

Networks of Evil Power

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Over the past two decades, Venezuela—under Chávez, Maduro, and Rodríguez—has channeled billions of U.S. dollars through international networks to *sustain the regime and extend its geopolitical reach*. These resources have served both domestic control and external influence, supporting aligned leaders and movements in exchange for diplomatic and ideological backing¹.

Within this context, figures like President Petro are often central to debate. His stance on Venezuela has drawn criticism over perceived ideological proximity to Chávez and Maduro, along with allegations of Venezuelan funding tied to his political rise.² In Spain, opposition sectors have raised similar concerns about what they describe as a pattern of *accommodation* toward the Venezuelan regime by parties such as the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party and Podemos over the past fifteen years³.

At the same time, security analysts point to weak governance and permissive conditions in Venezuela and Colombia as key factors enabling transnational criminal expansion. Groups such as Tren de Aragua and the so-called Cartel de los Soles operate across borders⁴, while the ELN and dissident factions of the FARC exploit institutional complicity to sustain illicit economies and territorial control⁵.

During Colombia's 2022 presidential election, allegations of contacts between Petro's campaign and individuals linked to La Picota prison raised concerns about criminal influence⁶. At the same time, critics argue that scrutiny of Rodolfo Hernández by *U.S. Democrat senators*, combined with these dynamics, undermined the fairness of the second-round runoff.⁷

Some investigations link these activities to broader transnational networks involving actors associated with Hezbollah and Hamas, alongside geopolitical ties with countries such as Iran and Russia. These

dynamics increasingly blur the boundaries between state institutions, organized crime, and non-state armed groups in both Colombia and Venezuela⁸.

More broadly, Colombia, Venezuela, Spain and other European countries have faced accusations of providing political support to Iran's leadership and allied non-state groups, including Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in Gaza. These organizations have long been involved in violent activities affecting civilian populations under their rule.

In January 2026, the United States—under President Trump carried out a military intervention in Venezuela that led to the removal and capture of Maduro. In the preceding months, Washington intensified pressure on drug trafficking networks in the Caribbean, including *the Gulf Clan*, which is part of the Colombia's "Total Peace" process. These developments were met with strong support across Venezuela, Colombia, and the Caribbean.

Trump's intervention was welcomed by many actors in the region, while critics accuse governments aligned with Maduro and Petro of promoting narratives that frame *organized crime groups* as part of marginalized communities, including small-scale fishers. There have also been allegations of well-funded lobbying aimed at influencing *U.S. Democrats, the United Nations, and other multilateral institutions*.

In this context, some actors linked to *UN human rights mechanisms and the UN Secretariat* have portrayed Maduro as *legitimate President* and framing *criminal networks* as impoverished communities⁹.

A defining episode of Venezuelan regime support to PM Sánchez occurred on *20 January 2020 at Madrid-Barajas Airport*, when Delcy Rodríguez—then subject to EU sanctions barring entry into the Schengen Area—arrived in Madrid. Spanish authorities attempted to avoid a formal breach by

¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xq5TDv3NL7w>

² 20251019 Maduro-Petro's Alliance, www.360geopolitica.org

³ Spanish-Venezuela Paradox, www.politico.eu

⁴ Both Maduro-Petro (the sameness' brothers as they called) denied their existence and, they said that they are *poor people*.

⁵ 20250811 Total Peace, Total Control: How a parallel State Took Hold in Colombia, www.360geopolitica.org

⁶ 20260119 Illicit Power Structures in Colombia, www.360geopolitica.org

⁷ <https://www.vozdeamerica.com/a/congresistas-piden-investigar-rodolfo-hernandez-colombia-16622077.html>

⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xq5TDv3NL7w>

⁹ Their posts in LinkedIn said so, then they blocked opposition comments, January 2026.

confining her to the airport's international transit zone.

The situation escalated when media outlets broadcast images of then Transport Minister José Luis Ábalos disembarking *the aircraft with a bag*¹⁰. The episode, quickly labeled “Delcygate,” triggered a prolonged political controversy in Spain.

For decades, *several European countries* have maintained extensive *trade relations* with Iran, Russia, China, and Venezuela, prioritizing sectors such as energy, finance, aviation, oil and commodities. Critics argue that these partnerships have persisted despite well-documented human rights abuses, environmental harm, systemic violence, and military aggression.

Equally, European development aid—both from EU and non-EU countries—has also funded cultural and political initiatives, including publications, films, and public events, that *portray* illegal armed groups and organized crime in Colombia in a sympathetic or even heroic light.

These initiatives have amplified narratives aligned with leaders such as Putin and Petro, as well as actors linked to Iran's leadership, Hamas, the Venezuelan regime, and Hezbollah—often overlooking the lived realities of affected populations.

Support for figures and groups such as Iran's leadership, Hezbollah, Hamas, Petro, and Pedro Sánchez is frequently framed as opposition to Donald Trump. Critics, however, contend that victim-populations in Ukraine, Iran, Lebanon, Colombia, Gaza, and Venezuela—many of whom face repression, violence, massacres and instability—do not share these narratives.

Prime minister Sánchez's foreign policy, in particular, has drawn sustained criticism as *opportunistic*. While he presents himself as a defender of international law, detractors argue that his positions align—directly or indirectly—with actors accused of systemic abuses.

Sánchez has promoted initiatives positioning Barcelona as a hub for progressive mobilization against “Trumpism.” At the same time, critics point to controversies surrounding contacts with figures linked to the Venezuelan regime, including Delcy Rodríguez and her life partner associated to Hezbollah.

Alongside Sánchez, leaders such as Petro have supported mobilizations related to Gaza and broader Middle East conflicts. Critics argue that these positions blur a key distinction: supporting civilian populations affected by war is not equivalent to aligning with armed groups or regimes—such as Hamas, Hezbollah, or Iran's leadership—widely accused of violence against civilians and the use of human shields.

This tension became especially visible during the recent progressive summit in Barcelona, which drew criticism from political opponents who argued it risked legitimizing authoritarian-linked actors. The controversy coincided with a diplomatic rift involving Venezuelan opposition leader María Corina Machado, who declined to meet Sánchez, citing the summit as a factor¹¹.

The episode reinforced perceptions among critics that Sánchez's rhetoric on democracy and international law is applied inconsistently, particularly when it intersects with ideological alliances. At the same time, he maintains firm opposition to Catalan independence while relying on separatist factions for parliamentary support—an apparent contradiction that continues to fuel debate.

This broader tension raises a central question: how can a government claim to defend human rights, international law, and democratic values abroad while appearing politically aligned with actors accused of violating them?

More broadly, critics argue that parts of Europe—and some international organizations—have applied a double standard that, intentionally or not, appears more tolerant of authoritarian regimes and networks linked to organized crime.

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¹⁰ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jan/24/airport-meeting-lands-spanish-minister-venezuela-controversy-jose-luis-abalos>

¹¹ 20260103 The Left vs. Venezuelan Democracy, www.360geopolitica.org