

NHSMUN

National High School Model United Nations

2023

BACKGROUND GUIDE: UNSC B

Topic A: The Situation in Venezuela

Topic B: The Situation in the Central African Republic

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Dear Delegates,

I am so excited to welcome you to the United Nations Security Council at the 2023 NHSMUN conference! My name is Elizabeth Williams, and I will serve as your director in Session I of the upcoming conference. My co-director, Jordan Baker, and I have worked incredibly hard together to produce these background guides to provide you with a holistic introduction to each topic and inform the external research and preparation you will do for committee. We hope this will give you a comprehensive overview allowing you to engage in creative debate and write innovative resolutions surrounding these urgent global events.

Before we meet at the conference, I would like to introduce myself. I am currently in my second year at the University of Chicago, studying neuroscience and business economics on the pre-med track. I am involved in MUN at UChicago, along with various music programs where I teach piano and perform; in my free time, you can find me watching K-dramas, cooking, shopping, or exploring the city. I am originally from New Jersey (like my co-director Jordan), and my MUN journey started in my sophomore year of high school. In fact, NHSMUN was my first-ever conference, and that experience sparked my love for international relations. After being a delegate in the Security Council for two years and then serving as Assistant Director of UNSC last year, this year's conference is truly significant to me. I am thrilled to be sharing this part of my NHSMUN journey with all of you!

This year, we have chosen the situations in Venezuela and the Central African Republic as topics of focus for the committee, as we hope these will bring fresh debate and new perspectives to issues that are not widely discussed. Both of these countries have rapidly evolving political, economic, and humanitarian affairs, with many citizens being heavily impacted. Keep in mind that the topics we will debate involve human rights abuses, political/ethnic violence, and other extremely sensitive topics, so it is essential that delegates treat the discussion with the utmost respect.

During my delegate years, my chairs made committee both enjoyable and educational, and it is my goal to pass on this experience to all of you. I can't wait to see everyone employ their skills in diplomacy and critical thinking in thought-provoking debate and dynamic solutions. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me, Jordan, or any of the NHSMUN staff with any questions or concerns you might have in the process; we are all here as resources to ensure that your NHSMUN experience is fun and rewarding. Good luck, and I look forward to meeting you in committee!

Best,

Elizabeth Williams

United Nations Security Council B

Session I

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Dear Delegates,

My name is Jordan Baker, and I'm thrilled to be one of your directors for Security Council B during the 2023 National High School Model United Nations Conference! My Co-Director, Elizabeth Williams, and I have put together two comprehensive background guides to help you start researching your topics. We look forward to seeing you all engage in thorough debate and hope you all come well prepared. The issues we'll be discussing in committee are incredibly important and should be handled with the utmost consideration and respect. This committee will test your skills in diplomacy and encourage you to learn more about international politics.

As your Director, I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce myself and express my excitement to see you all this spring! Before joining the staff here at NHSMUN, I was a delegate for the conference's in-person and online sessions. Last year, I had the pleasure of being one of the UNSC Assistant Directors, and I loved the committee style and delegates so much that I knew I wanted to be a Director. My Co-Director Elizabeth and I both hail from New Jersey and share a deep love from attending this conference and being involved in Model UN in high school. My main goal is for you all, as the delegates to have an amazing learning experience, as I believe MUN is an activity that should be accessible and enjoyable for everyone. I deeply value the opinions of all our delegates, so I'm looking forward to hearing all your different ideas and opinions.

I'm a second-year student at American University in Washington D.C. studying International Relations and Spanish, and I hope to share my passions and studies at the conference with you all. I compete on my University's Model UN team, staff our high-school conference, participate in advocacy organizations, and serve on the undergraduate council for the School of International Service. The time Elizabeth and I have spent researching has been some of the most important, well-spent moments of my life, and I hope you all will use these Background Guides to guide you in your research.

This year, Elizabeth and I wanted to address some topics that have not always been the regional focus of many conferences. This year's topics are "the Situation in Venezuela" and "the Situation in the Central African Republic." We could not be more excited to share these guides with you and implore that you all not only read and learn about both topics but expand into your independent research on them. Please note the powers and limitations of a unique committee such as the Security Council, and remember that these topics deal with real people facing very serious problems. We can assure you that this conference, and especially this committee, will be a great one! If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please feel free to reach out to me. Best of luck!

