



New National Assembly Takes Office as Guaidó Loses EU Recognition

Washington doubled down on its support for the opposition leader.

By Manuela Solé

Mérida, January 6, 2021 – Venezuela's newly elected National Assembly (AN) was seated on Tuesday for the 2021-2025 term. Lawmakers selected former Communications Minister Jorge Rodríguez as the new National Assembly president, Iris Varela as vice president and Didalco Bolívar as second vice president. "There must be reconciliation but without amnesia. There were crimes against the most humble people which must be paid for," Rodríguez assured in his opening speech. The new AN president went on to call on new legislators to listen to people's demands and "rebuild what was destroyed," in reference to the opposition's actions after winning a parliamentary majority in 2015.

The opposition-controlled parliament was declared in contempt and its decisions deemed "null and void" following a dispute with the Supreme Court in 2016. The body retained support from the US and allies and its leaders repeatedly voiced support for

sanctions and regime change efforts.

For his part, United Socialist Party (PSUV) deputy Diosdado Cabello welcomed the recently elected opposition deputies during his speech. "I am sure the elected opposition lawmakers will legislate for the people alongside our majority," he stated. Nevertheless, the opposition deputies, who represent almost 10 percent of the parliament, rejected the Bolivarian Bloc's leadership proposal and abstained from voting.

More than 6 million voters elected 277 deputies for the National Assembly on December 6. The ruling PSUV party and allies achieved 69.32 percent of the valid votes cast and 253 deputies. Turnout stood at 30.5 percent of the electoral roll.

While the installation ceremony had a host of international guests and diplomats in attendance, Washington was quick to voice its opposition. In a statement, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo declared once again that "[opposition leader and former AN President] Guaidó and the



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[outgoing] National Assembly are the only democratic representatives of the Venezuelan people." The Trump administration rejected the December 6 elections as "fraudulent" and refused to recognize its results. The Lima Group, a regional bloc composed mostly of right-wing Latin American governments and Canada, echoed Washington's position in a joint statement, while OAS Secretary General Luis Almagro called on the international community to dismiss the new AN as "spurious."

However, the European Union struck a different tone in a recent statement by referring to Guaidó and allies as "representatives of the outgoing National Assembly," no longer acknowledging the opposition leader as "interim president." Two EU diplomats told Reuters that Guaidó's self-proclaimed post no longer had "institutional standing" now that a new parliament was seated. The European bloc claimed in its statement the elections "failed to comply with the international standards for a

credible process." "The EU will maintain its engagement with all political and civil society actors striving to bring back democracy to Venezuela, including in particular Juan Guaidó and other representatives of the outgoing National Assembly," the statement went on to say.

Opposition sectors led by Guaidó held a virtual ceremony on Tuesday as well and installed a parallel legislative body, although the number of former deputies that participated is not known.

The hardline opposition groups boycotted December's elections and instead decreed an extension of the mandate of the outgoing National Assembly's term into 2021. In response, the Venezuelan Supreme Court's Constitutional Chamber invalidated the measure. The sentence declared any action taken by legislators to "perpetuate their status as National Assembly lawmakers" to be "lacking in judicial validity and effect".

[Article taken from: <https://venezuelanalysis.com/news/15089>]



A New Revolutionary Alternative for the People of Venezuela



By Ben Lunn (CPB) and Paul Dobson (PCV) Morning Star

For many on the left in Britain and within the heart of the global capitalist system, Venezuela has been an example of staunch opposition to US and Nato imperialism, with a broad collection of revolutionaries fending off multiple coups, mercenary attacks and resisting an imperialist blockade of late. This vision of defiance and tenacity has painted a very particular idea of what the experience is in Venezuela, which ultimately makes the formation of the Popular Revolutionary Alternative (APR), a new bloc of left wing groups without the ruling PSUV, quite a remarkable surprise.

The APR, which was formally constituted in July, looks to provide an alternative voice to the disenfranchised leftists in the country and all those who are unsatisfied with the rightward drift of the current government, and ideological confusion; shamefully symbolised of late by the call for the creation of a "revolutionary bourgeoisie" by the Land Minister Wilmar Castro Soteldo. It marks a significant tactical shift by one of its creating factors, the Communist Party of Venezuela (PCV), which has stood alongside the PSUV for many years.

Apart from the PCV, the APR includes the majority currents of the Homeland for All Party (PPT) and Tupamaro Party,

both of whom have suffered internal Supreme Court-led coup d'états in their party leadership of late, as well as United Left party, Class Struggle from the Marxist International and a host of grassroots activists, trade unionists, and individuals who share the task of creating a left wing counterweight to the government.

As a combined force, the APR will be launching an independent set of revolutionary candidates for the December 6 parliamentary election for the first time in Venezuela's recent history, and plans on representing and strengthening day-to-day struggles thereafter. For those fighting the daily struggles within Venezuela, the formation of the APR comes after a long period of stagnation, contradiction and internal failures which have seen the upper echelons of the PSUV speaking with revolutionary vigour, but failing to deliver with concrete policies. The need and timing of this alternative is particularly pertinent because the local right-wing and highly divided opposition forces are unlikely to make any electoral gains in December.

