

Venezuela in the Crosshairs: Are we Witnessing a Slow-Motion Coup D'Etat?

Global Research News Hour episode 194

By [Michael Welch](#), [Lucas Koerner](#), and [Henry Heller](#)

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

Theme: [GLOBAL RESEARCH NEWS HOUR](#), [Media Disinformation](#), [US NATO War Agenda](#)

"Today's announcement of sanctions against the Maduro regime underscores our commitment to defending democracy and human rights around the world."

- Hon. Chrystia Freeland, P.C., M.P., Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs September 22, 2017 [1]

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In the early 2000s, Left activists the world over looked to Venezuela and its charismatic Head of State Hugo Chavez, as championing a new model of "socialism for the 21st century" and a heroic ally in the resistance to the neoliberal economics sweeping much of the world and particularly the Global South in recent decades. [2][3]

Venezuela, once the heart and soul of the new Bolivarian Revolution, is today in chaos.

According to recent estimates from the International Monetary Fund's most recent World Economic Outlook report, Venezuela's rate of inflation has sky-rocketed over the last two years and is on track to reach 2300% by next year. Unemployment is closing in on 30 percent. New York City based Human Rights Watch, and press agencies like PBS, are reporting on a humanitarian crisis spurred on by shortages of food and medicine. [4][5][6]

Violence between opposition-led protesters and Venezuelan security forces has resulted in over 124 deaths and hundreds of injuries. [7]

The right-wing opposition within Venezuela's National Assembly are blaming President Maduro for the country's woes and are calling for his ouster. The governments of the US and Canada are likewise holding Maduro to task and have subjected the nation to targeted sanctions affecting key officials. [8][9]

President Maduro's attempt to resolve these crises supposedly through the election of a National Constituent Assembly in July appears to have only [further antagonized his critics](#) at home and abroad.

All eyes are now on the October 15th regional elections. According to authoritative opinion

polls, the opposition is expected to secure big wins on Sunday. A substantial deviation from such a result [would likely be interpreted](#) in some quarters as attributable to fraudulence of some kind (Russian-sponsored or otherwise).

For all their flaws, the governments of Hugo Chavez and his successor Nicolas Maduro represent an important node of regional resistance to the Anglo-American project for the corporate plunder of the South American continent. This reality provides vital context for US and Canadian condemnation of the Venezuelan government, as well as a necessary backdrop for this week's Global Research New Hour radio program.

Lucas Koerner is based in Caracas and a staff writer for [venezuelanalysis.com](#). In the first half hour, he provides a local perspective of the rationale behind the National Constituent Assembly vote, the opposition protests, and the prospects of further destabilization of the country leading to another coup.

We next hear from Julia Buxton. A Professor of Comparative Politics at the Central European University's School of Public Policy and Senior Research Associate at the [Global Drug Policy Observatory, Swansea University](#) Buxton is a specialist on Latin America and an expert on Venezuela. This interview, recorded in September at the University of Manitoba, provides some background on the evolution of Venezuelan politics over the past two decades, including the role of Chavez himself, the failure to address corruption and social violence in its program of progressive economic and restorative change, the role of the US and agencies like the National Endowment for Democracy in sabotaging the Venezuelan project, and the political and economic consequences of the country's strategic alliances with China.

Finally, we hear from Henry Heller. He is a Winnipeg-based scholar and professor at the University of Manitoba's Department of History. In the final conversation of the hour, Professor Heller talks about the sanctions against Venezuela recently announced by the Canadian government, and the true motivations behind it. He also talks about the public discussion he is co-organizing on [Neoliberalism and Revolt in Latin America](#), to take place the evening of October 14th at Broadway Disciples United Church (396 Broadway Ave.) in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

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Notes:

1. https://www.canada.ca/en/global-affairs/news/2017/09/canada_imposes_sanctionsonmadurogimeinvenezuela.html
2. <http://www.truth-out.org/archive/component/k2/item/52038:hugo-chavez-gets-heros-welcome-at-world-social-forum>
3. <https://www.globalresearch.ca/venezuela-world-social-forum-chavez-calls-for-socialism-or-death/1847>
4. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-10-10/imf-sees-venezuelan-inflation-rate-rising-beyond-2-300-in-2018>
5. <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/venezuelans-suffer-deadly-scarcity-food-medicine/>
6. <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2017/country-chapters/venezuela#16e9b9>
7. <https://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/Heres-Your-Guide-to-Understanding-Protest-Deaths-in-Venezuela-20170422-0016.html>
8. <https://daliaresearch.com/venezuelans-blame-maduro-for-economy/>
9. <http://www.cbc.ca/news/world/canada-venezuela-sanctions-1.4303663>

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