**Forum:** Security Council I

**Issue:** The Situation in Venezuela

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Introduction

Venezuela is a country located in Northern South America. It was one of three countries that emerged from the collapse of Gran Colombia in 1830 and 1831, which resulted in the establishment of Ecuador and Colombia. Immediately after the formation of the newly independent republic of Venezuela, the country was ruled by military strongmen called *caudillos*. Jose Antonio Paez was the first *caudillo*, and Juan Vincente Gómez was a prominent *caudillo* who ruled in the twentieth century from 1908 until his death in 1935.

Two individuals who play large roles in influencing the situation in Venezuela are Nicolas Maduro and Juan Guaido. Recently, Guaido declared himself the interim president of Venezuela, just two weeks after Maduro was sworn in for his second term of presidency in January 2019. This declaration was interpreted as Guaido’s challenge for political leadership of the country. Guaido received support from tens of thousands of protesters, and was recognized as the legitimate head of state by the United States, Canada, and many Latin American and European countries. Meanwhile, Maduro severed diplomatic ties with the United States and sealed off the border with Colombia and Brazil to stop Guaido’s attempts at receiving aid from his foreign allies.

Concerns have risen over the increasingly authoritarian state of Venezuela. In Venezuela, there are a number of grim realities that have attracted international attention. Currently in Venezuela, through the criminalization of free speech by imprisoning dissenters and opposition leaders in midnight raids on their homes, killing 46 demonstrators in September 2017, cracking down on street protests with lethal force, and postponing regional elections to avoid threats to his party’s power, Maduro has made attempts to reassert control. Furthermore, by forming the Constituent Assembly with loyalists and his family members, Maduro tried to establish “carte blanche” to ignore and rewrite the country’s constitution to expand his influence in the government. Additionally, Venezuela continues to struggle with economic problems ever since it entered a deep recession in 2014 that was exacerbated by the drop in global oil prices as well as the stringent regulations on currency that were producing record-high inflation rates in the country, which brought devastating impacts to the Venezuelan population. The crisis has not only affected political stability but also the Venezuelan population. Low salaries of 50% of the population of the country, those who are in some way employed, meant that they are unable to purchase daily necessities; even if they do have the means to purchase those goods and services, they may not even be available as Venezuela also suffers from shortages of medicine, food and auto parts. According to Vox, 75 percent of the country’s population had lost an average of 19 pounds of bodyweight between 2015 and 2016 due to food shortages. Furthermore, infant mortality in Venezuela, which had been reduced prior to high inflation rates that caused milk powder shortages, have started to rise again because of inadequate funding for healthcare. Lastly, the exodus of refugees from Venezuela comprised of many professionals, those who are crucial to the rebuilding of Venezuela. Without these professionals, Venezuela would also require appropriate retraining of the remaining population.

Without any sound intervention, Venezuela would be spiraling towards complete collapse. Venezuela’s current state of high inflation rates, projected to be greater than 1,000,000% with some reports even projecting up to 10,000,000%, and political instability would mean imminent collapse as a state. This could increase the existing issues within refugee camps and the receiving nations, caused by previous influxes of refugees. Examples of impacts are repercussions such as increased nationalistic sentiments among these host countries.

Definition of Key Terms

Democracy

From its Greek origins, democracy means “rule by the people”, in which a government system is formed by eligible members of a state through elected representatives. The two types of democracy are direct and representative democracy, the latter of which is most commonly observed. Direct democracy is when citizens directly decide on policies, while representative democracy refers to an elected group of officials appointed by the citizens, i.e. in an electoral college, to vote on behalf of them. The most recent example of a direct or “pure” democracy is in ancient Athens, although this system worked to the exclusion of women, slaves, and foreign residents. Referendums are also considered a form of direct or pure democracy, which, according to Kaufmann and Matthews of the Washington Post, roughly 80 percent of countries worldwide have had at least one nationwide referendum or popular vote on a constitutional or legislative issue.

