FOLLOW THE FUND


# Tracing the Oil Fund

## Executive summary

Read the full report here:

FOLLOW THE FUND

*The Foreign Government Deposit Fund, the Venezuelan Oil Industry, and the Transparency of Public Funds (January–June 2026)*

**“Follow the Fund”** (July 2026) uses public sources to reconstruct a detailed profile of the Foreign Government Depository Fund (FGDF, or Oil Fund)–created by the United States to manage Venezuela’s revenues from oil, gas, and mineral exports–as well as a map of the companies, licenses, and actors that currently produce and market Venezuelan crude oil.

The capture of Nicolás Maduro and Cilia Flores by U.S. Special Forces on January 3, 2026, signaled a dramatic shift in Venezuela’s oil and extractive industries. Since then, oil production has grown steadily: OPEC estimated 1,187,000 barrels per day (b/d) for June 2026, while independent analyses put the figure at slightly lower levels. Exports reached a record high of more than 1,250,000 b/d in May 2026, driven by general licenses from OFAC and the release of inventory accumulated during the quarantine of sanctioned oil tankers in late 2025.

However, the industry revival has not yet translated into benefits for the general public, and the interim government’s use of the funds remains shrouded in secrecy.

The report is organized into four parts:
Part I. **The Oil Fund in Detail**
Part II. **Companies in the Hydrocarbons Sector**
Part III. **Licenses, Investment Agenda, and Power Map**
Part IV. **roposals in Response to the Earthquake Humanitarian Emergency**

It also includes an appendix on how Production Sharing Agreements (CPPs) work.

Part I

# The Oil Fund in Detail

## Legal Basis and International Comparison

The Fund was established by Executive Order No. 14,373, issued by President Donald Trump on January 9, 2026, under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA) and the National Emergencies Act–the same legal framework used for sanctions against Venezuela. Its stated purpose is to protect the Venezuelan government's revenues from the sale of natural resources against seizures or legal proceedings by creditors, as such a threat "would materially harm the national security and foreign policy" of the United States.

Unlike other precedents–such as the United Nations' Oil-for-Food Program with Iraq (1995), which a panel chaired by Paul Volcker deemed deficient due to the UN's limited oversight capacity and undue interference by the Iraqi government itself; or the Fund for the Afghan People (2022), administered by a Swiss foundation with the participation of Afghan academics, a U.S. Treasury official, and a Swiss diplomat–the Venezuelan Oil Fund does not have a special governance mechanism, since it does not involve the administration of third-party humanitarian funds, but rather Venezuelan funds protected by the United States. A similar proposal, agreed upon in 2022 between the then-government of Nicolás Maduro and the Unitary Platform to create a Social Protection Fund with frozen assets, was never implemented.

## Types of Revenue and Government Take

The order applies to payments for exports of oil, gas, and minerals owed to the Venezuelan government, whether the sale is made by PDVSA–typically through its subsidiary PDVSA Petróleo S.A. (PPSA)–or by private contractors under the Production Sharing Agreements (CPPs), regulated by the 2026 reform of the Law on Hydrocarbons (LOH). The Venezuelan government take includes a royalty of up to 30% of production, a comprehensive tax of up to 15% of gross revenue, and income tax (50% of net enrichment). The LOH Regulations specifying these percentages (an aggregate tax rate of between 20% and 35%, depending on the type of field) were not published until July 7, 2026–that is, after the entire period under analysis–which makes it impossible to determine exactly how much was due to the Republic of Venezuela in the first half of the year.

All payments–including the portion due to the Republic under its revenue share agreement–are deposited into the Oil Fund, which means that this tax revenue does not go directly into the Venezuelan national treasury.

