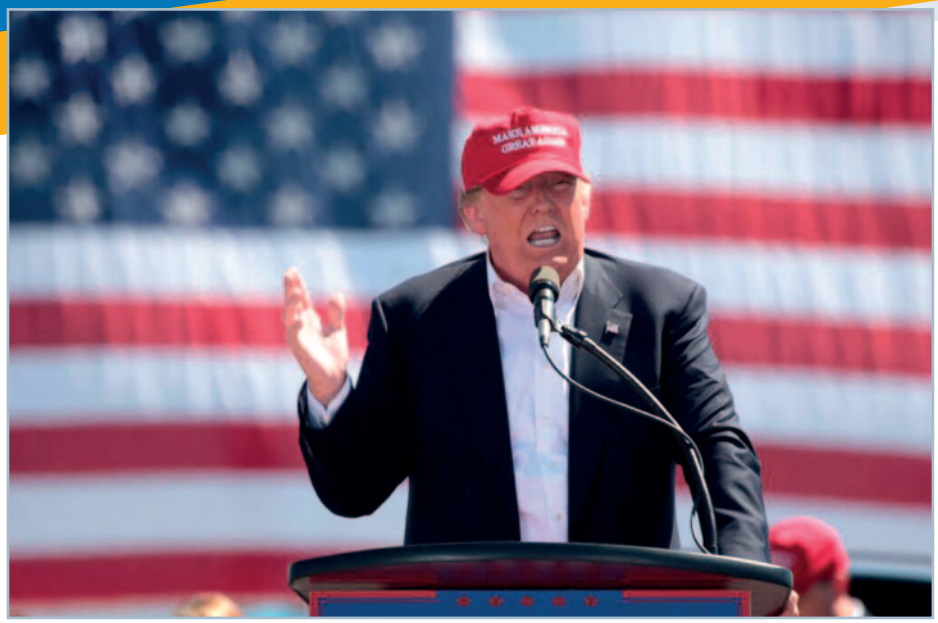
¡No to Trump's War on Venezuela!

Spring 2026



Donald Trump's military attack on Venezuela and the kidnapping of President Nicolás Maduro mark a grave escalation in Washington's long-running campaign against the Venezuelan people.

This war on Venezuela is clearly a war for Venezuela's oil — the largest proven reserves in the world.

It is also part of Trump's strategy to turn Latin America back into a colony that serves US interests, not the needs of its people.

The attack was a blatant violation of international law.

Trump has already threatened to bomb Venezuela again unless the country submits to US demands. He has also issued threats against Colombia and Mexico and is now seeking to totally cut off all fuel to Cuba in a blatant attempt at regime change.

While the bombing of Venezuela marks a dangerous new phase, the war on Venezuela itself is not new.
For more than 25 years, the country has faced US-backed coup attempts, destabilisation, economic sanctions, and violent opposition campaigns.

This pressure began as soon as the progressive President Hugo Chávez was elected at the turn of the century and reclaimed control over Venezuela's oil to fund social programmes in healthcare, education, housing, and poverty reduction. In the eyes of the United States, that was the real "crime" committed by the Venezuelan people.

For nearly two decades, the Venezuela Solidarity Campaign has worked to expose this aggression. Now more than ever, we need to step up our campaigning.

By building the broadest possible solidarity with Venezuela, we can help defend Venezuela's right to decide its own future, help secure the safe return of Nicolás Maduro and work for peace — not US war — across the region.

In this newsletter we look at the real reasons for Trump's attempt to overthrow the Venezuelan revolution.

www.venezuelasolidarity.co.uk
e: info@venezuelasolidarity.co.uk

Venezuela Solidarity Campaign

Putting People Before Profit

At the start of the 21st century, Hugo Chávez was elected President of Venezuela after decades of deep social crisis.

Despite the country's vast oil reserves, this wealth had for years been siphoned off to enrich a tiny elite at home and US corporations. While riches flowed out of the country, the vast majority of people suffered deep economic and social hardship.

Up to seven in ten Venezuelans lived in poverty. Many had little or no access to proper healthcare, education, or secure housing. Large parts of society were shut out of political and economic life.

When people challenged this injustice, they were met with brutal state violence — most starkly in 1989 when up to 3,000 people were killed during a popular uprising against neoliberal economic policies.

The Chávez government set out to reverse this injustice. It launched a programme of democratic and social reforms based on taking back control of the oil industry and using its wealth for the public good.

Poverty and extreme poverty fell sharply as access to food, healthcare, education, and housing expanded. Free education was provided from literacy programmes to university. Cuban doctors helped establish free healthcare in poor and neglected communities, giving millions access to a doctor for the first time.

Over five million social houses have been built helping families who had lived for generations in unsafe conditions. Democratic participation soared.

