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Geraldina Colotti

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## ***Fascism takes over Citgo. Maduro: "It's the theft of the century"***



Venezuela is mobilizing against the US decision to auction the shares of the parent of the Citgo Petroleum Corp refinery, PDV Holding, the main asset of the Bolivarian Republic abroad. A path for the company to be confiscated by creditors, after "negotiations" with those whom the United States recognizes as "representatives": the gang of the self-proclaimed Juan Guaidó or its derivatives, who had been allowed to access funds blocked by the illegal unilateral coercive measures, imposed on Venezuela.



Venezuelan government will defend Citgo against the attempted theft of the US in favor of the extremist opposition.

The Treasury Department had until now "protected" Citgo from creditors, but now, to tighten the noose even more on the Bolivarian revolution, Washington hawks have once again blocked the possibility of a change of course, proposed by the International Conference of Bogotá, which had Venezuela as its theme.

At that meeting, the 20 delegations, representing three continents, had agreed on a series of "recommendations", to be presented both to the Bolivarian government and to that part of the opposition that is in the Unitary Platform, to renew the interrupted dialogue in Mexico. In the center, the end of the "sanctions", a priority condition set by the Bolivarian government.



Colombian President Gustavo Petro and Colombian Foreign Minister Alvaro Leyva at the international conference on the political crisis in Venezuela, at the [Palacio de San Carlos in Bogota, Colombia, April 25, 2023](#). REUTERS/Luisa Gonzalez

The conference, preceded by a round of international contacts by Colombian President Gustavo Petro, could not have been organized without the approval of the Biden administration. However, as a sign of the internal conflict and confusion that reigns in US foreign policy, the show of the former self-proclaimed, Juan Guaidó, was allowed. A character disheartened by his own cronies, whose strings, however, still have to be pulled to the end.

After crossing the border "on foot," as he himself declared, Guaidó went to the conference in Colombia, uninvited, and was escorted to the airport, where he was taken by his gringo godfathers to Miami. The former congressman protested being expelled from Colombia.

In truth, President Maduro denounced, its objective was to "coordinate the theft of the Citgo company", formalized with General License 42, issued by the Office of Foreign Assets Control (Ofac), which authorizes a sector of the extreme right to deal with the issue of the debts of the Bolivarian Republic and the state company Petróleos de Venezuela (PDVSA).

Maduro explained that, with a document dated April 7, the Biden administration delivered "all the assets of the Citgo company, all the money of Venezuela abroad, to a group of opposition political parties, belonging to the Unitary Platform, to be sold, to negotiate, do and undo." Washington, the president reiterated, "is carrying out one of the greatest looting that has ever been done against any country in the world," and accused Biden of

"stabbing the Bogotá conference in the back," reaching where "not even Trump had dared." In fact, the date of the decision indicates that everything was already prepared before the Petro Conference, which ended on April 26.

A provocation to which the Bolivarian government has responded firmly, both internationally and nationally. During a meeting of the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, in relation to the objective 16 of the UN, which aims to "promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies", the alternate permanent representative of Venezuela to the UN, Joaquín Pérez Ayestarán, denounced the "sanctions" imposed by the US and the theft of Citgo.



Venezuela [denounces before the UN confiscation of Citgo](#): Joaquín Pérez Ayestaran, alternate representative of Venezuela

The Bolivarian government "will not recognize any negotiation or payment agreement with any creditor that is not directed by the Venezuelan State," said Vice President Delcy Rodríguez, explaining the mechanism by which the "illegal expropriation" of the Venezuelan company Citgo Petroleum Corporation is being carried out. The decision, which constitutes a violation of public and private international law, as well as Venezuelan law, authorizes members of the defunct National Assembly of 2015 to carry out transactions to negotiate the debt of the national government, PDVSA or any institution in which the republic owns with an equity stake equal to or greater than 50%.

"There is no law on the planet that OFAC License 42 has not violated," Rodríguez said from the Miraflores Palace, accompanied by Foreign Minister Yvan Gil and Oil Minister Pedro Tellechea. The vice president recalled the prodromes of this decision, anticipated by another provision of OFAC, issued on January 9, 2023, which allowed the National Assembly of 2015, "the power to deal with any person, institution or company in the United States." And, in fact, on March 15, former congresswoman Dinora Figuera, of the

Primero Justicia party, met with State Department officials "to establish the staging of this flagrant and vulgar theft of the century."

Rodriguez denounced that Washington, assuming the role of victim, intends to ignore the decision of the Delaware Court of Justice, which allows Venezuelan debt holders to confiscate the Citgo company. Among them are: ConocoPhillips, Crystallex, Rusoro, Gold Reserve, Koch Minerals, Owens Illinois, ACLI Investments, Northrop Grumman Systems. Against OFAC General License 42, Rodriguez said, "according to instructions from the head of state, Nicolás Maduro, the National Government will exercise all actions in defense of our interests, our rights and the patrimony of Venezuelans."

Houston-based Citgo is the seventh-largest refinery in the United States. It has plants in Louisiana, Illinois and Texas and is valued at more than \$13 billion. Robert Pincus, a court-appointed official, who met with the Treasury and Justice Departments, urged the court to hurry "to take advantage of Citgo's recent financial and operational performance and the current state of the refinery industry."

