

French youth speak out against Trump's illegal invasion of Venezuela

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The Trump administration's illegal invasion of Venezuela is provoking an explosion of anger in France and worldwide. The decision of the hegemonic imperialist power to kidnap an elected president, in an operation whose stated goal is to take over Venezuela and seize its oil revenues, signals the descent of world capitalism into unrestrained imperialist barbarism. French President Emmanuel Macron's initial decision to hail the invasion provoked deep disgust among the masses.

WSWS reporters interviewed students in the Paris area on US imperialism's intervention in Venezuela.

"It's a new form of colonialism," said Lucie, a literature student. "In fact, Trump does not care if the president" of Venezuela is not a democrat. "In any case, Trump himself is a fascist. And if he were really worried about this, he would have stopped the war in Ukraine. What interests Trump, in fact, are the oil resources in Venezuela."

Her fellow student Sarah added: "The United States should not have kidnapped the president of Venezuela, because they have no right to do that. ... And on top of that, look at how they kidnapped him: they blindfolded him!" She added, "In any case, it was obvious that Macron was going to support Trump. But I do not agree."

Jonas, a first-year history student, denounced the intervention in Venezuela: "It is scandalous. Trump is hiding behind some arguments to make out that he is helping the Venezuelan people, but he is just going there for money." Jonas also criticized the regime of Macron, who rules against the people, imposing pension cuts and social austerity measures opposed by an overwhelming majority of the population for an arms race and a potential intervention in Ukraine that is also rejected by the French people.

Macron, Jonas said, "argues that Venezuela did not respect democratic rights, but he himself does not really respect them anymore."

When WSWS journalists raised the question of a united international struggle of the working class to stop imperialist war and neocolonialism, Massamba, a language student, said: "What's happening is very serious, every country must speak out. Think what would have happened if another country [besides the USA] had attacked [Venezuela], I do not think the reactions would have been the same. ... We must at least try to mobilize ourselves to change the situation, this is not something we can accept."

Karim, a law student, said: "This is a paroxysm of US imperialism in pure form, unabashed. In the period of Reagan, in the 1980s, they did operations covertly. Now a barrier has been reached, in the recent years they have allowed themselves to do anything, especially Trump, he plays around with that. ... He threatens everyone. He is mainly threatening countries who are overall more affiliated to China and which therefore, for him, have the same rank as Venezuela, that is, countries that still are looking for their emancipation."

He added, "Donald Trump has contempt for international law ... We don't know how many people were killed in the operation, where exactly he struck, sent attack or reconnaissance helicopters for the CIA to kidnap a president who, whatever else one says about him, was nonetheless democratically elected."

Karim stressed his contempt for arguments that Washington aims to defend democracy in Venezuela: "In any case, the United States themselves are being turned into a dictatorship, sending the military and ICE to control US immigrant populations. In fact, there is no more rule of law in the United States, they are giving full powers to Trump who does whatever he

wants, and nobody has the right to go against him.”

He also criticized the role of European governments, who hailed the kidnapping of Maduro while also mouthing a few phrases about international law. Karim said, “The European Union is pressuring Venezuela to calm down, but it is Venezuela who has been targeted by a major attack from the United States. It is literally a declaration of war, as the United States are sending troops, armed forces, in another country which did absolutely nothing to the United States.”

Asked what underlies this reaction of Europe’s imperialist bourgeoisies, Karim pointed to the militarization of Europe that is taking place despite mass popular opposition: “In France, they are raising the military budget. And we are getting ready to go fight in Ukraine, which no one wants to do. Normally, we should try to pacify the situation and create a dialog. But the European Union and the United States do not want dialog. They just pour fuel onto the fire.”

Asked about the perspective of an international mobilization of the working class to stop the wars and bring down illegitimate, antidemocratic governments, Karim said: “For the United States, for the Americans, I think they are capable of creating mass movements ... I think they are moving into a real form of indignation.”



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