Authoritarianism

Largely opposed to democracy and the freedoms it supports, authoritarianism is a principle of blind submission to authority. Authoritarian rule denotes a government system whereby power is concentrated in the hands of a leader or an elite group of individuals who are not constitutionally responsible to the body of people. Authoritarian leaders often exercise power arbitrarily through disregarding existing bodies of law such as constitutions entirely or modifying the constitution to fit their interests. Authoritarian states are rarely multiparty- if they are, opposing parties are subjected to arbitrary punishment that generally comes in the form of exile or imprisonment.

**Dictatorship**

Dictatorship is a form of authoritarianism, a system of government in which a single person holds unchecked power over the affairs of the entire nation. A dictatorship is and that is of high authoritarianism. A dictator views his/her citizens as a means to assert and maintain influence and control over the nation. Dictatorships are therefore ruled by fear of the citizens towards the dictatorial government.

**Coup**

A coup is anillegal seizure of power from the incumbent president and his party. Coups that are spontaneous are known as ‘coup d’etat”, which is also known has ‘putsch’. The spontaneous and secretive nature of coup d’etats implies the power imbalance between the oppressive government and its citizens and dissenters that requires such level of intricate planning to push for a change in authority of the state. Coups require the support and acknowledgement of the citizens if the coup attempt is successful; therefore, if the coup plotters fail to garner the support of the citizens after a successful attempt, the citizens are more likely to be able to revoke the coup and reinstate the previous government. Apart from the support from citizens, coup plotters also require the support of the military so as to safeguard their security and safety during the coup attempt; control over and support of the military also provides the coup plotters more leverage over the government during the attempt – it is provides the same leverage over social order should the attempt be successful. Other forms of coup include promissory coups, executive aggrandizement, executive coups, election-day vote fraud and strategic election manipulation.

History & Developments

Venezuela’s Transition into Democracy

Since Venezuela’s independence, the democratic state has been plagued with coups. The death of Juan Vincente Gomez, a military general and Venezuela’s dictatorship from 1908 to 1935, meant that political enemies had been allowed to return from exile. These political enemies then began to organize political parties of their own, resulting in a promissory coup. The interim junta, made up of civilian politicians who overthrew the Venezuelan government in 1945, promised that elections would follow. This was surprising as juntas are militaries who operate as a political figure of authority in a country which means they are more prone to be military dictatorships.

Venezuela’s first democratically-elected leader, Romulo Gallegos, however, was overthrown within eight months by a military coup led by Marcos Perez Jimenez. By 1958, Gallegos was ousted by Admiral Larrazabal as President and he was responsible for the nationalization of Venezuelan oil and steel industries. This allowed for more governmental control over oil, Venezuela’s largest source of national revenue, which also provided the government more fiat over foreign investors of the oil industry; this came in useful in later years when Chavez’s regime took control of the oil industry from foreign corporations. Labor unrests during the economic depression in the late 1980s meant that Carlos Andres Perez, the newly-elected president in 1989, had to commit to neo-liberal economic reforms to reduce the country’s indebtedness. However, these reforms exacerbated civil and labor unrest in the forms of protests and strikes. Hundreds were killed amidst street violence and the enforcement of martial law. Meanwhile, Colonel Hugo Chavez took the opportunity to attempt a coup against Perez’s government twice, although he had been imprisoned during one of the coup attempts. Nearly 120 people were killed in the suppression of the two coups. The use of violence against Venezuelan citizens meant that past regimes ruled the population by fear; as a result, although the majority would succumb to violent oppression, the minority of dissenters would create substantial backlash in the form of coups. Justification for the use of violence by Venezuelan armed forces against the protesters amidst recent protests have been questioned by the United Nations. Evidently, the problems faced by Venezuela today – economic, humanitarian and political crises – are not unprecedented. More of the economic issues of Venezuela will be discussed in the Economy and Infrastructure below.**Hugo Chavez: A New Outlook for Venezuela**

Hugo Chavez had a crucial role in re-shaping Venezuela from 1998 to 2013. He was elected president in 1998 and brought with him a new constitution, socialist economic and social policies, and populism. He used oil revenue as funding for the Bolivarian Revolution. This also included anti-US foreign policy that persisted throughout the years of his administration. Chavez made multiple attempts to redistribute wealth in the country. He passed laws regarding wealth and land redistribution immediately after he first took office in 1998. Chavez signed a decree in January of 2005 that eliminated rich estates to benefit the Venezuelan poor.

