



Canadian Association of University Teachers
Association canadienne des professeures et professeurs d'université

May 27, 2019

BY E-MAIL: Hon.chrystia.freeland@canada.ca

The Honourable Chrystia Freeland, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Foreign Affairs
House of Commons Ottawa,
Ontario Canada K1A 0A6

Dear Minister Freeland:

The Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT), representing over 72,000 academic, professional and general staff at over 120 universities and colleges across Canada, stands alongside the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) and other national and provincial labour organizations in condemning Canada's role in support of illegal regime change in Venezuela.

The United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) has condemned the sanctions imposed by Canada since 2017 as "blatant violations of the most fundamental rules of International Law".

A letter signed by over 70 scholars and experts and 50 international NGOs and human rights organizations called upon the American administration to "cease interfering in Venezuela's internal politics". It pointed out the following:

The reality is that despite hyperinflation, shortages, and a deep depression, Venezuela remains a politically polarized country. The US and its allies must cease encouraging violence by pushing for violent, extralegal regime change. If the Trump administration and its allies continue to pursue their reckless course in Venezuela, the most likely result will be bloodshed, chaos, and instability.

For the sake of the Venezuelan people, the region, and for the principle of national sovereignty, these international actors should instead support negotiations between the Venezuelan government and its opponents that will allow the country to finally emerge from its political and economic crisis.¹

¹ "An Open Letter to the United States: Stop Interfering in Venezuela's Internal Politics", January 24, 2019, *Common Dreams* (<https://www.commondreams.org/views/2019/01/24/open-letter-united-states-stop-interfering-venezuelas-internal-politics>)

For similar reasons, CAUT calls upon the Government of Canada to cease efforts in support of illegal regime change in Venezuela, to withdraw from the Lima Group, and to respect the OAS Charter.

CAUT also calls on the Canadian government to rescind economic sanctions against both individuals and the population as a whole in Venezuela. Instead, Canada should use its influence to seek a peaceful resolution to Venezuela's crisis that upholds the rule of International Law and respects Venezuela's indigenous democratic and constitutional processes.

CAUT has long demonstrated a commitment to supporting international human rights as part of promoting academic freedom and democratic processes. Calling upon the Canadian government to respect democratic processes and human rights in Venezuela and the region is within this tradition.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'David Robinson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

David Robinson
Executive Director

cc: The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister (pm@pm.gc.ca)