## Revenue Estimate: January–June 2026

Oil production rose from 924,000 b/d in January to 1,187,000 b/d in June (+28.5%), while exports reached 1,254,000 b/d in May, a 70% increase from January. During the first half of the year, approximately 196.26 million barrels were produced and 190.52 million were exported. The Central Bank of Venezuela (BCV) reported–after seven years of non-compliance–that the trade balance for the first quarter totaled USD 5,491 million from oil exports; for the second quarter, the average price of Venezuelan crude was USD 86.62 per barrel. Estimates based on various revenue scenarios yielded the following data:

### DISTRIBUTION OF OIL REVENUES IN VENEZUELA

January – June 2026

Export Sales

**USD 15,166.8 Million**

Estimated Revenues of the Oil Fund

between

**USD 12.512,5 MM** and **13.574,2 MM**

Estimated Revenues of Venezuelan Government

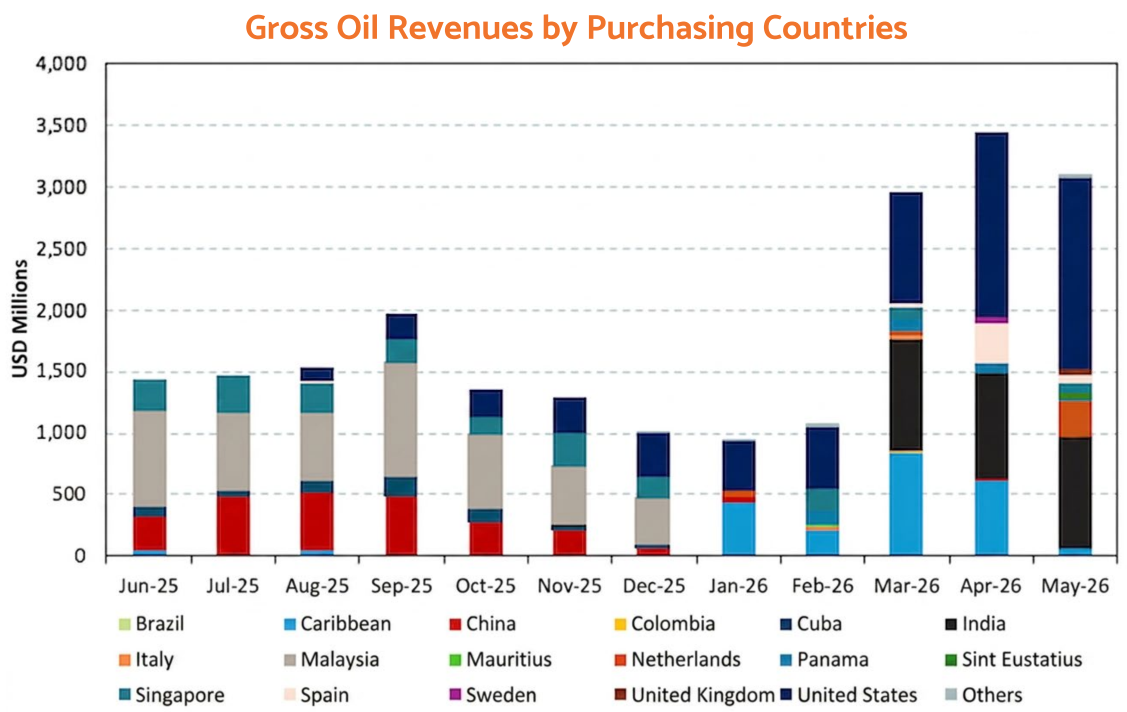
between

**USD 6.357,7 MM** and **USD 8.162,6 MM**

Source: Authors, with data from BCV, Reuters and market prices.

The difference between the total value of exports and the amount that flows into the Fund corresponds to private companies with specific licenses (Chevron, Repsol, Eni, Maurel & Prom, and others) that deduct their operating costs before transferring their share to the Venezuelan government. The report estimates that PDVSA (via PPSA) exported approximately USD 9,858 million of the estimated total for the first half of 2026, and private partners exported about USD 5,308 million, of which the latter retain between 30% and 50% for operating expenses and, possibly, debt repayment. Of the revenue that actually belongs to PDVSA, the experts consulted estimate that the Venezuelan government receives between 50% and 60% through its fiscal share.

The report also documents a shift in the buyer landscape: during the second half of 2025, China and Malaysia dominated, followed by the United States and, to a lesser extent, Singapore. Starting in March 2026, that composition changed radically, with India becoming the dominant buyer and an exponential growth in shipments to the United States, which displaced traditional Asian partners and established themselves as the two main destinations by the end of May 2026. Among the intermediaries that have purchased Venezuelan crude oil for resale are Vitol, Trafigura, GE Warren, and, on the Indian side, Reliance, Hindustan Petroleum Corporation, and HPCL-Mittal Energy.




