

Maclean's, Re: When it comes to Venezuela, Canada's on the wrong side of the coup

Dear Editors:

I'm writing to congratulate Andray Domise, author of "When it comes to Venezuela, Canada is on the wrong side of the coup". I also wish to congratulate the editors of Maclean's for your courageous publication of a sorely needed antidote to the dominant narrative on the allegedly antidemocratic nature of the Venezuelan government, held by not only by the Canadian corporate media and government, but sadly, by too many allegedly progressive academics who should know better<sup>1</sup>.

As an Argentine physician, social scientist, and educator in the field of public policy, I am appalled at the propagandistic quality of mainstream Canadian reporting on Latin American issues that essentially toes the line of US regime-change operations which, not coincidentally, align well with Canada's own elite interests – in mining, tourism, and banking, to name a few. <sup>2,3</sup>

The misleading, when not outright false, nature of this reporting aside, it clearly disregards its role in legitimating the well-documented, catastrophic implications of these operations for the health and well-being of millions south of the Rio Grande. To mention just one such implication, the criminal, illegal and immoral US sanctions on Venezuela, enthusiastically endorsed by the Canadian government<sup>4</sup>, have caused an estimated, completely avoidable 40,000 deaths<sup>5</sup>, for no reason other than installing a US style "democracy"<sup>6</sup>. Of note, this "democracy" is opposed by the vast majority of Venezuelans who have benefited from the social, educational, health and economic policies implemented by the Bolivarian governments of Hugo Chavez and Nicolas Maduro, even as these policies appear to have provoked the wrath of Washington and Ottawa. As such, Venezuela joins the 20 nations (at the time of this writing) currently sanctioned by Ottawa, for alleged human rights violations<sup>7</sup>. Canadians are never told how come Saudi Arabia, a serial human rights violator if there ever was one<sup>8</sup>, does not make it into this list.

It is about time that Canadian foreign policy started taking seriously international law, the UN Charter, the right of self-determination of sovereign states and just plain human decency, not just rhetorically but, as Mr Domise compelling puts it in his article, by standing "on the right side" of history.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://theconversation.com/canadas-disturbing-indifference-to-the-plight-of-venezuelans-110544>

<sup>2</sup> Gordon, T. and J. R. Webber (2008). "Imperialism and Resistance: Canadian mining companies in Latin America." *Third World Quarterly* 29(1): 63-87.

<sup>3</sup> Engler, Y. (2009). *The Black Book of Canadian Foreign Policy*. Toronto, Fernwood Publisher.

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.canadainternational.gc.ca/colombia-colombie/highlights-faits/2019/2019-04-16\\_press-presse.aspx?lang=eng](https://www.canadainternational.gc.ca/colombia-colombie/highlights-faits/2019/2019-04-16_press-presse.aspx?lang=eng)

<sup>5</sup> Weisbrot, M. and J. Sachs (2019). "Economic Sanctions as Collective Punishment: The Case of Venezuela." *Center for Economic and Policy Research*

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.state.gov/the-united-states-imposes-maximum-pressure-on-former-maduro-regime/>

<sup>7</sup> [https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/international\\_relations-relations\\_internationales/sanctions/current-actuelles.aspx?lang=eng](https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/international_relations-relations_internationales/sanctions/current-actuelles.aspx?lang=eng)

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2020/01/saudi-arabia-why-amnesty-will-not-attend-sham-c20-meetings/>