

US Sanctions Will Deepen Venezuelan Economic Crisis: UN

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"Water shortages, scarcity of natural gas and the collapse of public transport," are all effects of the sanctions, U.N. human rights chief, Michelle Bachelet, said.

Further sanctions from the United States will only serve to aggravate Venezuela's economic state, said U.N. human rights chief, Michelle Bachelet said Wednesday.

"I am concerned that the recent sanctions on financial transfers related to the sale of Venezuelan oil within the United States may contribute to aggravating the economic crisis, with possible repercussions on people's basic rights and wellbeing," Bachelet told the Human Rights Council.

On Tuesday, U.S. President Donald Trump warned that he had even "tougher measures" in store for the South American country if the democratically elected president didn't resign in favor of self-declared president and opposition lawmaker, Juan Guaido.

According to Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs, Carrie Filipetti told media sources that the U.S. never meant to harm Venezuelans.

However, Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro announced last week that the nationwide sustained blackout which extended from March 7 to March 12 was orchestrated from the U.S. Thousands were left without water and electricity for five days.

Bachelet insists that the political situation ought to be remedied democratically soon without risking further damage to the economy.

"Water shortages, scarcity of natural gas and the collapse of public transport also continue to affect many people, and together with hyperinflation, they generate dire economic conditions, which have triggered thousands of social

protests," Bachelet said.

In an open letter to the U.N. published by Ultimas Noticias, Economist Pasqualina Curcio wrote, "We live in an economic and political situation, which without becoming a humanitarian crisis, is characterized by the difficulty to acquire medicines and some food, as well as the accelerated increase in prices. The causes are the unilateral and illegal coercive measures of imperialism and the attacks on our currency that to date have caused us losses of more than 110 billion dollars, equivalent to 30 years of food and medicine for our people.

"Mrs. High Commissioner for Human Rights of the UN, Venezuelans do not need humanitarian aid. We demand that imperialism lift the financial and commercial blockade, stop the attack on our currency and stop the terrorist acts against our people," Curcio said.

Currently, a human rights team is on the ground to assess the situation, which Bachelet cheered as a "positive first step."

"It is important that the team have completely unhindered access, with no reprisals against any person who has met, or sought to meet, with them," she added.

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