## Rules for Use, Disbursements, and Protection Against Creditors

The U.S. Executive Order grants the State Department the authority to define disbursement policy and the Treasury Department the authority for its operational implementation; as of the report's closing date, the regulation intended to implement these rules had not been published. Among the uses identified through OFAC general licenses are the supply of diluents (GL 47A), the operating costs of PDVSA and the electricity sector (GL 48B), the operating costs of Minerven (GL 54A), humanitarian assistance–including the supply of medicines in February 2026 and relief efforts for the June 24 earthquakes under GL 60. Secretary of State Marco Rubio testified before the U.S. Senate that the disbursements are based on monthly requests from the Venezuelan government, suggesting that the execution of Venezuela's public budget depends on transfers from the Fund.

The only documented disbursement is an initial transfer of USD 500 million (January 28, 2026), which was first deposited into an account in Qatar as a temporary measure and then transferred to Venezuela; this figure matches the USD 300 million that Delcy Rodríguez's interim government acknowledged receiving in its "Social Protection Fund," without providing details on the expenditures and without the "Transparencia Soberana" website–created by Venezuelan authorities to report this information–having been available or offering additional data. This amounts to just 2% of the estimated total revenue of the Oil Fund.

Trump's Executive Order also protects the deposits from creditors of Venezuela's public debt: it declares them sovereign property not subject to seizure or enforcement of judgments, through a mechanism similar–though unilateral rather than multilateral–to the one that protected the assets of the Iraq Development Fund in 2003. This protection is in addition to general immunity from sanctions and constitutes, according to the report, the final barrier protecting the Venezuelan government's assets in the United States, including PDV Holding's shares in Citgo Petroleum.

## Protection of Deposits

The same Executive Order confirms that the Fund's deposits are sovereign assets of the Government of Venezuela not linked to commercial activities; therefore–in accordance with the Foreign Sovereign Immunities Act–no U.S. court may accept lawsuits or enforce judgments against them; the U.S. government may even intervene in any legal proceeding to enforce that protection. This barrier was partially weakened in June 2026, when the GL 5X license announced that, effective August 4, 2026, certain transactions involving the PDVSA 2020 bond (secured by 50.1% of Citgo Holding's shares) would be authorized. The deadline was extended to September 16 with License 5Y, published on August 3, 2026. Citgo's protection from creditors and its negotiating position depend on further extensions.

## Lack of Auditing and Oversight

The report did not identify any accountability mechanism in place within the Venezuelan government that would allow for verification of the amount managed by the Fund or the destination of the resources. This contravenes the constitutional mandates on transparency (Articles 141 and 311), the Anti-Corruption Law, and the Law of the Comptroller General of the Republic, which require PDVSA, the Central Bank of Venezuela (BCV), and the Comptroller General's Office to report on and audit the use of these revenues. None of these obligations has been fulfilled in a country that has endured more than 15 years of institutionalized opacity regarding its oil revenues: from parallel funds such as Fonden to the discretionary use of PDVSA as an instrument of international policy through Petrocaribe, ALBA Petróleo, sand Albanisa.

## Part II
# Companies in the Hydrocarbons Sector

In addition to PDVSA, the report identified 53 companies that extract oil in Venezuela: 19 registered in the country (36%) and 34 registered to or owned by companies from 22 different countries (64%). Of these, 34 participate as minority partners in joint ventures, and 19 hold Production Sharing Agreements (CPPs) separate from those of the joint ventures. Of the 42 joint ventures investigated, 25 are active, 6 operate intermittently, and 11 remain inactive. According to PDVSA, there are 29 active CPPs in place, which collectively produced 256,000 b/d in 2025; the report documented 25 of them in detail, operated by 19 companies.

- **Chevron** is the largest private producer, with about **260,000 b/d** through Petropiar, Petroboscán, and Petroindependencia
- **Petroleum Corporation (CNPC)** ranks second with about **98,000 b/d,** primarily at Sinovensa
- **Roszarubezneft** ranks third with **85,000 b/d**
- **Repsol**, ranks last with approximately **48,000 b/d** from Petroquiriquire and the Cardón IV project (in partnership with **Eni**).

