

CENMUN 2019



UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL

Discussing the Venezuelan political question

27th - 29th September 2019
*Centre Point School, Wardhaman Nagar
Nagpur
India*

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Letter From the Executive Board

Dear Delegates,

It will be our pleasure to welcome you in Nagpur for CEN Model United Nations 2019. We are both honoured to be your Presidents for this 2019 edition and to meet delegates from all kinds of geographies and academic backgrounds. We thank once again the CENMUN team for organizing this conference and giving us the possibility to propose to you a couple of days of debate on one of the most important topics the international community have to face today.

In this Security Council, you will have the opportunity to discuss the burning topic of the Venezuelan Political Crisis. In this simulation, you as delegates, will have the opportunity to experience the most powerful and important body of the United Nations – The Security Council. This organ is also a unique committee by virtue of the fact that it can pass binding resolutions on member states. The presence of the veto power for the five permanent members can however create complications. Therefore, we deeply hope that this committee can work together to come up with constructive solutions on this topic. Not only do we expect delegates to have a good understanding of the workings of the UN Security Council, but we also hope that everyone, according to their country's position, will be able to bring new, concrete solutions on the table.

The Venezuelan crisis raises multiple issues at the core of today's world values: democratic elections, the right to self-determination, humanitarian action and protection of human rights, generally speaking. We obviously expect delegates to be sufficiently prepared to propose a dynamic and serious debate on that matter, including by adequate knowledge of the Rules of procedure. We will be following **UN4MUN Rules of Procedure**¹. It would be better if you visit the resources mentioned below in the footnote to get a fair introduction of the same. We will however be having a complete overview of the RoP in the first session of our meeting.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to Ashfaque and me, or to the CENMUN secretariat, with any must-know questions that may arise from now until the conference. We look forward to seeing you on the *28th of October* and to sharing with you the unforgettable experience of CEN Model United Nations!

Narayan Sharma

Ashfaque Ali

¹ UN4MUN Rules of Procedure

Introduction to SC

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is one of the six principal organs of the United Nations (UN), charged with the maintenance of international peace and security as well as approving any changes to its United Nations Charter. It is the only UN body with the authority to issue binding resolutions to member states. The Security Council held its first session on 17 January 1946.

Under the United Nations Charter, the functions and powers of the Security Council are mainly:

- to maintain international peace and security in accordance with the principles and purposes of the United Nations;
- to investigate any dispute or situation which might lead to international friction;
- to recommend methods of adjusting such disputes or the terms of settlement;
- to determine the existence of a threat to the peace or act of aggression and to recommend what action should be taken;
- to call on Members to apply economic sanctions and other measures not involving the use of force to prevent or stop aggression;
- to take military action against an aggressor;

The Security Council is expected to meet two (sometimes conflicting) requirements: first, to make decisions that will ensure prompt and effective action to maintain international peace and security; and second, to gain the support of the wider United Nations membership for such Security Council decisions to be carried out.

The Security Council's primary responsibility is the maintenance of international peace and security (UN Charter, Article 24). The Security Council takes the lead in determining the existence of a threat to the peace or act of aggression. It calls upon the parties to a dispute to settle it by peaceful means and recommends methods of adjustment or terms of settlement². In some cases, the Security Council can resort to imposing sanctions or even authorize the use of force to maintain or restore international peace and security.

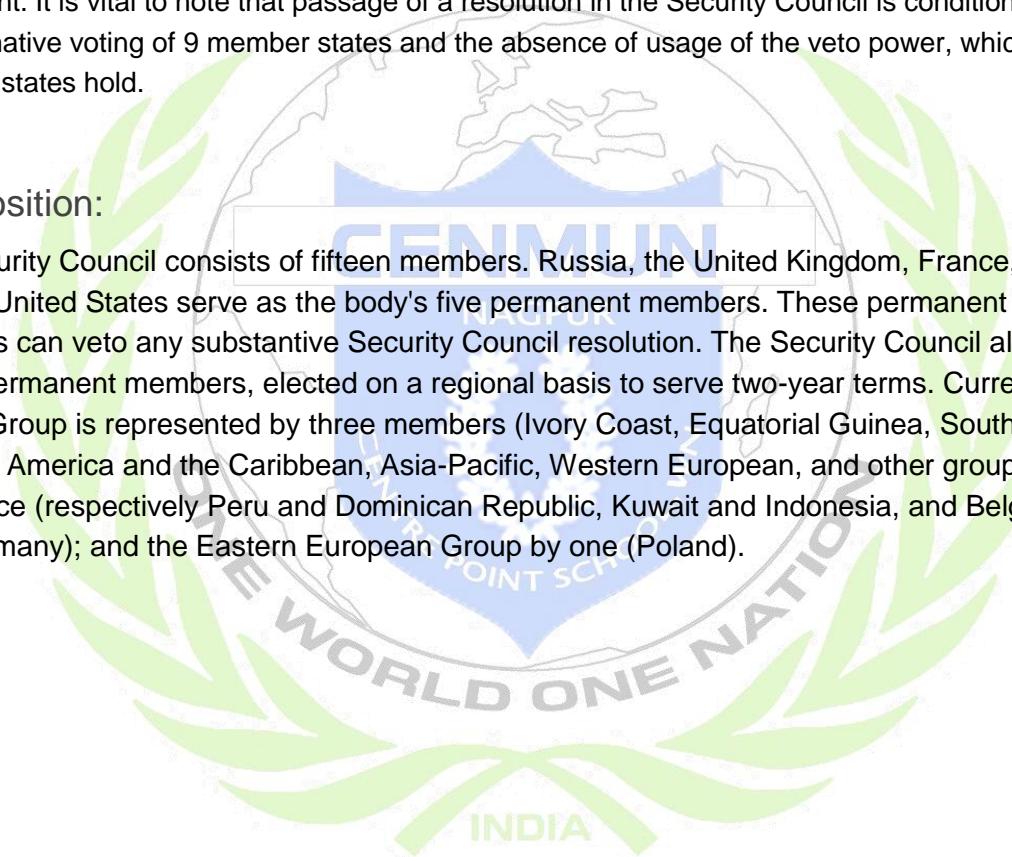
Chapters VI, VII, VIII and XII of the UN Charter all contain provisions pertaining the powers of the Security Council. Chapter VI pertains to the Pacific Settlement of Disputes, within which, under articles 33 to 38, the Security Council may call upon the settlement of such disputes by the parties involved, investigate such disputes and recommend appropriate procedures or methods of adjustment or resolution of the issue in a pacific manner. Chapter VII deals with the Action with Respect to Threats to the Peace, Breaches of the Peace and Acts of Aggression, within which, under articles 39 to 41, the Security Council may determine any of the three aforementioned violations, call upon, parties involved to comply with provisional measures and