***¡The resurgence of authoritarianism***

Signs of authoritarianism also surfaced under Chavez’s leadership. Media regulations imposed on the public meant that fines and imprisonment were viable options in the case of slander against a public figure or politician. Imposing punishments for slander against a public figure, violates the freedom of expression and basic rights that are upheld in democracies around the world. Additionally, under Chavez’s presidency, corporations that did not adhere to his price control regulations during high inflation in 2012 were expropriated. Such authoritarianism is also displayed later by Maduro, as he views himself as Chavez’s successor.

***The implementation of anti-US foreign policy***

Chavez implemented anti-US foreign policy during the years of his presidency through blaming the economic distress of Venezuela and the corruption that plagued his government on the United States’ intervention in the country. This resulted in the expropriation of two major US oil companies- Exxon Mobil and ConocoPhilips- when Chavez nationalized oil, energy and telecommunications industries. Nationalization of the oil industry before the current high inflation rates also play a role in the high unemployment and poverty rate in Venezuela, as the Venezuelan government can no longer fund for the employment of personnel. Conversely, foreign direct investments by the aforementioned corporations would have benefited the population more.

**Economy: Venezuelan Dependence on Oil**

Venezuela’s long Caribbean coastline helped the state develop more foreign trade ties than any other South American country. One of Venezuela’s main sources of income during the Great Depression from 1929 to the 1930s was its oil industry, which was mainly dominated by Royal-Dutch Shell. Oil revenue allowed Gomez’s successors to invest in infrastructural development including transport, electricity, and water supplies.

By 2014, oil exports covered 90% of Venezuela’s total exports. The revenue generated was used by Hugo Chavez to fund social programs to combat poverty and inequality. The government’s subsidies on healthcare for low income families meant that its spending obligations were high. However, as global oil prices dropped from $100USD per barrel to nearly $30USD per barrel, the demand for the Venezuelan currency bolivar plummeted, causing the value of the currency to decrease drastically while the price of imported goods increased. Maduro’s plan in 2013 was to print more money. However, as international investors continued to divert their investments away from Venezuela, the value of the bolivar continued to decrease. This meant that printing more money and converting stable savings to US dollars was just exacerbating inflation. As of August 2018, the bolivar has depreciated by 95%, which is the largest currency devaluation in contemporary world history.

A perfect petrostate would already have employment deficits in sectors because of the excessive diversion of human and financial resources to the oil industry. Venezuela is considered a failed petrostate because of the plummeted oil prices and its range of impacts. Oil suppliers are unwilling to sell the same quantity of oil to the market at this lower price. As a result, the supply of oil to the global market decreases, therefore, the amount of workers previously needed is no longer applicable where the new level of output is lower than before.Since the oil industry no longer has sufficient resources to employ as many people, unemployment has also risen to 44.3% according to Bloomberg. Low employment has also resulted in spiraled production of oil, and thus reduced levels of exports; however, because the majority of the population has inherently specialized in the oil industry, the Venezuelan workforce is not versatile – they lack the expertise, facilities and infrastructure required for the workforce to produce other products. As a result, this widespread unemployment has caused a need for humanitarian aid from foreign countries and NGOs.

A picture containing sky, outdoor, truck

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*Figure #1: PDVSA oil plant*

*A close up of a logo

Description automatically generated Figure #2: Venezuela’s dependency on oil and minerals exports – 94%*

Geopolitics

Intervention by the United States in South America

The United States’ political involvement in Venezuela started mostly during the Cold War, it was an ideological war for the US. The bottom line for any intervention by the US was to prevent Venezuela from becoming a communist state – which was their agenda for all countries in the region during the Cold War period.

Through the 1950s to the 1970s, far-left movements and populist parties have gained support in countries including Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil and Nicaragua. Chile’s Salvador Allende was the first democratically-elected Marxist president in 1970. Following this trend, concerns grew in the United States for two reasons which are based off of Richard Nixon, then-President of the US, being the most anti-Communist US President during the Cold War Period. First, developments in South America posed a threat to the global balance of power. Especially during the Cold War, these newly-established leftwing governments would be allies of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). Second, fear of a repeat of situations like the Cuban revolution grew. Therefore, the US exercised multiple interventionist measures in the region, not to preserve democratically-elected governments, but to align all states in the region to its agenda in the Cold War. Similarly today, there is still residual tension between the two ideological opponents, if not three – Russia and China, and the US – all of which are stakeholders within this conflict.