**North American Blue Energy Partners (NABEP)** stands out as the largest CPP holder under this framework, with **150,000 b/d**, followed by China Concord Resources (**50,000 b/d**) and Hainan Breey Energy (**30,000 b/d**). It was not possible to determine the production levels of the other 11 companies with CPPs. Despite the exclusion of the licenses, companies from China and Russia continue to engage in production, with no clear information available regarding the marketing of their crude oil.

**Chevron**
Through Petropiar, Petroboscán and Petroindependencia
Producing around **260,000 barrels per day (b/d)**.

**ROSNEFT**
**Roszarubezneft**
is a partner in five JVs.
Producing around **85,000 b/d**.

## 34 companies from 21 countries

participate in 42 Joint Ventures, including notably (based on production and allocations):

**PetroChina**
**China National Petroleum Corporation -CNPC,**
Participates in four JVs and is active in Sinovensa, Petrourica and Petrozumano.
Produces around **98,000 b/d**, mainly in Sinovensa.

**MAUREL & PROM**
**Maurel & Prom**
Participates in Petroregional del Lago.
Produces around **27,000 b/d.**

**repsol**
**Repsol**
Is a partner in two JVs, and also participates in the Quirique gas project in the Perla Cardón IV project with ENI; there are no available production figures.
Production is estimated at **48,000 b/d**.

Source: Authors, using data from the Venezuela Energy Map 2026 and specialized sources cited in the report

Only 13 of the 53 companies have publicly available information about their ultimate beneficial owners; evidence was found for another 17 in closed databases, and for the rest, the links are minimal or unknown, with frequent use of alleged front men. Among the documented cases, Jorge Alfredo Silva Cardona (A&B Oil and Gas)—a former SENIAT official allegedly linked to Diosdado and José David Cabello Rondón—stands out, with at least 33 companies identified.

Jorge Alfredo
Silva Cardona

Diosdado and José David
Cabello Rondón

Víctor Vargas Irausquín, whom some media sources describe as "Chávez's banker," is behind Cartera de Inversiones Petroleras (CIP) and Operaciones de Producción y Exploración Nacionales (OPEN). Ramón Carretero Napolitano, who has ties to Maduro, Cilia Flores, and Carlos Erik Malpica Flores, operates Hainan Breey Energy and was one of the Maduro administration's main contractors, with projects totaling $769 million, according to investigations by a regional alliance of media outlets and organizations.

Businessman Harry Sargeant III is the ultimate beneficiary of NABEP, which is also linked to LNGEG Growth I Corp; both share a registered address in Caracas with Derwick Associates, owned by Alejandro Betancourt López, Pedro Trebbau López, and Francisco Convit Guruceaga, who are under investigation in Switzerland, the United States, and Spain for the alleged laundering of USD 4.85 billion from PDVSA. The report also documents regional political ties: Territorio Trading Group is reportedly linked to a close associate of former Ecuadorian President Rafael Correa, and Colven Business & Corp—which operates in Barinas and Apure (1,114 million barrels in proven reserves)—is said to belong to a close associate of Colombia's outgoing president, Gustavo Petro.

Other companies—CNPC, Roszarubezhneft, Bielorusneft, and Soangol—are directly controlled by the governments of China, Russia, Belarus, and Angola, respectively.

Harry
Sargeant III

Pedro
Trebbau López

Alejandro
Betancourt López

Francisco
Convit Guruceaga

Part III

# Licenses, Investment Agenda, and Power Map

## OFAC Licenses

Between January and June 2026, OFAC issued the broadest set of general licenses for Venezuela since the start of sector-specific sanctions, following a gradual sequence: first, the sale of already extracted hydrocarbons (GL 46 and subsequent licenses), then goods and services to restart production (GL 48 and subsequent licenses), followed by investment, financial, and logistical activities (GL 49, 50, and subsequent licenses), and finally mining–with Minerven as the primary beneficiary, marking the first specific mining regime since 2017 (GL 51A, 53, 54, 54A, 55)–, air transport, telecommunications (GL 24A, 59), and preparations for a potential debt restructuring (GL 58). In July, General License 5Y announced that, effective September 16, 2026, transactions involving the PDVSA 2020 bond would be permitted. General License 60, in effect through October 23, authorizes transactions to assist the victims of the June 2026 earthquakes in Venezuela.

