarchy of the US and other imperialist nations to impose their will over and above the economic needs and desires, and the political rights of the masses and their chosen leaders – President Maduro in the case of Venezuela. The people of Britain, desperately in need of their own social movement to overthrow the power of the financial oligarchs at home, must be firm in standing with the people of Venezuela.

What can we do?

- Spread awareness: share this article with your friends and contacts on social media. - Demand the lifting of sanctions by Britain, the EU and the USA. - Demand the dissolution of the illegitimate US-proxy Lima group. - Insist that the right of the Venezuelan people to self-determination must be respected by demanding non-intervention in the internal affairs of the Venezuelan people. - [Refuse to cooperate](#) with any British attempt to interfere in Venezuela, whether by the imperialist media, NGOs, banks or other institutions. **No war for oil!**

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