

Washington presses regional governments to secure Maduro's ouster in Venezuela

Andrea Lobo
6 September 2024

Five weeks after the July 28 presidential elections in Venezuela, the fascistic leader of the US-backed opposition, Maria Corina Machado, demanded on Thursday that the Biden administration “do more” to oust President Nicolas Maduro from power.

Speaking to reporters from an undisclosed location, Machado argued that this was a matter of strategic importance for US interests globally and concluded: “I am partial to maximum pressure.” She then repeated her appeals for the Venezuelan military to overthrow Maduro.

Following a Supreme Court ruling on August 22 declaring Maduro re-elected, Machado's Unitary Platform coalition has continued to claim that its candidate, Edmundo González Urrutia, won the election.

The entire election predictably served as a fraudulent “democratic” cover to create the conditions for a coup and possible foreign military interventions, and the Biden administration is already escalating pressures on all fronts.

At the same time, having already failed to oust Maduro by simply recognizing another self-anointed “president” like Juan Guaidó in 2019, Washington has continued to support talks with Caracas for a negotiated handover of power.

If possible, the Biden administration hopes for a regime change without a prolonged civil war or a more catastrophic economic disruption that could affect oil production or provoke a further exodus of migrants and the political intervention of key sectors of the working class.

The *Wall Street Journal* reported this week that US-based oil giant Chevron pressured the White House to safeguard its continued production in the country, which has the largest known reserves in the world, even if that means keeping Maduro in power.

Venezuelan oil exports, including to the US and Europe, reached a four-year high of 885,000 barrels per day last month and are seen as a potential alternative for Europe to Russia, whose exports are sanctioned, and the war-torn Middle East.

Company executives argued, moreover, that Chevron serves as “a bulwark there against geopolitical adversaries gaining additional footholds in the country.”

The Biden administration, however, has made clear that in the context of an emerging world war against Russia and China,

nothing will suffice but total domination of Venezuelan oil and other key natural resources and cheap labor platforms in US imperialism's “backyard.”

Pro-opposition demonstrations have remained subdued since July 30. While the corporate media claims this is primarily due to a wave of arrests and repression, such a swift suppression of the protests led by the far right can only be explained by a lack of active popular support, which entirely belies the claims of the Morenoite pseudo-left that these protests represented in any way the “popular will.”

The far right has continued its attacks against public infrastructure, which only exacerbate mass suffering, including possibly recent fires that temporarily disrupted the electrical grid and the railroads.

While threatening to add sanctions against Venezuelan officials, Washington is now primarily acting through its regional allies, both the openly right-wing and nominally “left” governments alike, which have combined direct appeals for talks with Maduro with rabid provocations and backchannel overtures to the Venezuelan armed forces.

US authorities stole Maduro's presidential airplane last week in the Dominican Republic, whose multimillionaire President Luis Abinader met with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Friday to coordinate future actions regarding Venezuela.

In a major intensification of these efforts, on Thursday, Ecuador's president, the banana oligarch Daniel Noboa, requested that the UN Security Council declare the Venezuelan crisis a “direct threat to regional stability and international security,” clearly trying to set the stage for a foreign military intervention. The Chinese and Russian delegations blocked the discussion.

That same night, Argentine President Javier Milei hosted a summit of the fascist Madrid Forum that Machado belongs to. There, this cheerleader for the Zionist genocide in Gaza lamented that “the free world is crossing its arms” while Maduro turns Venezuela into a “human cemetery.”

As Milei was speaking, Argentine troops were finishing 10 days of military exercises with the Pentagon and the Chilean military, which were hosted by pseudo-left Chilean President Gabriel Boric. The exercises were launched after a “defense conference” in Santiago, where the US military's top

commander, Gen. Charles C. Brown, US Southern Command Chief Gen. Laura Richardson, and several Latin American and NATO military officials discussed “regional threats to democracy,” with a focus on Venezuela.

Then there was the publication of a statement signed by 31 former Latin American and Spanish presidents, whose hands are covered with the blood of hundreds of thousands from imperialist wars and state violence, demanding that the International Criminal Court order the arrest of the entire Venezuelan leadership.