Jordan Baker (she/her)

United Nations Security Council B

Session II

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A Note on the NHSMUN Difference

Esteemed Faculty and Delegates,

Welcome to NHSMUN 2023! We are Ming-May Hu and Ana Margarita Gil, and we are this year's Secretary-General and Director-General. Thank you for choosing to attend NHSMUN, the world's largest and most diverse Model United Nations conference for secondary school students. We are thrilled to welcome you to New York City in March!

As a space for collaboration, consensus, and compromise, NHSMUN strives to transform today's brightest thinkers into tomorrow's leaders. Our organization provides a uniquely tailored experience for all in attendance through innovative and accessible programming. We believe that an emphasis on education through simulation is paramount to the Model UN experience, and this idea permeates throughout NHSMUN.

Realism and accuracy: Although a perfect simulation of the UN is never possible, we believe that one of the core educational responsibilities of MUN conferences is to educate students about how the UN System works. Each NHSMUN committee is a simulation of a real deliberative body so that delegates can research what their country has said in the committee. Our topics are chosen from the issues currently on the agenda of that committee (except historical committees, which take topics from the appropriate time period). This creates incredible opportunities for our delegates to conduct first-hand research by reading the actual statements their country has made and the resolutions they have supported. We also strive to invite real UN, NGO, and field experts into each committee through our committee speakers program. Moreover, we arrange meetings between students and the actual UN Permanent Mission of the country they are representing. No other conference goes so far to deeply immerse students into the UN System.

Educational emphasis, even for awards: At the heart of NHSMUN lies education and compromise. Part of what makes NHSMUN so special is its diverse delegate base. As such, when NHSMUN distributes awards, we de-emphasize their importance in comparison to the educational value of Model UN as an activity. NHSMUN seeks to reward students who excel in the arts of compromise and diplomacy. More importantly, we seek to develop an environment in which delegates can employ their critical thought processes and share ideas with their counterparts from around the world. Given our delegates' plurality of perspectives and experiences, we center our programming around the values of diplomacy and teamwork. In particular, our dais look for and promote constructive leadership that strives towards consensus, as real ambassadors do in the United Nations.

Debate founded on strong knowledge and accessibility: With knowledgeable staff members and delegates from over 70 countries, NHSMUN can facilitate an enriching experience reliant on substantively rigorous debate. To ensure this high quality of debate, our staff members produce detailed, accessible, and comprehensive topic guides (like the one below) to prepare delegates for the nuances inherent in each global issue. This process takes over six months, during which the Directors who lead our committees develop their topics with the valuable input of expert contributors. Because these topics are always changing and evolving, NHSMUN also produces update papers intended to bridge the gap of time between when the background guides are published and when committee starts in March. As such, this guide is designed to be a launching point from which delegates should delve further into their topics. The detailed knowledge that our Directors provide in this background guide through diligent research aims to increase critical thinking within delegates at NHSMUN.

Extremely engaged staff: At NHSMUN, our staffers care deeply about delegates' experiences and what they take away from their time at NHSMUN. Before the conference, our Directors and Assistant Directors are trained rigorously through hours of workshops and exercises both virtual and in-person to provide the best conference experience possible. At the conference, delegates will have the opportunity to meet their dais members prior to the first committee session, where they may engage

one-on-one to discuss their committees and topics. Our Directors and Assistant Directors are trained and empowered to be experts on their topics and they are always available to rapidly answer any questions delegates may have prior to the conference. Our Directors and Assistant Directors read every position paper submitted to NHSMUN and provide thoughtful comments on those submitted by the feedback deadline. Our staff aims not only to tailor the committee experience to delegates' reflections and research but also to facilitate an environment where all delegates' thoughts can be heard.