² "Functions and Powers of the United Nations Security Council." Welcome to the United Nations. Accessed September 22, 2018. <http://www.un.org/en/sc/about/functions.shtml>.

invoke non-armed measures towards the resolution of it. Articles 42 to 50 pertain to the utilization of armed-measures, the procedures towards invoking and carrying out such measures and responsibilities and options for UN member states in light of such measures being employed. Article 51 of the same chapter VII finally iterates the inherent right of member states towards individual and collective self-defense. Chapter VIII contains only articles 52 to 54, which enshrine the practices involving regional arrangements, particularly in regards to how the Security Council may utilize such regional arrangements, but also how these will always require explicit authorization from the Security Council, should they wish to get seriously involved in matters. Finally we have Chapter XII, which pertains to the International Trusteeship System, under whose articles 83 and 84 mentions the Security Council as the sole approver of terms regarding such trusteeship agreements, as well as the body to whom the administering authority would be obligated as a contractual partner in this agreement. It is vital to note that passage of a resolution in the Security Council is conditional on the affirmative voting of 9 member states and the absence of usage of the veto power, which a certain 5 states hold.

Composition:

The Security Council consists of fifteen members. Russia, the United Kingdom, France, China, and the United States serve as the body's five permanent members. These permanent members can veto any substantive Security Council resolution. The Security Council also has 10 nonpermanent members, elected on a regional basis to serve two-year terms. Currently, the African Group is represented by three members (Ivory Coast, Equatorial Guinea, South Africa); the Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia-Pacific, Western European, and other groups by two apiece (respectively Peru and Dominican Republic, Kuwait and Indonesia, and Belgium and Germany); and the Eastern European Group by one (Poland).



The Venezuelan Political Question : Introduction

Venezuela, home to the world's largest oil reserves, is a case study in the perils of petrostate-hood. Since its discovery in the 1920s, oil has taken Venezuela on an exhilarating but dangerous boom-and-bust ride that offers lessons for other resource-rich states. Decades of poor governance have driven what was once one of Latin America's most prosperous countries to economic and political ruin.

Venezuela is the archetype of a failed petrostate, experts say. Oil continues to play a dominant role in the country's fortunes more than a century after it was discovered in the early twentieth century. The most recent plunge in oil prices—falling from more than \$100 per barrel in 2014 to a low of under \$30 per barrel in early 2016—has sucked Venezuela into an economic and political spiral, from which it could take decades to recover.

The South American country has been caught in a downward spiral for years with growing political discontent further fuelled by skyrocketing hyperinflation, power cuts and shortages of food and medicine. About four million Venezuelans have left the country in recent years.

A number of grim indicators³:

Oil dependence: Oil sales account for 98 percent of export earnings and as much as 50 percent of gross domestic product (GDP).

Falling production: Oil output has declined for decades, reaching a new low in 2018.

Spiraling economy: In 2018, GDP shrunk by double digits for a third consecutive year.

Soaring debt: Venezuela has missed billions of dollars in payments since defaulting in late 2017.

Hyperinflation: Annual inflation is running at more than 80,000 percent.

Growing autocracy: President Nicolas Maduro has violated basic tenets of democracy to maintain power.

Together these have caused a devastating humanitarian crisis, with severe shortages of basic goods, such as food and medical supplies. In 2017-18, Venezuelans lost an average of twenty-four pounds in body weight. Nine out of ten live in poverty. Roughly one in ten have fled the country.

³ Cfr: Venezuela: A simple guide to understanding the current crisis

How did Venezuela get here?

The Story Before Chavez and Maduro

A number of economic and political milestones mark Venezuela's path as a petrostate.

Discovering oil: In 1922, Royal Dutch Shell geologists at La Rosa, a field in the Maracaibo Basin, struck oil, which blew out at what was then an extraordinary rate of one hundred thousand barrels per day. In a matter of years, more than one hundred foreign companies were producing oil, backed by dictator General Juan Vicente Gomez (1908–1935). Annual production exploded during the 1920s, from just over a million barrels to 137 million, making Venezuela second only to the United States in total output by 1929. By the time Gomez died in 1935, Dutch disease had settled in: the Venezuelan bolivar had ballooned, and oil shoved aside other sectors to account for 90 percent of exports. Reclaiming oil rents. By the 1930s, just three foreign companies—Royal Dutch Shell, Gulf, and Standard Oil—controlled 98 percent of the Venezuelan oil market. Gomez's successors sought to reform the oil sector to funnel funds into government coffers. The Hydrocarbons Law of 1943 was the first step in that direction, requiring foreign companies to give half of their oil profits to the state. Within five years, the government's income had increased sixfold.

Punto Fijo pact: In 1958, after a succession of military dictatorships, Venezuela elected its first stable democratic government. That year, Venezuela's three major political parties signed the Punto Fijo pact, which guaranteed that state jobs and, notably, oil rents would be parceled out to the three parties in proportion to voting results. While the pact sought to guard against dictatorship and usher in democratic stability, it ensured that oil profits would be concentrated in the state.