### Licenses 2026

JANUARY

Key Licenses:
**GL 46**
Scope:
Oil extraction, export, and marketing under certain conditions

FEBRUARY

Key Licenses:
**GL 46A, 48, 30B, 49, 50**
Scope:
Marketing of existing crude oil, energy goods and services, port logistics, investment, and operations of specific companies

MARCH

Key Licenses:
**GL 46B, 48A, 49A, 50A, 52, 51A, 53, 54, 55**
Scope:
Expansion to include petrochemicals, investment, and payment terms for PDVSA; first regulatory framework for mining (Minerven)

APRIL

Key Licenses:
**GL 56, 57**
Scope:
Government contracts and financial services for public banks (BCV, Banco de Venezuela, and others)

MAY

Key Licenses:
**GL 58**
Scope:
Hiring advisors to explore debt restructuring

JUNE

Key Licenses:
**GL 46C, 47A, 48B, 50B, 51B, 52A, 54A, 5X (superseded by 5Y), 24A, 59, 60**
Scope: Expansion of the hydrocarbons and mining sectors; nominal licenses for Chevron, BP, Eni, Maurel & Prom, Repsol, and Shell; partial release of the 2020 PDVSA bond; telecommunications; aid for earthquake victims

Source: Authors, with OFAC data.

This is a selective easing of restrictions: it does not eliminate general financial sanctions, does not freely authorize new investments without oversight, and preserves OFAC's authority to revoke permits. The specific licenses that are publicly known are for Chevron, Repsol, Eni, Maurel & Prom, BP, and Shell; specialized media outlets have reported–without official confirmation–additional specific licenses for Vitol, Trafigura, Reliance Industries, and NABEP.

## International Investment Promotion Agenda

The regulatory opening was accompanied by an intensive agenda aimed at attracting capital: six production agreements were signed with Shell, Repsol, Eni, Chevron, and BP, and the interim government held dozens of meetings with investors, governments, and multilateral organizations between January and June 2026. In March, U.S. Secretary of the Interior Doug Burgum visited Caracas accompanied by more than 20 companies from the energy and mining sectors, while more than 50 investors and hedge funds attended a meeting at the government headquarters, Miraflores, organized by Signum Global Advisors. That same month, opposition leader María Corina Machado presented a production target of 5 million b/d at the CERAWeek conference in Houston, along with an estimated investment of USD 150 billion, contractual stability, international arbitration, and a 20% royalty rate, while Delcy Rodríguez, at the FII Priority Miami forum, stated that she had held 236 meetings since assuming the interim government.

In April, Chevron increased its stake to 49% in the Petroindependiente joint venture and secured an expansion of its rights in the Ayacucho 8 (Petropiar) block, in exchange for ceding gas exploitation rights in two fields on Lake Maracaibo. Repsol renewed its control of Petroquiriquire with the goal of increasing production by 50% within 12 months and tripling it within three years. ENI signed an agreement with PDVSA to develop Block Junín 5 in the Orinoco Oil Belt. BP signed a memorandum of understanding for the Deltana and Loran-Manatee gas fields and opened a permanent office in the country. At the same time, the IMF (Kristalina Georgieva) announced the resumption of its relationship with Venezuela, and the World Bank held talks in Washington on investment, employment, and financial reintegration. Delcy Rodríguez also strengthened ties with India, with a visit to New Delhi in June that included meetings with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and representatives from Reliance, ONGC, and Indian Oil.