That is why Chávez was elected again and again — and why, when he died of cancer in 2013, President Maduro was elected to continue this progress.

OPPOSING WAR ON VENEZUELA

The Venezuela Solidarity Campaign was quick to respond to Trump's illegal attack. We organised a well-attended emergency online rally and protest at Downing Street in the first 48 hours and another protest a week later calling on the British Government to speak out against these clear breaches of international law.

We also produced a No War on Venezuela statement signed by 9 trade union General Secretaries, over 40 MPs and Lords, a broad range of peace and social movements including Stop the War, CND, War on Want and Global Justice Now, writers, academics and cultural figures and over 4,000 members of the public.

We also worked with Richard Burgon MP on a parliamentary motion that received strong support.

Francisco Dominguez addresses the Downing St demo

Free Nicolás Maduro

In the coming weeks the court case against Nicolás Maduro will begin in New York, where he has been held after his illegal kidnapping. This will be a show trial that flies against the key principles of international law. The Venezuela Solidarity Campaign is proud to be part of an international alliance calling for Nicolás Maduro to be freed.

VSC protest against the show trail of Maduro

25 Years of US Aggression Against Venezuela

From the very start, first the government of Hugo Chávez and then of Nicolás Maduro faced a constant campaign of US-backed aggression. The aim was to restore power and wealth to Venezuela's privileged elite and to put Washington back in control of Venezuela's vast oil reserves.

Most famously, in 2002, President Chávez was temporarily overthrown in a US-backed military coup. People were killed and democratic rule was suspended. The coup was defeated only because millions of Venezuelans took to the streets to demand the return of their elected president.

Then a three-month sabotage of the oil industry sought to wreck the economy and force Chávez to resign. It was defeated, but not before it caused a huge rise in poverty and hardship, and major damage to oil infrastructure.

Attack after attack on the Venezuelan government was backed by many tens of millions of dollars from US agencies, including the National Endowment for Democracy, channelled to opposition groups in an effort to restore the old political and economic order.

After Chávez's death in 2013, this campaign intensified against President Maduro. The United States immediately refused to accept his election.

Violent street protests known as guarimbas erupted in 2014 and 2017. Public buildings such as public health centres linked to the Revolution's achievements were targeted. This wave of violence included attacks on Chávez supporters, the use of razor wire strung across roads to behead motorcyclists, and attempts to burn people alive. People lost their lives.

This violence was led by Venezuelan political groups whose representatives are now presented in the British media as the "democratic opposition".

From 2017, a new strategy of deadly US sanctions - including a blockade of oil exports and that hit food and medicine imports - tried to oust the government by punishing the population. Leading US economists estimate that sanctions

were responsible for 40,000 deaths in 2017–2018 alone. In 2021, a UN Special Rapporteur carried out a 12-day visit to Venezuela, highlighting how "the drop in oil revenues, exacerbated by the sanctions, provoked a food and nutrition crisis."

This pattern of intervention has always had the same clear aim: to deny Venezuela the right to decide its own future and to reverse the gains made by its people. It is not about democracy or human rights, but about power, resources, and control.

And now, this long war has entered an open and dangerous new phase with Trump's bombing and kidnapping.

From Cuba to Palestine - Venezuela has been a beacon of solidarity

As part of the progressive wave of change that has occurred in Venezuela, a new foreign policy was launched based on solidarity and cooperation — a policy that was opposed by the United States every step of the way.

A key aim was to build Latin American independence by reducing the region's dependence on Washington. This meant strengthening cooperation and integration between Latin American countries on the basis of equality and mutual respect.

Venezuela played a leading role in creating new regional organisations such as the **Union of South American Nations (UNASUR)** and the **Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC)**. These bodies brought countries together, without US involvement, to work jointly and resolve disputes peacefully.

A clear example of Venezuela's international solidarity was its **close partnership with Cuba**. Venezuela supplied oil, while Cuba sent tens of thousands of doctors, nurses, and teachers to work in poor and remote communities in Venezuela and other countries. This brought free healthcare and education to millions of people.

Through **Operation Miracle**, Venezuela and Cuba helped restore the eyesight of millions of people across Latin America and the Caribbean, providing free sight-saving surgery to those who had been needlessly blinded by poverty and lack of access to care.

Through **Petrocaribe**, Venezuela also supplied oil on fair terms to countries across the Caribbean. This helped them fund healthcare, education, housing, and social programmes without being pushed into debt.

Venezuela has also **consistently supported the rights of the Palestinian people**, strongly opposing Israel's current genocide and previous wars. This has included breaking diplomatic relations and expelling the Israeli ambassador.

Venezuela's foreign policy of independence clearly clashes with Donald Trump's desire for total control.

This newsletter was made possible by kind sponsorship of the BFAWU, NEU and GFTU trade unions

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