

More than 40 US Organizations Pressure US Congress: End Trump's Crusade for War in Venezuela

Some 40 organizations are telling Congress to step up pressure on Trump.

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More than 40 organizations from around the United States are demanding their Congress put an end to U.S. intervention in Venezuela saying that, in particular, the illegal and "extensive economic sanctions, imposed unilaterally by the Trump government since August 2017, have caused great hardship and loss of life" in the South American country.

The organizations, including Codepink, and dozens of other civil and religious society organizations, sent a letter to Congress Monday asking for them to encourage peaceful dialogue within Venezuela and to denounce the U.S. Republican administration's dangerous economic sanctions and threats of military action in Venezuela.

"These threats are absolutely unacceptable, particularly towards a country that does not represent a threat to the United States," said the authors of the letter that include Demand Progress, Peace Action, Sisters of Mercy Justice Team, American Friends Service Committee, Vote Vets, Common Defense, Alliance Americas, and CASA of Maryland, among others.

President Trump has gone so far as to say that Venezuela is the "country with which we should go to war, they have all that oil and they are right in our backyard."

The letter was delivered to all Congressional elected officials Tuesday morning.

"The pressure from these grassroots organizations could not come at a more critical time for Venezuela," said Alex Main, Director of International Policy for Center for Economic and Policy Research (CEPR).

Main pointed out:

"The latest round of sanctions launched in January is worsening the current crisis and generating more suffering as it slows down imports, including food and medicines, and blocks the roads allowing economic recovery."

So far, U.S. President Donald Trump and his hawkish advisors, including John Bolton and Elliot Abrams who have led the U.S. into drawn out and illegal wars under previous

presidencies, have enacted over 20 sanctions against the Venezuelan government and individuals in the country in order to bring down the democratically-elected Nicolas Maduro presidency.

Hassan El-Tayyab, Co-Director of [Just Foreign Policy](#), which organized the petition told CEPR:

“There is really no military solution to the crisis in Venezuela and more than 40 groups believe that our best chance to achieve peace is through dialogue, the lifting of sanctions and the total elimination of unauthorized war.”

Just Foreign Policy helped to pass legislation in December to end the U.S.’s congressionally unauthorized involvement in the war on impoverished Yemen.

The complete letter follows:

Dear (member of Congress),

We, the undersigned groups, wish to express our deep concern regarding the dangerous and destructive strategy of regime change directed at Venezuela by the Trump Government. The extensive economic sanctions imposed unilaterally by the US Government since August 2017 have caused great difficulties and loss of life for many Venezuelans.

The latest round of sanctions announced in January is expected to worsen the current crisis and cause even greater human suffering across the country. Although many onlookers have noted that civil war is an increasingly likely possibility, Trump government officials are strongly opposed to peaceful dialogue between the country’s political representatives, and have openly threatened military intervention.

We ask you to take a firm and public stand against these immoral, reckless and illegal policies, and to support efforts to promote a peaceful dialogue, before it is too late.

We urge you to:

- Oppose economic sanctions: Although the mismanagement of the Government and the fall in world oil prices are the causes of much of the deep crisis in Venezuela, the economic sanctions of the U.S. Government – both the financial sanctions of August 2017, like the sanctions of January 2019 to the Venezuelan oil industry – are generating additional losses of billions of dollars of foreign currency needed for essential imports, according to experts and even U.S. officials, as National Security Advisor, John Bolton. In the current context, these sanctions will inevitably lead to greater human suffering, including many deaths due to lack of medicines and other essential imports. Unilateral economic sanctions are illegal under the U.N. Charter and the Charter of the OAS; and research shows that they are generally ineffective in achieving the desired political results.
- Oppose threats of military intervention : President Trump has advocated military intervention in Venezuela since the beginning of 2017, while he and other government officials have declared repeatedly that “all options are on the table” with Venezuela.

These threats are absolutely unacceptable, particularly towards a country

that does not represent a threat to the United States, and only the immense political polarization in Venezuela is increasing. Members of Congress must strongly denounce these threats and make the adoption of the “Law for the Prohibition of Unauthorized Military Action in Venezuela” one of the top priorities, and they must also commit to that, in case President Trump and his Government to involve the military in any action directed at Venezuela, will invoke the War Powers Resolution of 1973 and, consequently, will give rise to a debate and a vote in Congress to end any unauthorized use of force.

- Support for dialogue : Members of the US Executive have rejected the possibility of dialogue and, instead, have pressed for an immediate regime change in Venezuela, asking the Venezuelan Armed Forces to rebel against the Maduro Government. Experts have warned that this strategy could trigger a division within the Armed Forces of the country, with a potentially violent and catastrophic result. Members of Congress must oppose this dangerous zero-sum game led by the White House, and advocate for peaceful dialogue. The Vatican, the Secretary General of the U.N., Mexico and Uruguay have offered to help mediate in the dialogue and political negotiations to resolve the current crisis in a peaceful manner. Congress should support these efforts.

With the recent appointment as special envoy to Venezuela of the veteran American advisor and condemned by the Iran-Contra scandal, Elliott Abrams, and with the increasingly aggressive rhetoric of the White House, his support could not come at a more crucial moment. There is no moral, legal or political justification for this collective punishment against the Venezuelan population, based on economic sanctions. There is no solution that is military; Venezuela’s crisis must be resolved through dialogue and negotiations. Therefore, Congress must insist on eliminating destructive economic sanctions and removing any possibility of an unauthorized war from the board.

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