## Economic Power Map

The report identifies Delcy Rodríguez, acting president, and her brother Jorge Rodríguez, president of the National Assembly, as the main centers of economic decision-making. A second inner circle, most of whom have served for over a decade under Delcy Rodríguez's direct authority, holds key positions: Anabel Pereira Fernández (Minister of Economy and Finance, with influence over Bandes, Fonden, Sudeban, Sunacrip, the BCV, and PDVSA); Héctor José Silva Hernández (Minister of Mining Development and president of Minerven/ CVM, mentioned in a Spanish investigation regarding gold sales); Calixto Ortega Sánchez (Sectoral Vice President for the Economy, Governor to the IMF, Representative to the IDB, and President of Banco de Venezuela; former President of the BCV from 2018 to 2025); Héctor Andrés Obregón Pérez (President of PDVSA since 2024); Paula Kristina Henao Vera (Minister of Hydrocarbons); Román Daniel Maniglia Darwich (Superintendent of SENIAT since July 2026, former president of the Bank of Venezuela and of Pequiven); Christiam Moisés Hernández Verdecanna (director of the BCV and vice president of Finance at PDVSA); Félix Plasencia (Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade); and Luis Antonio Villegas Ramírez (Minister of Industry, Production, and Trade). Most of this group rose to prominence in tandem with the consolidation of Delcy Rodríguez's power, which highlights a high concentration of Venezuela's economic and financial decision-making within a circle.

Part IV

# Proposals in Response to the Earthquake Humanitarian

On June 24, 2026, two earthquakes measuring 7.2 and 7.5 on the Richter scale—occurring just 39 seconds apart, with epicenters near San Felipe and Catia La Mar—shook northern Venezuela, with damage concentrated in La Guaira and Caracas. As of July 16, at least 4,900 deaths and more than 16,740 injuries had been reported, figures that independent organizations consider to be underestimated. The UNDP estimated the damage at between USD 4.7 and 8.7 billion, equivalent to 6% of Venezuela's GDP.

The United States responded immediately: President Trump authorized the response on the very night of the earthquake, and by June 29, the State Department—which now leads foreign assistance following the dissolution of USAID—had committed more than $300 million (from an initial announcement of $150 million: $100 million to the UN OCHA fund and $50 million in bilateral aid to NGOs such as World Vision, Samaritan's Purse, Catholic Relief Services, the International Rescue Committee, the IOM, and the WFP).

The report compares this response to that of other earthquakes of similar magnitude—Haiti in 2010 and Nepal in 2015—and highlights a unique aspect of the Venezuelan case: A significant portion of the revenue that could finance reconstruction is already under U.S. administration through the Oil Fund, while the Venezuelan government has not responded in a manner commensurate with the emergency, against a backdrop of institutional deterioration that predated the earthquakes.

Based on this assessment, the report makes the following recommendations to restore transparency and accountability regarding the resources of the Oil Fund and humanitarian aid:

- Establish an independent unit to coordinate, manage, monitor, and ensure transparency regarding the resources received by Venezuela, whether from the Oil Fund or humanitarian aid.
- Disclose the regulations governing the administration of the Oil Fund and the Venezuelan government's management reports, as provided for in Executive Order No. 14,373.
- Require PDVSA to submit a report on exports covered by the Executive Order, identifying buyers, price, volume, and terms of sale.
- Publish all Production Sharing Agreements (CPPs) signed by PPSA and joint ventures, in accordance with the principle of contractual transparency set forth in the Law on Hydrocarbons.

- The Ministry of Hydrocarbons shall report on the tax regime applied to each partner in joint ventures or under CPPs.
- The Comptroller General of the Republic should audit PDVSA's reports on sales covered by the Executive Order.
- The Central Bank of Venezuela should report on the foreign currency received from the U.S. Department of the Treasury and its use in the foreign exchange market, with due protection of personal data.
- The Ministry of Finance should report on the funds received from the U.S. Treasury, their expenditures, and the consolidated results of fiscal management.
- Government agencies selling other raw materials, including Minerven, should report the terms, volumes, and prices of those sales.

This reconstruction exercise–necessary given the lack of published contracts–illustrates the report's central conclusion: the magnitude of the resources generated by Venezuelan oil revenues in 2026 stands in stark contrast to the near-total lack of transparency surrounding their administration, both in the institutional design of the Oil Fund and in the management of the revenues that belong to the Venezuelan government. For Transparencia Venezuela, closing this information gap is an indispensable condition for ensuring that the country's economic recovery benefits its citizens and not just the industry and the political and economic actors who currently control its management.