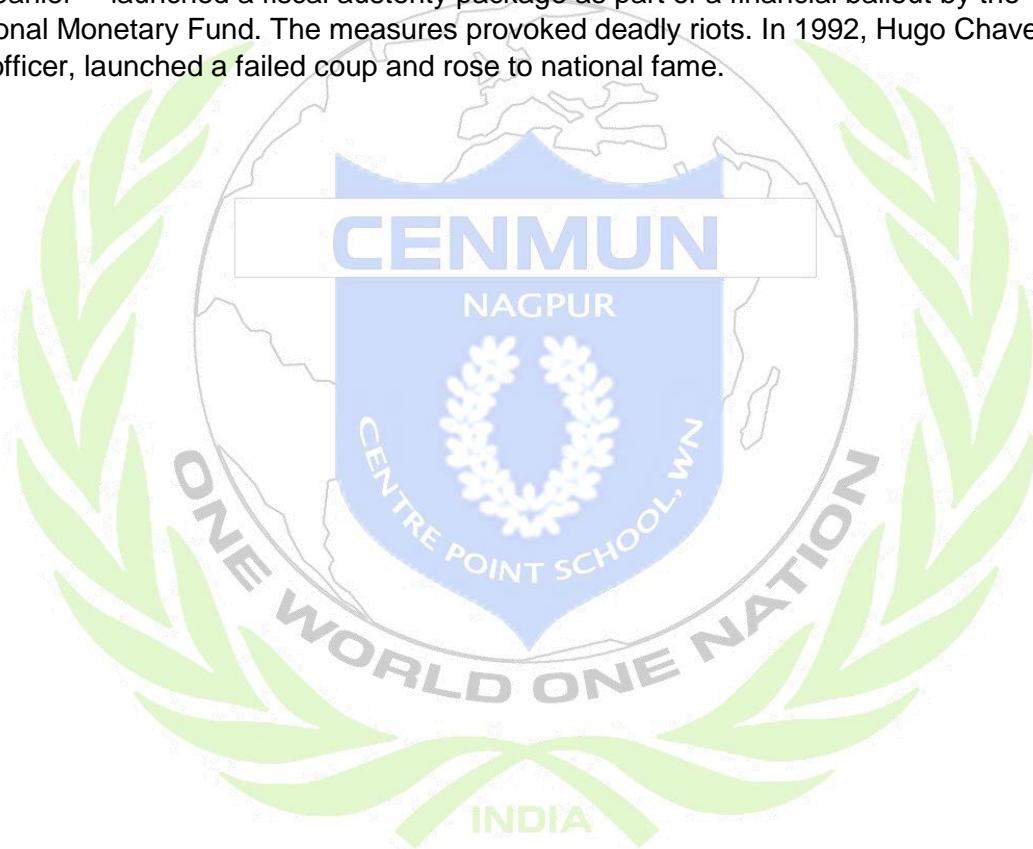
OPEC: Venezuela joined Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia as a founding member of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) in 1960. Through the cartel, which would later include Qatar, Indonesia, Libya, the United Arab Emirates, Algeria, Nigeria, Ecuador, Gabon, Angola, Equatorial Guinea, and the Republic of Congo, the world's largest producers coordinated prices and gave states more control over their national industries. That same year, Venezuela established its first state oil company and increased oil companies' income tax to 65 percent of profits.

The 1970s boom: In 1973, a five-month OPEC embargo on countries backing Israel in the Yom Kippur War quadrupled oil prices and made Venezuela the country with the highest per-capita income in Latin America. Over two years, the windfall added \$10 billion to state coffers, giving

way to rampant graft and mismanagement. Analysts estimate that as much as \$100 billion was embezzled between 1972 and 1997 alone.

PDVSA: In 1976, amid the oil boom, President Carlos Andres Perez nationalized the oil industry, creating state-owned Petroleos de Venezuela, S.A. (PDVSA) to oversee all exploring, producing, refining, and exporting of oil. Perez allowed PDVSA to partner with foreign oil companies as long as it held 60 percent equity in joint ventures and, critically, structured the company to run as a business with minimal government regulation.

The 1980s oil glut: As global oil prices plummeted in the 1980s, Venezuela's economy contracted and inflation soared; at the same time, it accrued massive foreign debt by purchasing foreign refineries, such as Citgo in the United States. In 1989, Perez—reelected months earlier—launched a fiscal austerity package as part of a financial bailout by the International Monetary Fund. The measures provoked deadly riots. In 1992, Hugo Chavez, a military officer, launched a failed coup and rose to national fame.



Hugo Chavez

After a long history of imperialist rule and subsequent independence, the State assumed full sovereignty in 1830⁴. Throughout the 19th century, caudillismo ruled Venezuela in an era of autocracy. Caudillos are ‘strongmen’ in Latin American military and politics. A successful coup in 1945 brought the provisional presidency of Romulo Betancourt. After developing a new constitution, holding democratic elections that he won, going to exile in a decade of military rule, and returning to power, Betancourt left a stable and democratic Venezuela.

After being pardoned for anti-government activities in 1994, Hugo Chavez contested the elections in 1998 and won with 56.2% of the votes under the promise of a peaceful and democratic social revolution⁵. His socialist party, called the “Fifth Republic Movement,” advocated for major changes to the government and economy. Chavez rewrote the constitution, renamed Venezuela the “Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela”, placed many members of his party in the National Assembly⁶. Chavez’s rise to power is known as the Bolivarian Revolution. Although his first term maintained a moderate foreign policy, including considering the United States as an important ally and making state visits as such, his administration was known for its social programmes dedicated to improving access to health, education, food, land, and social security for the poorest members of society.

At this point, Chavez’s role split Venezuelan politics in two. Chavistas saw him a leader who redistributed wealth and worked for the welfare of the people, and Anti-Chavistas saw him as a symbol of autocratic and authoritarian rule who used social welfare to take power away from the people. A counter-revolution even briefly ousted him from office, but it did not take him more than two days to reclaim his seat. In following years, there was a considerable focus on Chavez’s actions and intents. President Chavez took special interest in Venezuela’s oil wealth and re-nationalised the oil industry and severed the ties private businesses owned by the rich and elite had to the oil resources. Chavistas point to reforms like this as Chavez’s success. Throughout Chavez’s presidency, GDP per Capita almost doubled, unemployment halved, and oil export revenues increased from USD\$14 billion to USD\$60 billion annually⁷. However, in the Anti-Chavista books, Chavez was simply lucky to preside over an era of rise in oil prices and he

⁴ "Venezuela." Archived 4 September 2011 at the Wayback Machine. Friends of the Pre-Columbian Art Museum. (retrieved 9 July 2011)

⁵ Canache, Damarys. "From Bullets to Ballots: The Emergence of Popular Support for Hugo Chávez." Latin American Politics and Society 44, no. 1 (2002): 69-90. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3177111>.

