

Venezuela: Trump Diverts Central America Aid to Guaido as EU Threatens More Sanctions

Guaido's team is receiving over \$40 million to fund salaries, travel, training, propaganda and technical assistance.

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The Trump administration is reportedly diverting over US \$40 million of aid destined for Central America to the Venezuelan opposition.

According to the [Los Angeles Times](#), a memo from the US Agency for International Development (USAID) was handed to Congress on July 11 notifying that \$41.9 million were being handed to self-proclaimed "Interim President" Juan Guaido and his team, arguing that there is an "exigent" crisis involving US "national interest."

The LA Times report adds that the money is destined for salaries, airfare, "good governance" training, propaganda, technical assistance for holding elections and other "democracy-building" projects.

The funds were reportedly destined for Guatemala and Honduras. Poverty, insecurity and political instability have seen a growing flux of Central American migrants towards the US in recent years. President Trump has threatened to cut all aid to Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador if those countries fail to stop the flow of migrants towards Mexico and the US.

Opposition leader Juan Guaido declared himself "[interim president](#)" on January 23, receiving the prompt backing of Washington and allied regional governments. In the six months since he has led several attempts to oust the Maduro government, which included a humanitarian aid "[showdown](#)" on February 23 and an attempted [military putsch](#) on April 30.

Guaido has been mired in a corruption scandal after international funds meant to support soldiers who heeded his call to desert were allegedly [embezzled](#) by his envoys in Colombia.

The latest revelations of US financial support comes on the heels of the European Union announcing and threatening new sanctions against the Caribbean country.

EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs Federica Mogherini said on Tuesday that the bloc is readying sanctions against security officials "involved in torture and other serious violations of human rights." Retired Navy Officer Rafael Acosta died in state custody on June 29. He was allegedly subjected to torture, having been arrested accused of involvement in a coup plot.

Mogherini went on to add that the European Union would impose more sanctions if it failed to see "concrete results" from the current government-opposition talks.

The European Parliament likewise approved a resolution on Thursday morning backing sanctions against security officials and demanding results from ongoing negotiations, as well as reiterating support for “legitimate interim president Juan Guaido.”

The European Union has imposed [sanctions](#) against a host of high-ranking Venezuelan officials, as well as blocked sales of arms and other inputs. Several assets held in European territories have also been frozen, including bank accounts and [gold deposits](#). For its part, Washington has imposed unilateral [measures](#) against individuals and several sectors of the Venezuelan economy, chief among them the [oil industry](#).

Caracas reacted promptly to the EU announcement, with Foreign Minister Jorge Arreaza criticizing Mogherini’s “meddling” in Venezuelan affairs.

“[Mogherini] is proffering unacceptable threats, at a time when [understanding] is vital for the dialogue between the people in Venezuela,” he wrote on [Twitter](#).

Arreaza held a meeting with United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres on Wednesday in New York, in which Guterres offered his backing for the current dialogue process.

The Venezuelan government and opposition are currently engaged in Norway-mediated talks in [Barbados](#). After two rounds of negotiations held in [Oslo](#) in May, the delegations restarted the process in the Caribbean island last week, before beginning another round on Monday.

No [details](#) have been disclosed about the content of the talks, with the Norwegian government praising both sides for their commitment. There have been unconfirmed reports that the issue of early elections is being left for last in the discussions.

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