The core of the APR's critiques include the government's failure to invest in and develop productive infrastructure in the oil-rich nation, especially in local petrol, gas and electrical generation, which would have helped alleviate the impact of the inter-

national imperialist economic blockade. Other issues include a failure to combat corruption; impunity in fatal landlord-led attacks against progressive small farmers, and a dwindling down of the communal empowerment initiated by Hugo Chavez.

Politically, APR forces point to the fact that the Maduro government regularly meets and negotiates policies with the right and business sector, but has turned his back on his leftist allies' proposals and meeting-spaces.

On top of this, petit-bourgeois elements within the

The anti-imperialist APR highlights that despite strong divergence on domestic policy, there is much common ground with the PSUV in international policy, and the PCV firmly continues to stand with the government and other patriotic forces within the Simon Bolivar Great Patriotic Pole against foreign interference. Nonetheless, the new bloc is looking to offer voters a set of candidates which promote a revolutionary way out of the current crisis of Venezuela's rentist and structural capitalist system as the

'The next few months are going to be definitive to the fate of South America for years to come, with elections in Bolivia, Ecuador, the US and Venezuela'

PSUV have managed to implement an economic policy which is promoting privatisations, de facto dollarisation, widespread concessions to large capital, the destruction of collective labour rights, the persecution of workers and unionists, and a real wage reduction to £3 a month, which, alongside unchecked inflation, collapsed public services and austerity-hit social programmes, have hit the living standard of the poorest the hardest. These internal issues underline the key problems of the PSUV leadership, but also demonstrate the flags of struggle which the APR will be flying in the coming months.

best way to confront imperialism.

Granting concessions to large capital is not, according to the APR, the way to defeat the blockade. Sadly, since the formation of the APR, the state has not responded kindly.

Since July, the APR has seen numerous working-class leaders sacked from public-sector jobs, starting with the case of Sergio Requena, an aluminium factory leader in a state-run industry and founder of the Workers' Productive Army (EPO), which enlists volunteer technicians to perform maintenance on state entities for free.

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He was later reinstated following a widespread popular pressure campaign, with bosses claiming his sacking was "a technical mistake." Other candidates have also reported having their homes ransacked by police without search warrants, and a number of candidates have been detained by security forces, albeit for short periods of time in what can only be interpreted as scare tactics.

One of the most prominent detentions was that of former PPT leader and joint founding member of the APR, Rafael Uzcategui, who was falsely implicated in a prostitution ring in Caracas before being released. Likewise, the double detention of candidate Isabel Granado in Merida State has caused international shockwaves.

Granado, 23, is a mother of three and a peasant leader in a fierce land struggle in the El Trompillo ranch, where over 1,000 peasant families were

granted land rights under the Chavez government, only to now have them revoked under the current administration. The peasants, who mostly produce bananas, yuca, and papaya, have been attacked in the past by security forces responding to the local landowning elites with the backing of PSUV leaders, judges, and military leaders who themselves want to take over the prosperous ranch.

Granado, who was arrested twice within four days by the heavily armed FAES special forces with their faces covered. During the first arrest, one of her children was hit, and during both her life was threatened by the officers. She has been forced to continue her candidacy in hiding with peasant anger at government policy rising.

The recent hostilities towards candidates of the APR combined with other troubling domestic developments, such as the restructuring of the FAES, demonstrates the vision of circumstances in Venezuela are not utopian but they are

certainly complicated; which, without critical analysis of the developments as they are happening, lead us to run the risk of either justifying international interference or allowing the petit-bourgeois elements of the PSUV to run the party and the Bolivarian Revolution into a reformist corner from which it cannot escape.

For the people of Venezuela, this sets up a dangerous precedent for the groundbreaking developments which have been able to flourish thanks to the Chavez leadership. For those in the heart of imperialism, the lead-up to the coming election in December highlights the need for continuing support of the Venezuelan people, its electoral system, and its right to a diverse and progressive National Assembly. The results of the election need to be respected, campaign-time attacks condemned, and we must make every effort to confront the lies and slander that will undoubtedly be peddled by the US, EU, and Nato. Ven-

ezuelans need our support to defend themselves against imperialism's continuing attacks and the criminal blockade, to which Boris Johnson's government is an active member.

But this does not mean that the PSUV should be given a free pass to attack workers and ineptly deteriorate living conditions, and it needs to be held to account by an organised expression of the revolutionary, class-conscious forces.

The next few months are going to be definitive to the fate of South America for years to come, with elections in Bolivia, Ecuador, the US and Venezuela, where we see a new opportunity for a revolutionary jump forward beginning to be organised. The international solidarity movement needs to be ready for the struggles ahead.

[Article taken from: <https://venezuelanalysis.com/analysis/15030>]

UK Funds Communications Programs Against Venezuela

The UK government illegally financed the Efecto Cocuyo website to undermine and destabilize Venezuela, national media released on Thursday.

According to a report by Globovision TV, which provides details of a study originally issued by the British media Daily Maverick (or Declassified-UK), the Venezuelan website was hired for one million dollars to act as a 'mercenary of journalism.'