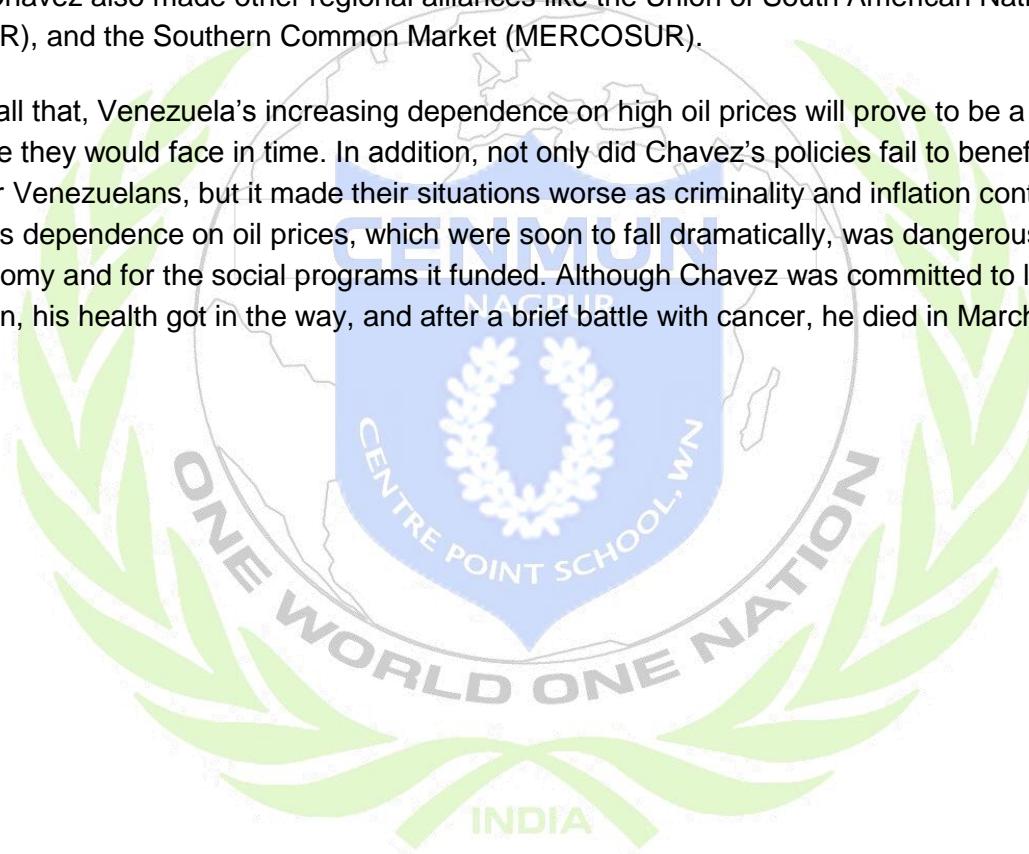
⁶ Lapper, Richard. "Venezuela and the Rise of Chavez: A Background Discussion Paper." November 22, 2005. Accessed September 21, 2018. <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/venezuela-and-rise-chavez-background-discussion-paper>

⁷ Bibliography "The Achievements of Hugo Chavez." Www.counterpunch.org. Last modified December 31, 2015. <https://www.counterpunch.org/2012/12/14/the-achievements-of-hugo-chavez/>

ended up spending all the money that came in, which lay the foundation an inevitable economic crash without any type of buffer.

As Chavez continued winning elections amidst loyal support and dissent, he continued to pump money from rising global oil prices into his welfare programs. After his 2006 reelection, he expanded his socialist dream beyond borders where he extended and handed it to socialist states like Cuba. The 2004 agreement signed with Cuba slowly transformed into the Alianza Bolivariana para los Pueblos de Nuestra América (ALBA) pact, forming a leftist group of Latin American countries to work against United States of America (U.S.A) capitalist exploitation of Latin American countries⁸. The group aimed to combat cheap imports and protect worker rights by promoting state-owned enterprises, pursuing free healthcare and education for all citizens, and promoting the effectiveness of socialist policies by controlling the narrative through state media. Chavez also made other regional alliances like the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), and the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR).

Despite all that, Venezuela's increasing dependence on high oil prices will prove to be a challenge they would face in time. In addition, not only did Chavez's policies fail to benefit the wealthier Venezuelans, but it made their situations worse as criminality and inflation continued to rise. Its dependence on oil prices, which were soon to fall dramatically, was dangerous for the economy and for the social programs it funded. Although Chavez was committed to leading the nation, his health got in the way, and after a brief battle with cancer, he died in March 2013.



⁸ "A Guide to ALBA." Americas Quarterly. Accessed September 22, 2018. <https://www.americasquarterly.org/hirst/article>.

Maduro

Nicolas Maduro organised labour from a young age. Instead of studying at university, he observed organising in Cuwba. A loyal Chavista who Chavez thought was fully in line with the Bolivarian Revolution, Maduro even took nominal control of the government when Chavez was undergoing treatment for his health in 2013. After the death of Hugo Chavez, he was soon sworn into office after a marginal electoral victory. Maduro strengthened national security and took precautions against organised crime and drug proliferation and internal corruption⁹. He requested more executive power under “rule by decree”, a form of control primarily used by dictators, that would allow him to create unchallenged laws.

As Maduro began what he called an “economic war,” as the economy keeps crashing, global oil prices dropped and economic chaos ensued in oil-dependant Venezuela, thus beginning its economic crisis. In addition, Maduro formed a Constituent Assembly to draft a new constitution despite domestic and international opposition to it.

