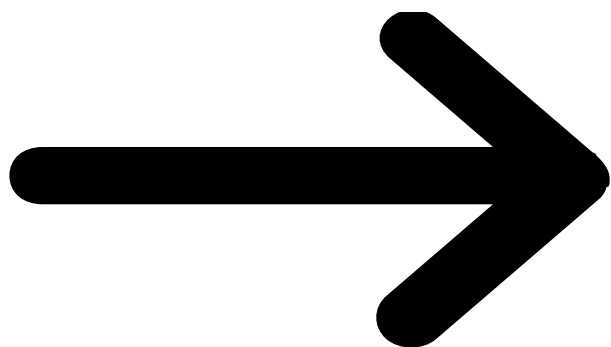


The left's love-in for Venezuela 'an embarrassment for Holyrood'

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MSPs who've publicly supported Venezuela's socialist regime should admit their mistake, as the country stands on the brink of disaster.

Opposition leaders have been hauled from their homes and taken to prison, while the UK Government has advised all British nationals to leave the country.

In addition, voting firms say the weekend's election was almost certainly "fixed".

Despite this, a number of SNP, Labour and Green politicians have been gushing in their praise for the hard-left regime.

Scottish Conservative deputy leader Jackson Carlaw said their approach was "an embarrassment for Holyrood", and that their respective leaders should distance themselves from the remarks.

Several parliamentary motions have been tabled praising the Venezuelan government, including the late Hugo Chavez.

Labour's Neil Findlay has been effusive in his praise for both Chavez and current president Nicolas Maduro, hailing their "social reforms aimed at addressing the legacy of inequality" and "governing in the interests of the Venezuelan people".

Fellow Labour member Elaine Smith urged MSPs to "note the reported international praise for Venezuela's electoral system". In the latest vote, the government there said turnout was more than eight million, while the opposition put the figure at 2.5 million amid reports of deserted polling stations.

Nationalist MSP Sandra White applauded authorities for “transforming Latin America into a progressive area”, a motion signed by dozens of other MSPs.

And in 2010 Jamie Hepburn, now a Scottish Government minister, said: “Venezuela has been transformed through the progressive policies pursued by the Chavez administration in the last decade.”

That motion was signed by, among others, Joe Fitzpatrick and Aileen Campbell.

Greens Ross Greer and John Finnie have also praised the left-wing administration on social media.

Scottish Conservative deputy leader Jackson Carlaw said:

“This lefty love-in for the Venezuelan government has to stop.

“It’s an embarrassment for Holyrood.

“It’s all very well for left-wing politicians to offer misty-eyed praise for a regime they’d love to see in place across Scotland and the UK.

“But the fact is it’s a brutal dictatorship which has brought Venezuela to its knees.

“Now opposition leaders are being ripped from their beds in the middle of the night, in front of their families, and thrown in jail. Presumably, as an opposition politician, Neil Findlay wouldn’t like this to happen to him.

“It’s time for the Scottish Parliament to wake up to this nonsense.

“These MSPs have to stop behaving like short-sighted student politicians and realise that, in the real world, this socialist experiment has been nothing short of devastating.”