In a manner entirely complicit with these fascist forces, the nominal allies of Maduro in the “pink tide” governments of Lula da Silva in Brazil, Gustavo Petro in Colombia and Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO) in Mexico have sought to strong arm Maduro toward an off ramp, while backing the demands of the Venezuelan far right and Washington that Maduro present proof of his victory.

After Maduro and Machado both rejected their initial proposal for new elections, Lula and Petro are now pushing for an international “inquiry” into voting records and the setting up of a transitional government.

These maneuvers make it clear that the elections were conceived of from the outset as a mechanism to press forward for regime change and secure US geopolitical interests in the context of brutal economic sanctions. All demands for an inquiry on election data from these governments are aimed at furthering the drive to bring to power the CIA “assets” who comprise the right-wing opposition.

Currently, Colombian Foreign Minister Luis Gilberto Murillo, who is particularly close to the US political establishment, has sought to coordinate a meeting between Maduro, Lula, AMLO and Petro in efforts openly backed by Washington.

During this process, Lula has adopted an increasingly impatient and menacing tone, declaring last week that Maduro “must bear the consequences of his actions, and I will bear the consequences of my actions. Now I have the political awareness that I tried to help a lot, but a lot and a lot.” It is worth recalling that last December, Lula deployed troops to the Venezuelan border amid threats by Maduro to take control of territories disputed with neighboring Guyana.

At the same time, Washington has sought to make an example of the government of Honduran President Xiomara Castro, one of the few that still backs Maduro. Last week, the US ambassador denounced a meeting between Honduran Defense officials with Venezuelan Defense Minister Vladimir Padrino López. This was followed by the leaking of a video given by the head of a local drug cartel to US authorities that shows Castro’s brother-in-law accepting money from the cartel during her election campaign.

This has led to a wave of resignations in Honduras and a media and political campaign calling for the overthrow of Castro herself similar to that preceding the US-backed military

coup in 2009 that ousted Castro’s husband, Manuel Zelaya.

Meanwhile, the Maduro administration has tried to use the elections and the aftermath to convince US imperialism that it can serve its interests better than the opposition by continuing to suppress the class struggle. It has combined threats against the far-right opposition with an olive branch to US imperialism.

At the same time, a recent reshuffling of cabinet positions, including the naming of Diosdado Cabello—the second most powerful leader of the Chavistas—as Interior Minister points to insecurity over allegiances. The elections have also shown that the government has lost a significant base of support in the working class.

In recent days, arrests of suspected opposition supporters have stopped, and a bill to outlaw foreign NGOs and another to wipe out organizations accused of “fascism” have been temporarily shelved.

Maduro has also extended the repression against organizations to the left of the government.

While an arrest warrant was issued against opposition candidate González Urrutia, efforts to detain him and Machado have been limited. On Wednesday, general prosecutor Tarek William Saab, a top Chavista leader, summoned González Urrutia’s lawyer, José Vicente Haro, for a private three-hour meeting.

While Williams Saab reaffirmed the arrest warrant against González Urrutia and rebuffed requests for an inquiry into the elections, Haro himself represents a bridge between factions of the ruling class and US imperialism. He helped draft the 1999 Constitution approved under Hugo Chávez and several other laws, while advising top Chavista officials before becoming a Stanford fellow and deepening ties with US foreign policy circles.

The dangers for the working class cannot be overstated. If Machado-Gonzalez have their way, they would install a fascist, military dictatorship that would seek to privatize oil and other sectors and impose brutal social austerity at the behest of Wall Street, while aligning the country behind the US-NATO war against China and Russia.

However, every established political organization in Venezuela has been implicated in backing Chavismo or the far right. The most important aspect of the Venezuelan crisis is that it has exposed all bourgeois nationalist governments of the Latin American pink tide and their pseudo-left apologists as instruments of US imperialism as it drags the region and the world toward world war, fascist reaction and barbarism.



To contact the WSWs and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

[wsws.org/contact](https://www.wsws.org/contact)