In mid-2014, global oil prices tumbled, and Venezuela’s economy went into free fall. As unrest brewed, Maduro consolidated power through political repression, censorship, and electoral manipulation. In 2017, the government issued an indefinite ban on all protests, imprisoned political adversaries, and dissolved the National Assembly. In May 2018, Maduro secured reelection in a race that the United States and other powers condemned as unfair and undemocratic.

As he continues to rule Venezuela, we see the country crippling under economic and political struggles, which has resulted in the situation today.

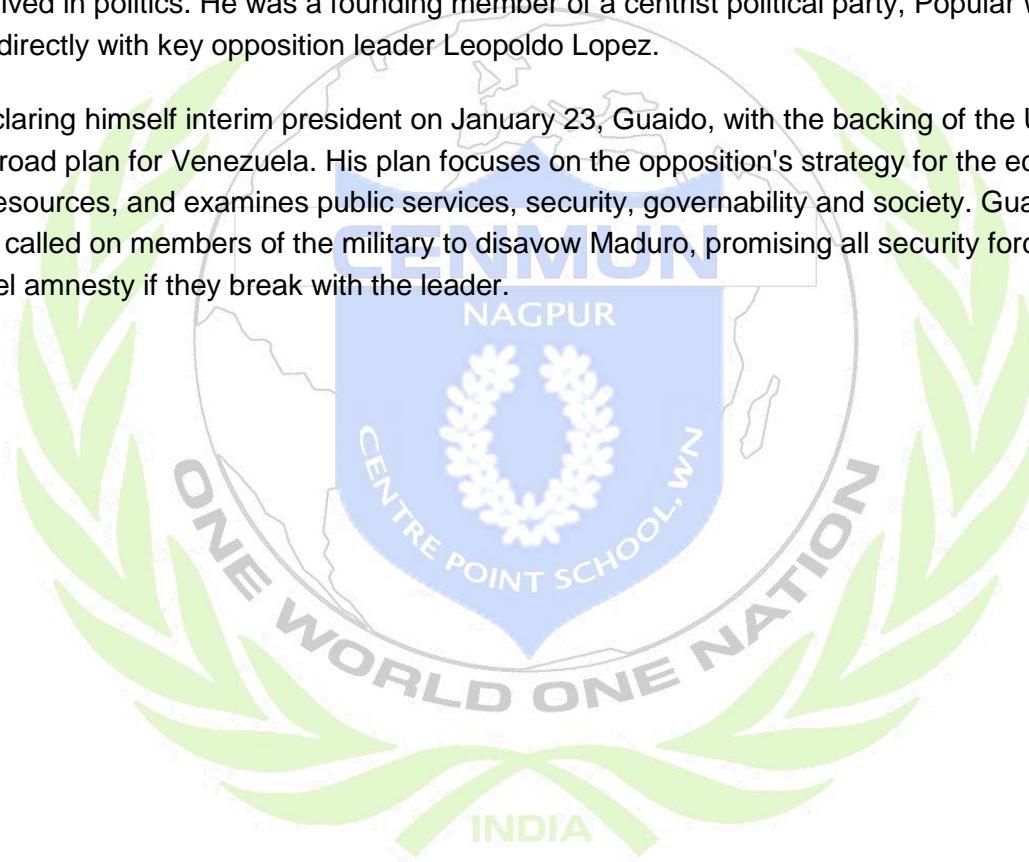
⁹ "Nicolas Maduro Remporte L'élection Présidentielle De Justesse." France 24. Last modified April 15, 2013. <https://www.france24.com/fr/20130415-nicolas-maduro-president-venezuela-election-presidentielle>.

Juan Guaido

Guaido rose from obscurity to the self-declared interim president of Venezuela in a matter of weeks.

The 35-year-old politician was relatively unknown when he was named the president of the National Assembly in early January. Guaido was born in the port city of La Guaira, in the state of Vargas. He was 15 years old when Chavez came to power in 1999. From an early age, he was involved in politics. He was a founding member of a centrist political party, Popular Will, working directly with key opposition leader Leopoldo Lopez.

After declaring himself interim president on January 23, Guaido, with the backing of the US, laid out his broad plan for Venezuela. His plan focuses on the opposition's strategy for the economy and oil resources, and examines public services, security, governability and society. Guaido has also called on members of the military to disavow Maduro, promising all security forces personnel amnesty if they break with the leader.



Timeline of Events

1521 - Spanish colonisation begins on the north-east coast.

1749 - First rebellion against Spanish colonial rule.

1810 - Venezuelans take advantage of Napoleon's invasion of Spain to declare independence.

1829-30 - Venezuela secedes from Gran Colombia.

1870-88 - Ruler Antonio Guzman Blanco attracts foreign investment, modernises infrastructure and develops agriculture and education.

1908-35 - Dictator Juan Vicente Gomez governs at time when Venezuela becomes world's largest oil exporter.

1945 - Coup established civilian government after decades of military rule.

1948 - President Romulo Gallegos, Venezuela's first democratically-elected leader, overthrown within eight months in military coup led by Marcos Perez Jimenez.

1998 - Hugo Chavez elected president. Leads the Bolivarian Revolution bringing in new socialist and populist economic and social policies funded by the high oil prices. Rewrote the constitution and became increasingly anti-US.

2001 - Chavez utilizes the enabling act to pass socialist laws to redistribute land and wealth. Business and labour groups begin to worry about the government's role in the economy. December

2006 Chavez wins a third presidential term with 63% of the vote.

January 2010 - Bolivar devalued by 17% for priority imports and by 50% for non-essential items to boost oil revenue.

April 2012 - Chavez regime tightens price controls on essential goods against inflation, threatening to expel non-complying companies.

April 2013 - President Hugo Chavez dies at age 58 in March after a battle with cancer. Nicolas Maduro, his chosen successor, is elected president by a narrow margin. The opposition contests the result.

November 2013 - National Assembly grants Maduro emergency powers for a year due to rampant inflation (running at over 50%), which he uses to limit profit margins. Prompts protests by opposition supporters.

2 February-March 2014 - Protests spread to Caracas from the western regions of Tachira and Merida, earning the backing of opposition parties and turning into anti-government rallies. The government accuses the opposition of planning a coup and breaks up the rallies, leaving at least 28 dead.