Canadian miner Crystallex International is asking PDV Holding for \$970 million. Other creditors with at least \$2.600 billion in claims against Venezuela have received conditional approval to join the lawsuit. Pincus proposed to begin the sale process on Sept. 5 with the highest bid received by the court through June 2024. The court entered into an agreement with investment banker Evercore to gauge market demand and make the sale.

Citgo, Maduro said during the May 1 march, generates annual revenues of more than 1,000 million dollars and has more than 10,000 gas stations in the United States. Resources that belong to the people and that, if they had been available, would have been used to increase the income of the workers. Therefore, the Venezuelan parliament, the legitimate one, approved, in initial discussion, the bill for the protection of assets abroad.

"We are going to apply the Law of Extinction of Domain to all those lacay@s involved in this robbery of the republic," said the president of the National Assembly, Jorge Rodríguez, presiding over the parliamentary session, which will continue this week. The Asset Forfeiture Act provides for the possibility of seizing and redistributing assets resulting from corruption. A crime considered "treason", which is being pursued on a large scale after the discovery of a gigantic network that has stolen public money for about 23,000 million dollars.

The legitimate An has urged its application to 72 former deputies who usurp public functions. The State will not recognize any transaction involving Venezuelan property. It is provided in article 138 of the Bolivarian Constitution, according to which "any usurped

authority is null and void and its acts are null and void". With the usual vis polemic, [Jorge Rodríguez demanded that the political leader, Henrique Capriles Radonski, order Dinora Figuera, a militant of his party, "to return all the money that was stolen."](#)

The State Department has in fact allowed the extinct AN of 2015 – which this year, after having withdrawn confidence in Guaidó, continued the electoral farce, entrusting the "management" to a triumvirate of fugitives from justice, led by Figuera – the bank account of some 347 million. Venezuelan money frozen in US banks, disbursed to the opposition since 2019, when Juan Guaidó proclaimed himself "interim president". However, since the elimination of its imperial invention, in January 2023, the new "management" of the illegal An had not been able to access the loot, due to the "directive vacuum".

The problem was making the gang nervous, as they pressured their American sponsors to grant them access to "protected" resources abroad. And this lucrative transfer of signature may also explain Guaidó's flight to Miami, perhaps to negotiate a good "compensation". He was given a sugar by making him appear at a public rally, during which he thanked "Republican senators for their commitment to democracy."

In that context, former Florida Governor Rick Scott introduced him as "the presidential candidate of Voluntad Popular in the primaries," adding, "I hope that all of my colleagues and the White House will meet with the brave leaders of the opposition and align themselves with the Venezuelan people, to continue to be their voice against the nefarious Maduro regime." A group of activists protested against Guaidó, shouting "corrupt" and "murderer." He stammered: "Let them go to Venezuela to interrupt Nicolás Maduro, to see what happens to him." And, as the police carried away the protesters, he continued to brag about the wonders of American "democracy."

"The United States confuses the Bolivarian government's willingness to dialogue with weakness," Deputy Minister of Anti-Blockade Policies William Castillo said during the "A Pulso" program. Illustrating the investigative work carried out by the Sanctions Observatory, Castillo stressed how the fluctuating attitude of the US is due to the distorted vision given by the Venezuelan opposition, making it believe that "Maduro is falling, and sanctions must be increased."



Venezuela file: Citgo to auction to save Guaidó

A statement from the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America-Peoples' Trade Treaty (ALBA-TCP) also called the State Department's decision to ["expropriate Citgo through the illegitimate General License No. 42,"](#) a new aggression against the people and government of Venezuela, a "consequence of the unilateral coercive measures imposed by the U.S. government, that threaten the sovereignty of that country." Therefore, the Bolivarian Alliance called on the international community to demand the cessation of "sanctions", and expressed its support for "all legal measures undertaken by the Venezuelan government for the protection of its assets".

During his visit to Spain, Colombian President [Gustavo Petro](#) has returned for his part to denounce the effects of the "sanctions" on the Venezuelan people. After recalling that Colombia and Venezuela "are practically the same people," Petro said that, due to the "sanctions," Venezuelan society has gone from "living well and having access to the best whiskey in the world, to not having a dish to eat. And this," he added, "is not the opposition to Maduro, it is the reason why many emigrate." Petro also confirmed Washington's plans to invade Venezuela, discussed with his predecessor, prompting an angry reaction from members of Duque's former government.

But, this May, Venezuela remembered the third anniversary of [Operation Gideon](#), when a group of mercenaries sent by the United States and trained by Colombia tried to invade Venezuela with a plan to kill Maduro and the entire Chavista high command. During a public ceremony, the vice president of the PSUV, Diosdado Cabello, paid tribute to the courage of the people who stopped the invasion: "Revolutionary strength and unity," said the Captain, "are the greatest guarantee of victory of the Bolivarian revolution."

One of those mercenaries, a former marine, could be the subject of an exchange with Venezuelan diplomat [Alex Saab, kidnapped by the United States](#), whose health deteriorates day by day. The Venezuelan government also reiterated this on the occasion of the Bogotá Conference. But the United States has responded with this new act of imperial arrogance.

*Geraldina Colotti*

*Edited by [María Piedad Ossaba](#)*

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