

Venezuela plans to appeal to The Hague over U.S. efforts to halt oil trade



Caracas, May 20 (RHC)-- Venezuela considers U.S. efforts to impede the trade of its oil a violation of international law, and will appeal to the ICC in The Hague, Foreign Minister Jorge Arreaza announced on Tuesday.

“New threats of sanctions and confessions from a U.S. spokesman confirm [U.S.] aggression against Venezuela. With the resources earned from the sale of oil, medicines, food and supplies are purchased for our people. Preventing this is a crime. We will raise this issue before the International Criminal Court,” Arreaza wrote, embedding a video featuring Trump administration figure Mauricio Claver-Carone threatening leading Spanish oil giant Repsol with sanctions if it continues to export crude oil from Venezuela.

In the video, Claver-Carone, who serves as director of the National Security Council Office of Western Hemisphere Affairs, threatens Repsol and other foreign oil companies with US sanctions over their continued cooperation with Venezuela.

This is the second time Caracas has promised to appeal to the ICC over its right to do business with other countries since February, when it sent a complaint to the court over US sanctions against Rosneft Trading, a subsidiary of Russian oil giant Rosneft, over its dealings with Venezuela. “These actions against Rosneft Trading violate freedom of trade and business,” Arreaza wrote at the time. Caracas added the Rosneft complaint to its appeal to the Hague Tribunal regarding U.S. restrictions imposed on the country since 2014. It’s not clear whether Tuesday’s complaint will be filed as a separate case, or added to Caracas’s existing charges against the United States.

The U.S. slapped sanctions on Venezuelan state oil-giant PDVSA in early 2019, after recognizing self-proclaimed ‘interim president’ Juan Guaido as the country’s leader. U.S. measures have also included the seizure of \$7 billion in PDVSA overseas properties, including those of U.S.-based gas retailer Citgo. In March, Curacao-based oil firm Refineria di Korsou also seized a PDVSA oil terminal on the Dutch Caribbean island of Bonaire following a payment dispute.

Washington has transferred some of the seized oil assets over to Guaido and his allies, despite media reports that members of his ‘interim government’ have been dipping into and siphoning off these funds for their own personal use.

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