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Venezuela-South Africa

Build solidarity with the people of Venezuela - Reject US imperialist aggression

- Features -

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ZASO unequivocally condemns the US invasion of Venezuela and the kidnapping of its president, Nicolás Maduro. We call on the South African government to denounce this violation of the UN Charter and to demand the release of the kidnapped president and his wife immediately. The South African government must use every diplomatic avenue to isolate the US.

The US has been intervening in the countries of Latin America for more than 200 years, but rarely, at least in the recent past, has an action been so blatant, so shameless and so nakedly self-interested.

The paper-thin veil of a war against 'narco-terror', which has been the excuse for destroying shipping in the Caribbean, has now been ripped aside as the US regime openly declares its intention to expropriate Venezuela's vast oil reserves in the service of the profits of US oil companies. All pretence of international law, the founding principles of the United Nations, the post WWII international order, have been swept away as the US seeks to establish its domination through brute force.

And this is what, above all, is striking. In the past, the real goals of imperialism have been partly concealed beneath excuses – weapons of mass destruction, support for 'democracy' – but this time there is only the flimsiest of fig leaves to cover the nakedness of raw power. The amount of drugs that travel from Venezuela to the US – whether cocaine or fentanyl – is universally accepted as minuscule.

This is the shameless, barbarous rule of brute force, with no excuses.

ZASO has not been a supporter of the Maduro regime, especially since the 2024 elections. Its suppression of democracy, its failure to protect social rights, including the incomes of public sector workers, its incarceration of political prisoners – in our view these have nothing to do with socialism. Moreover, it has created space for reactionary forces, including from the US state, to drive a wedge between the government and the mass of people. Nevertheless, we stand with the people of Venezuela and progressive forces around the world in their existential fight against US imperialism and the brazen attempted theft of their national resources.

We do so on the basis of the principle of national self-determination. We have supported the Ukrainian people on the same basis since the Russian invasion. We continue to stand on the same anti-imperialist ground, as the US regime clearly signals that Cuba is next on its list to take out regimes that it regards as unfriendly. And after that? And after that? Which country is next in the project to build a US-owned and -controlled 'Western hemisphere'? Greenland? Brazil? Mexico? Canada? Is Africa immune, after the bombings in Nigeria only a week ago? In South Africa we cannot afford to be complacent, especially in the light of the US rhetoric about a white genocide.

And we understand that this attack on Venezuela is also driven by US geopolitical interests to weaken the growing influence of China and Russia in Latin America and across the globe. This is an influence that challenges long-standing US control through investment, trade, energy partnerships, and diplomatic alliances. Venezuela's resources, especially its oil, and its strategic position, have made it a target for coercion and regime-change operations designed to reassert US imperial control at any cost.

Meanwhile, the 'democracies' of the West line up behind each other with their mealy-mouthed excuses for this aggression. The UK's great defender of human rights, Keir Starmer, says Maduro is no friend of his and he is glad to

see him go. He doesn't have enough information to determine whether there has been any breach of international law.

And they queue up behind that dishonesty – the EU, France, Germany, they all claim not to know what happened, as it played out on YouTube in front of their eyes. In Europe, only Norway has come out clearly to say the US is in breach of international law. And this is the same vicious charade we have seen over the last two years in Palestine –a refusal to condemn the clear genocide. Permission for Zionist Israel to continue slaughtering Palestinians, even long after the 'ceasefire'.

The goalposts of what is acceptable in the use of force in international relations have shifted decisively. Brute force is fine. Victory for the forces of the right at all costs.

However, time will tell whether the US has overestimated its power. Right now, there still appears to be a government in Venezuela, which is demanding the release of the president. So this is by no means a done deal. Could it be Trump's Vietnam?

As we enter the most flagrant era of US imperialist aggression in decades, whatever our differences, progressive forces, especially socialists, must stand together. We must defend the countries of Latin America from US aggression, with all the resources at our disposal. This is an existential fight for survival – not just for Venezuelans, but for all of us.

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[ZASO](#) is an anticapitalist, eco-socialist organisation whose key objective is to contribute to the building of a mass movement for socialism in South Africa.

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