November 2014 - Government announces cuts in public spending as oil prices reach a fouryear low.

2014-2015 - Opposition figures Maria Corina Machado and Antonia Ledesma charged with treason and conspiracy in December 2014 and February 2015 respectively.

December 2015 - Opposition wins a two-thirds majority in parliamentary elections, marking the end of 16 years of Socialist rule.

September 2016 - Hundreds of thousands participate in a rally against Maduro and his actions addressing the economic crisis.

2017 April-June - Several people die in clashes with security forces during mass protests demanding early presidential elections and the revoking of a planned constituent assembly to replace the National Assembly.

July 2017 - Opposition holds an unofficial referendum, reporting that seven million people rejected Maduro's plan to convene a new constituent assembly.

July 2017 - Constituent assembly formed and granted virtually unlimited powers by vote to rewrite the constitution with Maduro's Socialist Party.

3 August 2017 - Luisa Ortega, Venezuela's main prosecutor, fled to Colombia over fear of the government 2018 May - President Maduro wins another term in an election.

2018 August - Venezuela slashes five zeros from its old currency, renaming it the Sovereign Bolivar and tying it to a state-backed cryptocurrency in a bid to tackle rampant hyperinflation.

2019 - Not long after Maduro's inauguration on January 10, Venezuelans took to the streets calling for him to step down. Guaidó, leading the opposition, claimed the presidency, citing emergency powers granted from the constitution.

The Current Situation

The problems that construct the Venezuelan crisis today can be split into three categories: economic, political, and humanitarian.

ECONOMIC CRISIS: The drop in oil prices and the subsequent depletion of government reserves forced Maduro to simply print more money to pay workers. The hyperinflation in Venezuela is a result of that monetary incontinence. The inflation currently rising at a staggering 3% every day. The International Monetary Fund predicts the inflation will skyrocket to 1 million percent by the end of the year as the government continues to print money. The IMF reports¹⁰ compares the situation to Germany in 1923 or Zimbabwe under Robert Mugabe in late 2000s. Oil prices have picked up recently. Yet underinvestment dating back years has crippled Petróleos de Venezuela, S.A, the state oil company and it struggles to raise production levels. Production is down 35% since 2015, crashing to less than 1.69 million barrels per day¹¹. This is less than half the production since Chavez took over in 1999.

Nicolas Maduro introduced the petro, a cryptocurrency that will be backed by oil, and it will be an official currency in August 2018. In August, he also raised the minimum wage by 3000%, shed five zeros off the bolívar, devalued it by more than 90%, and announced that the bolívar will now be backed by the petro. The Venezuelan economy shrank 30% between 2013 and 2017 and the IMF predicts it to shrink another 18% in 2018. Generally, such a situation would force a nation to turn to the IMF for a bailout, but Venezuela severed ties with the multilateral lender in 2007. Although the economy is not the only problem, it is evident how the dire situation leads to other issues.

HUMANITARIAN CRISIS :Alejandro Werner of the IMF writes, “The collapse in economic activity, hyperinflation, and increasing deterioration in the provision of public goods as well as shortages of food at subsidized prices have resulted in large migration flows, which will lead to intensifying spill over effects on neighbouring countries,” as Venezuela’s economic state led to a full blown humanitarian crisis on different fronts. With no motivation for production within the country, since the inflation and price controls allows for no profit, there are massive shortages of even the most basic necessities like food and medicine. The fixed exchange rate and the United State of America’s embargo also means it is not possible to import supplies. Furthermore, it is

¹⁰ "Nicolas Maduro Remporte L'élection Présidentielle De Justesse." France 24. Last modified April 15, 2013. <https://www.france24.com/fr/20130415-nicolas-maduro-president-venezuela-election-presidentielle>

¹¹ "Venezuela: How the Most Oil Rich Nation on Earth Was Brought to the Brink of Collapse." The Independent. Last modified August 20, 2018. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/business/analysis-and-features/venezuela-nicolas-maduro-economy-crisis-oil-prices-explained-history-hugo-chavez-a8494696.html>

also not possible for Venezuela to borrow money as the international community have slapped heavy sanctions to condemn the Maduro government.



Lack of food and medicine accelerated the decline in health. Current estimates show that over 11% of children under age five are severely malnourished. Almost one-third of Venezuelans admit to eating two or fewer meals per day, over 85% say they eat less than before, and 44% say they've gone at least one full day without eating¹². Illness rising from these problems go untreated as doctors and hospitals face an acute shortage in medicine and related supplies. Moreover, diseases like Diphtheria, that one thought had been eradicated, has returned due to the lack of immunity and adequate vaccination. Malaria has also infected people at a rate that hit a 75-year high. The prevalence of malaria has risen for similar reasons and has infected enough people to hit a 75-year high. In just one week in October 2017, 32 people died from the disease as waiting rooms overflowed and doctors attempted to treat the illness without medicine. Doctors are reported to have left the country as they say they cannot treat patients anymore, which has contributed to an increasing brain drain .

The mass migration, with numbers beyond imagination, has also created problems for the host countries as they struggle to take in thousands of refugees. Latin American countries have recently introduced measures strengthening their borders to halt refugee influx. Demanding passports at borders is one of the new measures, which has proved successful as many Venezuelans lack passports due to the situation at home. Unrest in refugee camps has also increased across the continent with a Brazilian camp recently being lit on fire by the locals after the Venezuelans allegedly robbed a restaurant. Massive protests have also broken out in Ecuador to protest the influx of refugees as local population fear a loss of jobs. The Venezuelan exodus shows no sign of slowing down and many, who have fled, fear a peaceful solution is not possible anymore due to the increasing political crisis.

POLITICAL CRISIS : Perhaps President Maduro also thinks a peaceful solution is not possible as he continues to drown out the slightest of dissent with strict authoritarian measures. By establishing a Constituent Assembly to draft a new Constitution and absolving the opposition controlled National Assembly, Maduro continues to claim more power for himself and is well on the path to dictatorship. The regime and the military react violently to protests by the public, charge opposition leaders with treason, and suppress the freedom of press¹³ .