The US can prescribe and have prescribed great extents of military-related intervention, such as in Guatemala, one of Venezuela’s regional neighbors. The State Department and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) were closely involved in the training of Guatemalan security forces, in the 1960s, who were then responsible for thousands of civilian deaths during the civil war between leftist rebels and the right-wing government that resulted in 200,000 civilian casualties. These security forces went on to arrest 32 people suspected of colluding with the Marxist guerillas on March 6, 1966 and were secretly executed that night according to a CIA cable. The US’s priority in Venezuela, although is also to instill peace and stability in Venezuela is also to win the ongoing ideological war between Marxist socialism and democracy, to repudiate any communist influences in the region as stated above in this section. This is evident when the US withheld information of a coup, that resulted in 3,065 civilian murdered, from the Chilean president Salvador Allende. He was overthrown by General Pinochet who then committed human rights abuses to approximately 40,000 citizens. The US’ prioritization of instilling democracy has clearly outweighed their concerns over humanitarian suffering, as seen through their negligence in General Pinochet’s massacre of the Guatemalan citizens. This should also be a point of consideration when exploring the possible outcomes of US intervention.

Before the Cold War, when the US had reduced if not no vested interests in Venezuela in terms of political ideology, the US also prioritized their oil supply from Venezuela over the humanitarian atrocities committed by the dictatorship. During the Great Depression (1929 – 1939), the US imports of Venezuelan crude petroleum between 1929 and 1930 accounted for 42.4% of total US imports of crude oil globally according to the US House of Representatives 1934. This was mainly because of then-Venezuelan president Juan Vincente Gomez’s lucrative concessions offered to US oil companies such as Standard Oil (now Exxon Mobil). Later between 1948 and 1958, the US continued to support Venezuelan military dictatorship, by helping to train Marco Perez Jimenez’s Directorate of National Security (DSN) that went on to torture thousands of opposition-affiliated officials and murder thousands of dissenters.

Moreover, in Venezuela, the US withheld their knowledge of a coup attempt from Chavez in 2002.This shows the reluctance of the US, for former-allies like Venezuela to go under socialist rule and develop close relations with Russia. The US was also responsible for training two key coup plotters of the 2002 coups, army commander Efraín Vasquez and General Ramirez Poveda, at the US Army School of the Americas. After the George W. Bush administration, President Obama continued Bush’s policy on demonizing Hugo Chavez and in 2015, President Obama declared that Venezuela was an “extraordinary threat to national security”.

Currently, the Trump administration has been repeatedly imposing sanctions on Nicolas Maduro’s regime, specifically to the defense and security services sectors. This is a strategic attack on the integral sectors of the Maduro regime that protect the regime from potential coup attempts and military intervention. The US Treasury Department also declared that any US and foreign companies working with Venezuela’s defense and security services sectors would be sanctioned, including those working in the oil and banking sectors. The Trump administration also issued sanctions on Venezuelan state-owned oil firm PDVSA, a key source of revenue.

**Russia**

Russia’s stance on Venezuela is a derivative of two agendas – economic risks and political influence. The former originating from Russian state-controlled oil firm Rosneft buying out most of Venezuelan state oil company, Citgo, which was owned mostly by Venezuelan state-owned oil firm PDVSA. The latter of Russia’s agendas as stated above is driven by Russia’s desire to expand global political influence and to demonstrate to other allies that their respective alliances with Russia are taken seriously.

Chavez believed that the guerilla forces of the Machuruto Incident in May 1967 were acting as liberators of Venezuela from the corrupt democratic government and therefore aligned himself with Cuba, an ally of Russia. By doing so, Venezuela started an alliance with Russia. In July 2006, Chavez signed a 3 billion USD arms deal with Russia which included the purchase of helicopters and fighter jets, veering away from previous arms trade ties with the US during the Cold War and the Cuban revolution. This is the first major interaction between Venezuela and Russia after the Cold War and it shows Chavez’s willingness to build arms trade relations with Russia.