The aforementioned report reveals that for a long time the UK has financed projects to bolster alleged independent investigative journalism in Latin America to undermine foreign leaders and political movements considered a threat to British business interests.

In response to a request for freedom of information processed by those in charge of the website, the UK Foreign Office handed over data revealing how from January 2016 to September 2018, it financed the known Cocuyo Effect Foundation, as well as the Fey Alegria Radio Institute and the National Union of Press Workers (SNTP), the press release refers.

According to Globovision's report, the documents show,

among other things, that while receiving those funds, Cocuyo partnered with the British Bellingcat and Forensic Architecture organizations to dig deeper and ask for more pieces of evidence about Oscar Perez's death during a confrontation with the Venezuelan police.

Perez was a police officer who stole a helicopter on June 27, 2017 to throw explosives over several government buildings in downtown Caracas, terrorist attacks that several media showed as heroic.

In July 2019, the editor of the aforementioned website, Luz Mely Reyes, participated in the Global Conference for Media Freedom event, promoted by London, where the then Foreign Affairs Secretary Jeremy Hunt praised her by pointing out that she had defied 'the Maduro regime by co-founding an independent news website,' the TV station assures.

Declassified, the source refers, lately revealed that a secret Cold War propaganda unit, called the Information Research Department (IRD), tried to prevent Chilean socialist Salvador Allende from winning the 1964 and 1970 presidential elections, as well as that unit's relationship with the



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1964-1985 Brazilian dictatorship.

It highlights the information that despite the IRD's closure in 1977, they continue to sponsor allegedly independent journalistic projects in Latin America.

The documents obtained by Declassified also prove that the Westminster Foundation for Democracy, known as the UK's democracy promotion arm,

has executed programs in and against Venezuela, in which they have invested over one million dollars since 2016 to subvert the Bolivarian process.

[Article taken from: <https://www.plenglish.com/>]

Let Venezuela Breathe!

Dear VA readers,

If 2019 had been a challenging year for Venezuela, 2020 somehow managed to surpass it. Electricity blackouts, a border standoff and a coup attempt gave way to a paramilitary invasion attempt, a global pandemic, and now, parliamentary elections this December 6. But there has been one constant: devastating US sanctions.

Hell bent on regime change, Washington has levied ever more crippling unilateral measures to strangle the Venezuelan economy. The sanctions, which have been denounced as “collective punishment,” have imposed severe hardship, from fuel and medicine shortages to a breakdown of public services, handicapping any efforts at economic recovery. Hardest hit is the country’s working-class black and indigenous majority, overwhelmingly concentrated in the informal sector. Simply put, Venezuelans can’t breathe!

But Venezuelans are not alone. In nearby Colombia, Haiti, and Chile, people have been rising up against murderous neoliberal client regimes backed by Washington, while the US Empire has itself been rocked by the George Floyd rebellion against white supremacist police terror.

Across the hemisphere, the US imperial “policeman” has relied on a loyal Western corporate media ever eager to whitewash its asphyxiating violence – whether



at home or abroad – and that of its local proxies.

And here is where alternative media like **Venezuelanalysis** come in. **For seventeen years, we have stood firm against the corporate media propaganda war**, never ceasing to platform the voices of the Bolivarian grassroots. Against all odds, Venezuelan popular movements continue to organize and resist, and we at VA remain as committed as ever to defending the Venezuelan people’s right to life, dignity, and self-determination.

But we need your support! Independent of government or corporate backers, our on-the-ground coverage relies 100%

‘For seventeen years, we have stood firm against the corporate media propaganda war, never ceasing to platform the voices of the Bolivarian grassroots.’

on contributions from readers like you. VA needs \$15,000 (*) to continue its operations in the coming year. We urge you to support us with whatever you can. **A \$10, 20 or 30 a month contribution goes a long way to sustain our grassroots independent journalism.** No donation is too small!

And this year we have a special treat! Utopix, Venezuela’s coolest artist collective, is designing a kicking **VA t-shirt**. If your donation is \$50 or more,

we will send you a complimentary one!

Happy holidays,

Cira, Manuela, Paul, Ricardo, Jeanette, Katrin, Lucas, Rachael and Greg for the VA team.

[Article taken from: <https://venezuelanalysis.com/donate>]

Join Hands Off Venezuela!

The international broad-based Hands Off Venezuela campaign was established in 2002 to generate awareness about Venezuela, especially within the trade union and Labour movements. Our main task is to mobilise public opinion against imperialist aggression towards Venezuela.

The basic aims of the campaign are to:

- Give full support to the Venezuelan revolution, which has repeatedly proved its democratic credentials.
- Defend the revolution against the attacks of imperialism and its local agents the Venezuelan oligarchy.
- To counteract the media distortions and lies about Venezuela.

To get your trade union or other organisation affiliated, here are the recommended annual affiliation fees: National trade unions: £500, regional bodies: £250, branches/trades councils: £50, others: £25. Membership fees for individuals are: waged: £7.50 and unwaged: £5 (suggested)

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