The Venezuelan streets are often filled with protestors and even the most peaceful of demonstrations end in tear gas and casualties. In mid 2017, there were more than 120 deaths as policemen shot at the marchers mercilessly. This repression of dissent has manifested itself in the form of extreme consequences for the public and the opposition members as torture and extreme forms of punishments and retribution have become more common. In July 2017, protests and public gatherings were banned with a maximum sentence of 5 years. Maduro continues to take new measures, in 2017 he had several opposition members arrested and charged, indicating he is willing to do anything to protect his political power. Venezuelan politics

¹² "UNICEF Sees Growing Signs of Malnutrition Crisis in Venezuela." U.S. Last modified January 26, 2018. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-venezuela-unicef/unicef-sees-growing-signs-of-malnutrition-crisis-in-venezuela-idUSKBN1FF1OF>.

¹³ "Censorship and Persecution: Net Closes on Venezuelan Media | Reporters Without Borders." RSF. Last modified May 16, 2017. <https://rsf.org/en/news/censorship-and-persecution-net-closes-venezuelan-media>.

has become increasingly unstable, with its economic and refugee crisis, and it is time to address this issue that threatens both the sanctity of democracy and the wellbeing of millions of Venezuelans.



International Response

Maduro's supporters

Maduro's major supporters include the Venezuelan military and the Supreme Court, Russia, China, Turkey, Cuba, Bolivia, Iran and Nicaragua. Both China and Russia blocked a push in the United Nations Security Council to back Guaido.

State oil company PDVSA, which was recently hit with US sanctions, has also stood by Maduro. "We have no other president" besides Maduro, PDVSA President and Oil Minister Manuel Quevedo, a career military officer, said in a January 23 statement.

Guaido's supporters

Countries: Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, UK, US. Some low-ranking members of the military. EU has called for fresh elections.

Among other countries recognising Guaido are Australia, and Israel. Defence attache Colonel Jose Luis Silva, Venezuela's top military envoy to the US, declared himself a supporter of Guaido, saying, "He is the only legitimate president."

LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES

As neighbouring countries continue to take on refugees from Venezuela, and not directly confronting Maduro, they have taken to the Organisation of the American States (OAS) (including the USA) to condemn Maduro for what they consider to be undemocratic elections in May 2018. A panel enlisted by the OAS also accused the Maduro government of crimes against humanity. The Lima Group of Latin American countries (including Canada) announced that it does not recognise the legitimacy of the May 2018 elections. They indicated that they would call their ambassadors back from Caracas for consultations and coordinate a regional response to the exodus of Venezuelans "who have been obligated to abandon their country"

EUROPEAN UNION

The EU condemns President Maduro's repression of opposition members and believes the recent elections were neither free nor fair, which led to sanctions against multiple Venezuelan officials by issuing travel bans and freezing their assets¹⁴. The bloc targeted names including former Vice President Tareck El Aissami because he is "responsible for serious human rights violations ... including arbitrary detention, politically motivated investigations, inhumane and degrading treatment, and torture," and current Vice President Delcy Rodriguez¹²⁶. The EU continues to keep an eye on the economic and humanitarian situation and has committed to supporting Venezuela to find peaceful and democratic solutions.

UNITED NATIONS

Attempts to bring about political dialogue started as early as May 2016, through an initiative facilitated by three former Presidents from the Dominican Republic, Panama and Spain, under the auspices of the Union of South American Nations. Despite some initial progress, no concrete agreements were reached through that initiative, which was suspended by the beginning of 2017. By mid-2017, there were efforts to resume dialogue, and formal talks began in September 2017, hosted by the Dominican Republic and with international accompaniment. The talks ended in February 2018, without agreements having been reached. One of the major areas of disagreement was the electoral calendar and guarantees to ensure free, transparent and credible elections. Subsequently, the Government went ahead with presidential elections in May 2018. President Nicolás Maduro Moros was declared the winner over two other candidates. Most of the opposition did not participate in the elections or recognize the results.

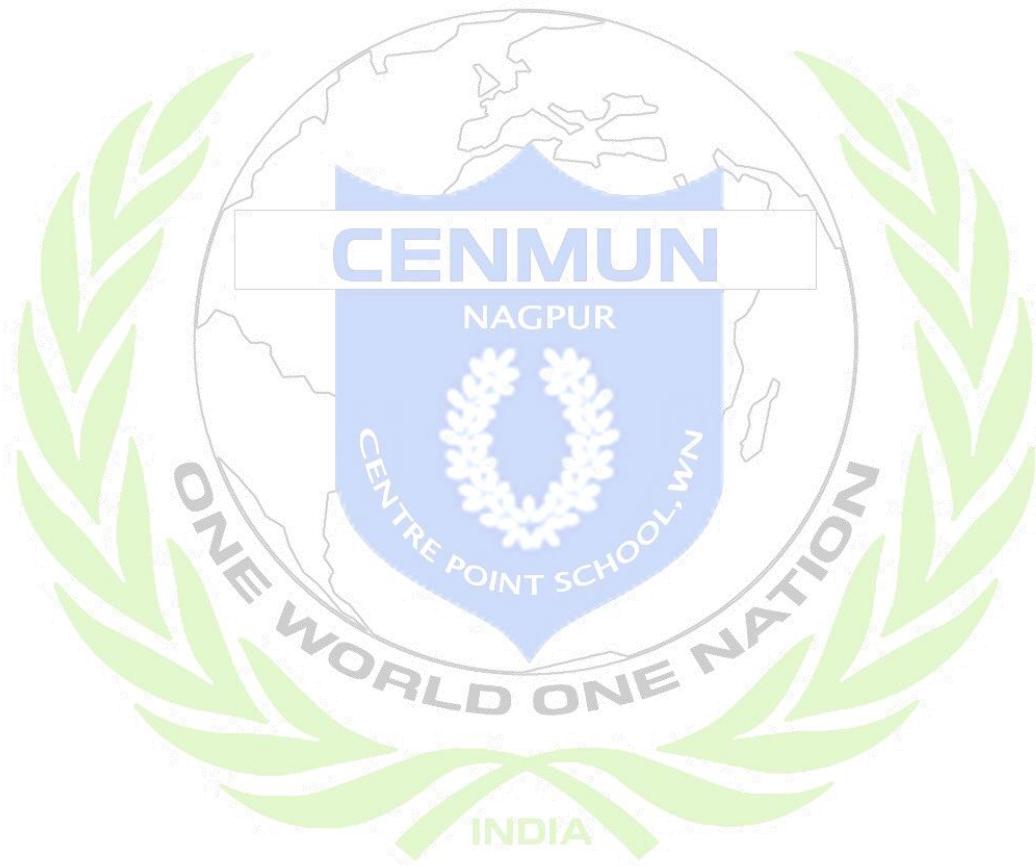
On January 26th, 2019, the UNSC held a meeting concerning the situation in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. "Following widespread protests and political upheaval in Venezuela, all actors must exercise maximum restraint and avoid any further escalation", said a senior United Nations official during this emergency meeting.