Russia is also willing to further develop their diplomatic relations with Venezuela to the extent of engaging directly to the US. They have been responding to Nicolas Maduro’s requests in the recent past when Russian oil firm Rosneft helped divert Venezuelan oil exports to Asia to prevent further economic instability, which reduced dissent among Maduro’s supporters. When Trump said that US military intervention in Venezuela was “an option” in February, Russia deployed two military aircrafts carrying military technicians to Venezuela. Russia has also been aiding Venezuela in their food shortages. Because American firms are sanctioned if they export grain to Venezuela, Russia has been exporting their wheat to Venezuela as a replacement for American grain. However, as Venezuela’s economy continues to plummet, Russia has also reduced wheat exports by 60 percent to 187,000 tons. The Russian state-controlled bank, Gazprombank, which used to be one of the major bankers for the Venezuelan state-owned oil company, PDVSA, has erased all of their credit portfolios after withdrawing from a joint banking venture with Maduro. It demonstrates the vulnerability of the Russo-Venezuelan relations and its contingency upon Russia’s economic gains in the country, which means that for Russia to comply to intervention, like for most of other countries as well, economic incentives need to be in place.

Venezuela’s inability to pay for military exports from Russia have also caused the reduction of military equipment provided by the Russians. This, again, shows that Russia is more willing to engage with Venezuela if they accrue financial gains from their initiatives in Venezuela. Another example of this is when Russian industrial conglomerate, Rostec, has reduced its presence in Venezuela because of unpaid invoices; the company has also decided not to renew weapons maintenance contracts and to freeze progress on other projects, including the Kalashnikov machine-gun factory in Maracay, Venezuela. Over the past two years, however, Russia has still shown comradery towards Venezuela by having exported 1 million USD worth of goods, including military equipment, to Venezuela, according to the Russian customs. However, in early June, Putin told reporters that “We have not done it for quite a while now.” Due to Russia’s economic incentive, they should continue its transactions with Venezuela should the economic risks remain marginal, as in the status quo, as compared to their incentive to protect Venezuela against the US’ ideological contestation in the region.

**The National Bolivarian Armed Forces (FAN)**

The mission statement of the FAN states “to ensure the independence and sovereignty of the nation and ensure the integrity of the geographical territories of the country, by means of military defense, cooperation in the maintenance of internal order and active participation in national development”. The doctrine of FAN, however, was laid out by late-President Hugo Chavez – that included assisting in maintaining ‘internal order’ and resisting the enemies of the state.

Top military officials at the time, whereby Maduro nationalized oil company PDVSA, benefited from gaining authority and control over those newly state-controlled corporations. These officials, therefore, are more likely to pledge loyalty to Maduro. Nevertheless, without a clear chain of command, the loyal armed forces are plagued with bureaucracy which means slow decision making and superfluous communication between top officials. Middle-ranked officials, on the contrary, have fled Venezuela and joined the exodus of refugees – some even supporting the opposition, Guaido’s government, from Colombia.

The allegiance of the National Armed Force towards either of Maduro’s or Guaido’s regimes plays an important role – a decisive factor within the conflict in Venezuela. this is largely due to the fact that whichever party shares an alliance with the FAN, that party would have substantial assurance and safety and security, as the FAN could defend the regime from any attacks, such as coup attempts. However, without mass mutiny of FAN, the top military officials that currently stand in favor of Maduro are unlikely to mutiny and support Guaido instead.

FAN, with 123,000 active personnel as of 2018, are also responsible for distributing food aid to civilians and for exploration of minerals such as gold and copper. This makes them more useful, apart from security terms, in spreading aid supplements to civilians when it is being delivered to by international organizations, should either of the governments permit.

**The National Constituent Assembly (ANC)**

The ANC is a constituent assembly elected in 2017 to draft a new constitution for Venezuela. This election for ordered by Maduro, and was boycotted by most Latin American and Western countries, who turned their support towards MUD, Guaido’s party. Many argued that it was a mechanism implemented by Maduro to maintain the power of the incumbent government – an undemocratic practice of governance.

