

# Study Claims 40,000 Venezuelans Dead as a Result of US Sanctions that Have Increased Under Trump

written by GEG | June 25, 2019



A study by the Center for Economic and Policy Research, a left-leaning think tank, claims that American economic sanctions may have led to the death of up to 40,000 people in Venezuela between 2017 and 2018, as the mortality rate surged 31%. President Trump increased the sanctions tenfold over the Obama administration's limited sanctions, in a "maximum pressure" campaign. The study highlights that sanctions are an act of war with lethal consequences that affect civilians, despite being presented as a humane alternative to armed combat.

American economic sanctions may have killed up to 40,000 people in Venezuela between 2017 and 2018, according to a new study. The finding only underscores the lethal realities of "soft power," all too often presented as a humane alternative to open armed conflict.

"There was a 31 percent increase in general mortality from 2017 to 2018," noted the study, conducted by the Center for Economic and Policy Research (CEPR), a left-of-center think tank based in Washington.

"This would imply an increase of more than 40,000 deaths," the study said, adding it was "virtually certain" the sanctions made a "substantial contribution" to the figure. The authors said that amounted to "collective punishment," and violated international humanitarian law.

In addition to the surge in the mortality rate, the study also found that the sanctions have helped to reduce the average Venezuelan's caloric intake, and driven millions to flee the country in search of

employment.

The researchers acknowledged the difficulty in precisely quantifying the role of the sanctions in Venezuela's dismal economy, but it's clear they are among the main factors preventing a recovery.

## Pressure

Though Venezuela's troubles are surely caused in no small part by the government's **socialist economic policies** – as well as the dramatic **devaluation** of the Bolivar – the humanitarian crisis is only worsened by US sanctions. The Obama administration maintained a limited sanctions regime on the country, but President Trump has expanded it tenfold since taking office – part of another so-called “maximum pressure campaign.”

As of April, more than **150** Venezuelan entities have been penalized, many linked to the country's industrial and financial sectors. Washington in the summer of 2017 **cut off** Venezuela's access to American lenders, and more recently sanctioned its **central bank**.

*The U.S. has sanctioned the Venezuelan Central Bank (BCV) & Director Iliana Josefa Ruzza. This action will hinder former Maduro regime's use of BCV to move money in & out of **#Venezuela** via the U.S., stopping further theft of assets & destruction of the economy. **#EstamosUnidosVE** [pic.twitter.com/ly4jYDu9WV](https://pic.twitter.com/ly4jYDu9WV)*

– Department of State (@StateDept) **April 17, 2019**

Deprived of foreign creditors and the ability to finance capital maintenance, Venezuelan oil production has collapsed, with output expected to fall by some 67 percent by the end of this year, according to the CEPR study. Production capacity currently sits at **one third** of what it was the year Hugo Chávez took power in 1999.

Venezuela's oil sector is a vital source of state revenue, and was hit with several rounds of sanctions this year. In January, Washington blocked American firms from purchasing Venezuelan oil, which alone tanked petrol exports by **40 percent**; the US was its largest market. Additional oil sanctions were applied in April, looking to **disrupt shipments** to Cuba.

The sanctions are set to continue to inflict pain on Venezuela's civilian population, who face one of the worst economies in the country's history.

**Read full article here...**