Although both the United Nations Security Council and the General Assembly did not vote a lot of resolution on this crisis, it is worth using international law, including the United Nations Charter, to deal with such situations.

On February 10th, 2019, the US presented a resolution project to the UNSC pledging for a peaceful transition towards free presidential elections, and reasserting its preoccupations concerning the misuse of force by the Venezuelan police towards protesters. On February 14th, Moscow condemned this incitation to perpetrate a coup d'état, and proposed to respect the

¹⁴ "Declaration by the High Representative on Behalf of the EU on the Situation in Venezuela - Consilium." Home - Consilium. Last modified April 19, 2018. <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2018/04/19/declaration-by-the-highrepresentative-on-behalf-of-the-eu-on-the-situation-in-venezuela/>

institutions installed by N. Maduro, saying that any interference in the country could be considered as political meddling.

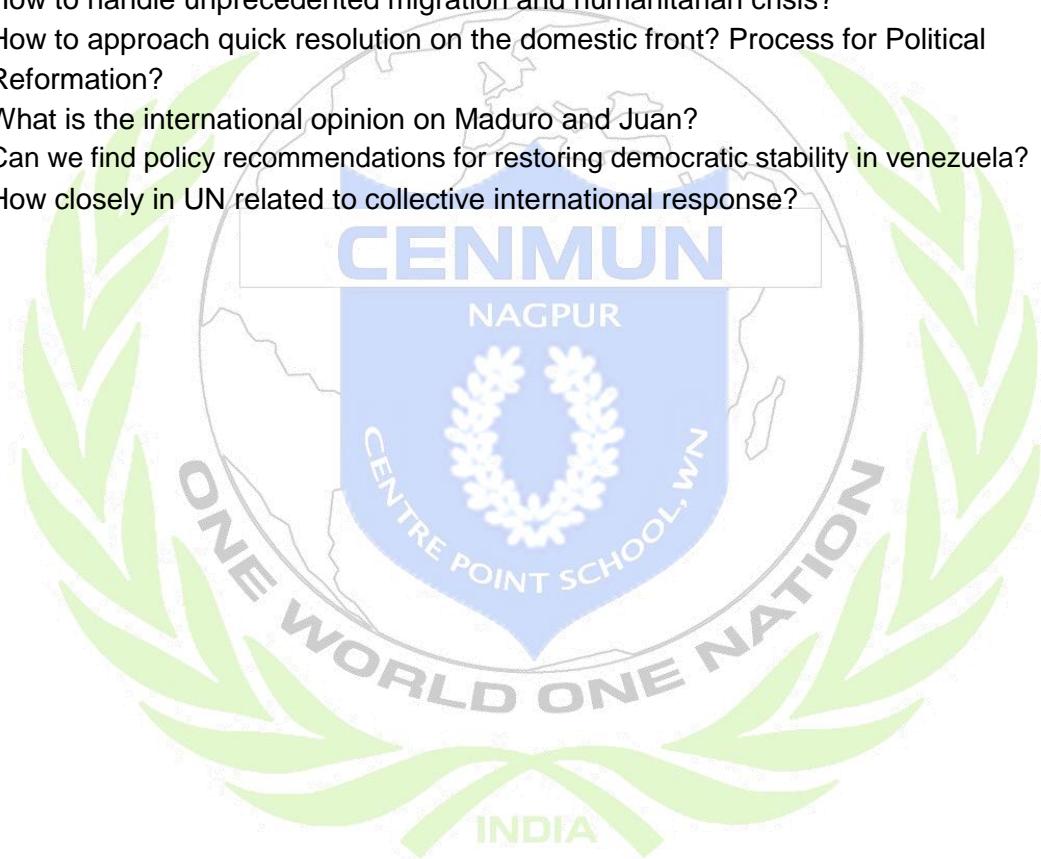


Key Concerns and Questions For the Meeting

For normal Venezuelans, everyday life has become increasingly difficult. One of the biggest challenges people face is hyperinflation. According to a study released by the National Assembly, by the end of 2018, prices were doubling every 19 days on average.

Some of the most important fronts of discussion are:

1. How to tackle the economic disaster?
2. How to handle unprecedented migration and humanitarian crisis?
3. How to approach quick resolution on the domestic front? Process for Political Reformation?
4. What is the international opinion on Maduro and Juan?
5. Can we find policy recommendations for restoring democratic stability in Venezuela?
6. How closely in UN related to collective international response?



Further Reading Resources

UNSC Meeting Record, January 26th, 2019

(http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/PV.8452) UN Website

(<http://www.un.org>) UN Charter <https://treaties.un.org/doc/publication/ctc/uncharter.pdf>

<https://www.cia.gov/library/Publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ve.html>

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-19652436>

<https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2012/09/201292121430533264.html>

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-47126434>

<http://en.rfi.fr/americas/20190126-eu-us-venezuela-8-day-ultimatum-elections-un-securitycouncil>

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-venezuela-politics-un/u-s-pushes-u-n-security-council-toback-venezuelas-guaido-idUSKCN1PJ1ZR>

<http://www.rfi.fr/ameriques/20190210-venezuela-deux-projets-resolution-s-opposent-conseilsecuite>