The ANC has history of delegitimizing Guaido’s political power by stripping his parliamentary immunity (this was condemned by the EU and said to be a “serious violation of the Venezuelan constitution, as well as of the rule of law and separation of power"). As Maduro claims the ANC as the legitimate governing body of Venezuela, he ordered for his political opponents be removed by means of extortion, thus repeatedly violating democratic principles. Maduro also commissioned the Assembly the overriding powers in the matters of the opposition-led National Assembly.

Should Maduro call for the renewal of the National Constituent Assembly in 2020 and declare it the official governing body of Venezuela again, there lies uncertainty as to how they will be viewed by the Venezuelan public and how the Democratic Unity Roundtable (MUD) would react – whether by accepting the results or by rebelling against the ANC government. However, given the ANC’s preceding actions of violating democracy, it is more likely of them to be completely allegiant to Maduro. However, the two parties, ANC and MUD, constantly refuse to recognize the authority of each other; this means that for any peaceful constructive governmental change or reform to be successful, these two parties in conflict need to be incentivized to engage.

**Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue**

Before hyperinflation began in Venezuela, the most significant problem was political instability. The situation now, however, entails three facets – political, humanitarian and economic –the latter two of which can be improved if political tensions are resolved. The United Nations Security Council gathered during their 8472nd meeting on 26 February 2019 to discuss whether to hold free and fair elections under international supervision. However, opinions differed as to whether or not to hold free and fair elections or to encourage Maduro to engage in open dialogue with the opposition, without foreign interference and intervention. Such deliberation on international dialogue platforms like UN meetings allow for diversified ideas and perspectives to be presented to the world but no definitive conclusion can be derived because member states and major stakeholders in the region share opposing views regarding intervention of the US and any other external party.

Apart from international discussion, humanitarian aid to alleviate existing shortages has already been implemented. Before Maduro banned any kind of import that could be classified as “war material”, small non-profit organizations around the world sent shipments of medicine to Venezuela. This helped increase stocks of neo-natal medicine that caused a staggering 2 percent of neo-natal deaths.

Domestically, some US Senators, like Ben Cardin and Marco Rubio have also set up a bill known as the “Venezuelan Humanitarian Assistance and Defense of Governance Act of 2017” to provide humanitarian aid to Venezuela, including a 10 million USD fund to support these programs to provide food, medicinal and nutritional aid. However, the bill received no substantial follow-up and its operations was interrupted by President Trump’s comments on Venezuela, insinuating that the US might apply military intervention.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) will be tripling their aid to Venezuela after Maduro approves the delivery of humanitarian assistance, thereby tripling their budget for assistance from 9 million USD to 24.6 million USD. The ICRC will be focusing on four different areas within their delivery of humanitarian assistance – migration, health, water and sanitation and detention. The ICRC has helped with the following: reconnecting nearly 3000 detainees and 6000 migrants with their families; providing training and supplying water and sanitation, and medical materials to 28 hospitals and 8 primary health centres in Venezuela.

Relevant UN Treaties and Events

* 1992 February and November: Hugo Chavez makes two coup attempts
* 1998: Chavez elected as president, ‘Bolivarian Revolution’ is launched
* 2001 – 2005: As part of the ‘Bolivarian Revolution’, Chavez implemented several laws that included redistribution of land and wealth within the country
* 2006 July: Chavez signs a 3 billion USD arms deal with Russia, to purchase fighter jets, helicopters and other military supplies
* 2006 December: Chavez wins his third term of presidency with 63% majority
* 2007 January and July: energy and telecommunications companies are nationalized, which included Exxon Mobil and ConocoPhilips, whose operations were expropriated by the Venezuelan government
* September 2008: Russia and Venezuela sign an oil and gas cooperation accord and Russian warplanes visited Venezuela, as well as a joint-naval exercise
* 2012 October: Chavez wins fourth term in office
* 2013 April: Chavez dies and Maduro is elected president, with contestation from the opposition
* 2014 February – March: 120 die from suppression of anti-government protests
* 2014 November: global oil prices reach a 4-year-low
* 2017 July: Maduro’s Constituent Assembly of his loyalists is established
* 2018 May: Opposition contest the election of results of Maduro’s victory
* 2019 January: Guaido challenges the leadership of Venezuela just two weeks after Maduro is sworn in for his second term of presidency
* 2019 January: Trump administration sanctions Venezuelan oil industry and all companies who assist Maduro’s government
* 2019 January: , Russian oil firm Rosneft helped divert Venezuelan oil exports to Asia so as to prevent further instability of the economy
* S/2019/186, a draft resolution by the United States that was vetoed by the Russian Federation and the People’s Republic of China (PRC)
* S/2019/190, a draft resolution by the Russian Federation that received support from countries like the PRC and South Africa but voted against by countries like Belgium, France, Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States

