

US invasion of Venezuela exposes bankruptcy of Mélenchon's France Unbowed Party

Alex Lantier**17 January 2026**

Trump's illegal invasion of Venezuela to abduct President Nicolás Maduro is an act of imperialist plunder targeting not only Venezuela but all of Latin America and the world. Its utter lawlessness and Trump's open calls for US banks to seize Venezuela's oil revenues mark a major escalation in the international class war on working people. At home, Trump is sending anti-immigrant ICE police to occupy US cities and faces rapidly growing opposition in the working class, including calls for a general strike in Minneapolis.

Imperialism's turn to unabashed neocolonial war and the rise of the class struggle expose the bankruptcy of "populist" parties like Jean-Luc Mélenchon's France Unbowed (LFI) party. Hostile to the independent mobilization of the working class in struggle against the capitalist state and for workers' power and socialism, they call to unify the people—that is, to unify capitalists and workers based on nationalism. This anti-Marxist position only works to subordinate workers to bourgeois nationalist forces and block the necessary struggle against imperialism.

LFI calls on workers in Venezuela and internationally to subordinate themselves to Venezuela's capitalist regime, which is trying to work out a deal with Trump at workers' expense. Its statement, "Support the Venezuelan people against Trump's aggression," says:

France Unbowed gives its full support to the Venezuelan people and its authorities, facing an illegal and illegitimate war triggered by Donald Trump's administration against Venezuela. ... The USA is violating international law and trying to forcibly impose regime change. They are renewing their tradition of coups, wars and interventions that ravaged Latin America in the previous century. Faced with this aggression, the Venezuelan people's resistance is legitimate.

Masses of working people have participated in protests in

Caracas and across Venezuela after Maduro's abduction, and the situation in Caracas remains explosive. But in such a situation, the task of any genuine Marxist-Trotskyist tendency is to unify the struggles of the working class internationally against imperialism, independently from bourgeois nationalist forces that seek an accommodation to imperialism.

Mélenchon and LFI—by remaining silent on the revolutionary tasks of US and European workers, and demanding that Venezuelan workers obey the state machine—block such a struggle. LFI's entire policy is based on a political lie. It presents support for Venezuelan bourgeois nationalism as a strategy of resistance, but in reality the Venezuelan regime is desperately trying to work out a deal with US imperialism at workers' expense.

A week ago, the Chancellor of the Venezuelan regime, Yvan Gil, announced that interim President Delcy Rodriguez "decided to initiate an exploratory process of a diplomatic character with the government of the United States." This exploration, Gil added, is "oriented towards re-establishing diplomatic relations between the two countries," broken in 2019 by Trump during his first term. But re-establishing diplomatic relations after a US invasion, with Maduro still in a US prison, is a signal from the ruling elite in Caracas that it is willing to collaborate with Trump.

Indeed, the economic foundation of the Venezuelan regime's deepening ties with the Trump administration is Caracas' attempts to grant Washington more control over Venezuelan oil and natural resources. Such an economic collaboration could only be worked out between the US and Venezuelan bourgeoisies at the expense of the Venezuelan workers—in particular, by liquidating what remains of social spending based on Venezuela's now-shrinking oil revenues.

PDVSA, the Venezuelan national oil company, has hailed the US Navy's illegal seizure of a Russian tanker transporting Venezuelan oil in the Atlantic Ocean. Only days after the abduction of Maduro, it presented this US act of war against Russia as a great success of Venezuelan cooperation with Trump. The PDVSA, formerly run by

interim President Rodriguez, issued a communiqué declaring:

US and Venezuelan authorities have announced the success of the joint operations to force the return of the ship Minerva, which left port without paying for its oil and without the authorization of Venezuelan authorities.

Thanks to this first, successful joint operation, the vessel is now steaming to return to Venezuelan waters to be taken back under control and for other pertinent actions.

Neither PDVSA nor Rodriguez have clearly stated through which channels and with what aims the Venezuelan regime has established military collaboration with Washington. But PDVSA's silence on Trump's demand that Venezuela give him personally the control of part of its oil revenues is deafening. The Venezuelan regime is buffeted both by mass protests in Venezuela and by Trump's threats, but it is evident that factions at its summit are seeking collaboration with Trump.

The *New York Times* for its part wrote: "Venezuela's New Leader Went From Revolutionary to Trump's Orbit." Hailing Rodriguez for having "relied on a close-knit team of market-friendly officials," it added: "Ms. Rodríguez brokered a truce with Venezuela's economic elite and embarked on a stealth privatization of natural resources by giving foreign investors control over some coveted projects, such as oil fields, cement plants and iron ore mines."

The Spanish social democratic daily *El País*, citing CIA reports summarized by the *New York Times*, concluded: "The CIA has recommended to hand power in Venezuela to Delcy Rodriguez, given the risk that [Venezuelan bourgeois opposition leader] Maria Corina Machado might not be able to control the army. Donald Trump has opted for continuity of [Venezuela's] *chavista* regime, believing this is the best guarantee of stability in the Latin American country."

Mélenchon is thus trying to bolster the same force that Trump and the CIA are currently treating as key to their plans to subjugate Venezuela: Rodriguez's regime. Of course, Mélenchon briefly called on Venezuela, last weekend at a protest in Lyon, to oppose the United States "arms in hand." But this call—aiming to give his own policy a false, left-wing veneer—is in blatant contradiction with LFI's policy of full support to the Venezuelan regime.

Opposing imperialist war requires building an international movement in the working class. In countries targeted for conquest, the task of this movement is to take control of the

resources targeted for imperialist plunder out of the hands of rotten capitalist elites. In imperialist countries, the goal must be to take control of the economic resources of society out of the hands of a ruling class bent on wars of plunder abroad and dictatorship and social plunder at home. In both cases, this objectively leads the working class towards a struggle for socialist revolution.

LFI opposes the building of such a movement in France, however. It seeks to block the growth of the class struggle by forming an alliance, which it currently calls the New Popular Front (NFP), with the bourgeois Socialist Party (PS) and the Stalinist and Green parties and union bureaucracies. This alliance has worked relentlessly to subordinate the French working class to Macron.

The NFP backed the French union bureaucracies' sell-out of mass strikes against Macron's pension cuts in 2023, opposed by the overwhelming majority of French people. LFI was thus instrumental in letting Macron keep diverting tens of billions of euros from social spending to France's military. In 2024, LFI endorsed PS and pro-Macron candidates in snap general elections, claiming this would fight neo-fascism. It returned a series of weak, Macron-led minority governments to power.

Macron has applauded Maduro's abduction, hoping French imperialism could also benefit from the plundering of Venezuela despite rising tensions with the Trump administration. This indicates the urgent necessity not only for renewed working class struggles against Macron, but of a political break with Mélenchon and the NFP, who have played the leading role in enabling Macron to rule against the people.

This requires building rank-and-file committees in the working class, independent of the union bureaucracies like those in the NFP, to coordinate workers' struggles, block sell-outs as in the 2023 pension struggle and link them to workers' struggles internationally. Unifying rising workers' struggles against imperialism in the United States, Latin America, Europe and beyond requires fighting to build a socialist anti-war movement in the working class, based on a perspective of transferring power to the working class and pursuing socialist policies.



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