Possible Solutions

**A negotiated settlement** would provide the necessary amount of aid in food, healthcare and sanitation while satisfying the economic needs of the country and negotiating a peaceful settlement between Guaido’s and Maduro’s governments.

To achieve this, member states of the UN Security Council should actively engage Venezuela in open dialogue to promote **rejoining the International Monetary Fund (IMF)** **and the World Bank** so as to reduce their overdependency on individual member states’ loans that could be made unstable for multiple variable reasons – mainly political and economic ones. Such open dialogue would also garner more international attention of NGOs and aid organizations that could provide further assistance to Venezuela. Without prior dialogue of such, it is highly unlikely for aid to reach civilians due to potential intervention of Maduro.

Instead of pressing Venezuela, specifically Maduro, to amend his authoritarian rule in exchange for humanitarian and economic aid, member states could strongly **advocate for the Venezuelan government to reinvest revenues from oil exports** into the industry, in aim to increase employment, and more importantly, the efficiency of crude oil production in Venezuela. The increased revenue from the aforementioned aims, if reached, would also increase consumer confidence in the Venezuelan economy thus attracting more foreign investments. The government could then **use the revenue to improve healthcare and infrastructure** of Venezuela or subsidize taxes for small firms to boost local economies. This, however, will not be possible if transparency measures against corruption are not in place or if political instability continues.

As homelessness has been a pervasive impact of the economic crises, resulting in high unemployment, the aforementioned revenue could also be reinvested to **build more public housing**, that could be made cheaper for disadvantaged groups in society ie. Disabled, elderly, single mothers etc. Unilateral aid programs, like the US Agency for International Development (USAID), could also collaborate with local authorities to install infrastructural features to ensure clean water and better quality of sanitation.

**Transparency measures** like the United Nations Transparency and Accountability Initiative (UNTAI) Phase II, proposed by the United States Mission to the United Nations (USUN) in 2006 after systemic abuses involving humanitarian and development activities in the Funds and Programmes of the United Nations, should be implemented. This would act as a regulatory mechanism to ensure the legitimacy of the humanitarian assistance provided by member states and/or individual non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Furthermore, delegates could explore the possibility of **providing political amnesty** to these officials such that they would be exempted from a trial or offered political asylum should they be found guilty of corruption or crimes against humanity. This can be advocated by the UNSC who could refer these cases to the International Criminal Court (ICC), that has jurisdiction over the Venezuelan officials and has the capacity to enforce the aforementioned amnesty.

**Hosting free and fair elections** in Venezuela, under the regulation and observance of non-partisan third-parties like the United Nations (UN) would also be more valuable than domestically-regulated elections whereby candidates Guaido and Maduro would have greater propensity to dismiss the results of the election. To ensure reliability of the votes, they should be tallied by multiple neutral parties. Other transparency measures for tallying votes should also be implemented and publicly broadcasted to the citizens and international audience through news platforms. Security of the poll centers needs to be ensured so as to prevent foul play during the election. Security forces should preferably be deployed by the UN, rather than by individual member states, so as to reduce political bias that could jeopardize the security of these poll centers.

Meanwhile, in tandem with the elections, the UNSC could also appeal to organizations like the World Health Organization (WHO) and implement programs such as the World Food Programme (WFP) to **ensure social security** in Venezuela by providing temporary aid in healthcare and malnourishment, of which can only be achieved contingent upon the political stability of Venezuela.

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