Empowering participation: The UN relies on the voices of all of its member states to create resolutions most likely to make a meaningful impact on the world. That is our philosophy at NHSMUN too. We believe that to properly delve into an issue and produce fruitful debate, it is crucial to focus the entire energy and attention of the room on the topic at hand. Our Rules of Procedure and our staff focus on making every voice in the committee heard, regardless of each delegate's country assignment or skill level. Additionally, unlike many other conferences, we also emphasize delegate participation after the conference. MUN delegates are well researched and aware of the UN's priorities, and they can serve as the vanguard for action on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Therefore, we are proud to connect students with other action-oriented organizations to encourage further work on the topics.

Focused committee time: We feel strongly that face-to-face interpersonal connections during debate are critical to producing superior committee experiences and allow for the free flow of ideas. Ensuring policies based on equality and inclusion is one way in which NHSMUN guarantees that every delegate has an equal opportunity to succeed in committee. In order to allow communication and collaboration to be maximized during committee, we have a very dedicated administrative team who work throughout the conference to type up, format, and print draft resolutions and working papers.

As always, we welcome any questions or concerns about the substantive program at NHSMUN 2023 and would be happy to discuss NHSMUN pedagogy with faculty or delegates.

Delegates, it is our sincerest hope that your time at NHSMUN will be thought-provoking and stimulating. NHSMUN is an incredible time to learn, grow, and embrace new opportunities. We look forward to seeing you work both as students and global citizens at the conference.

Best,

Ming-May Hu
Secretary-General

Ana Margarita Gil
Director-General

A Note on Research and Preparation

Delegate research and preparation is a critical element of attending NHSMUN and enjoying the debate experience. We have provided this Background Guide to introduce the topics that will be discussed in your committee. We encourage and expect each of you to critically explore the selected topics and be able to identify and analyze their intricacies upon arrival to NHSMUN in March.

The task of preparing for the conference can be challenging, but to assist delegates, we have updated our [Beginner Delegate Guide](#) and [Advanced Delegate Guide](#). In particular, these guides contain more detailed instructions on how to prepare a position paper and excellent sources that delegates can use for research. Use these resources to your advantage. They can help transform a sometimes overwhelming task into what it should be: an engaging, interesting, and rewarding experience.

To accurately represent a country, delegates must be able to articulate its policies. Accordingly, NHSMUN requires each delegation (the one or two delegates representing a country in a committee) to write a position paper for each topic on the committee's agenda. In delegations with two students, we strongly encourage each student to research each topic to ensure that they are prepared to debate no matter which topic is selected first. More information about how to write and format position papers can be found in the NHSMUN Research Guide. To summarize, position papers should be structured into three sections:

I: Topic Background – This section should describe the history of the topic as it would be described by the delegate's country. Delegates do not need to give an exhaustive account of the topic, but rather focus on the details that are most important to the delegation's policy and proposed solutions.

II: Country Policy – This section should discuss the delegation's policy regarding the topic. Each paper should state the policy in plain terms and include the relevant statements, statistics, and research that support the effectiveness of the policy. Comparisons with other global issues are also appropriate here.

III. Proposed Solutions – This section should detail the delegation's proposed solutions to address the topic. Descriptions of each solution should be thorough. Each idea should clearly connect to the specific problem it aims to solve and identify potential obstacles to implementation and how they can be avoided. The solution should be a natural extension of the country's policy.

Each topic's position paper should be **no more than 10 pages** long double-spaced with standard margins and font size. **We recommend 3–5 pages per topic as a suitable length.** The paper must be written from the perspective of your assigned country and should articulate the policies you will espouse at the conference.

Each delegation is responsible for sending a copy of its papers to their committee Directors via [myDais](#) on or before **February 24, 2023**. If a delegate wishes to receive detailed feedback from the committee's dais, a position must be submitted on or before **February 3, 2023**. The papers received by this earlier deadline will be reviewed by the dais of each committee and returned prior to your arrival at the conference.

Complete instructions for how to submit position papers will be sent to faculty advisers via email. If delegations are unable to submit their position papers on time, please contact us at info@imuna.org.

Delegations that do not submit position papers will be ineligible for awards.

Committee History

The Security Council was founded in 1945 as one of the six principal organs of the United Nations. It was given the responsibility of maintaining international peace and security.¹ On January 17, 1946, the Council met for the first time and adopted their provisional rules of procedure.² Originally, the Council included six elected members, but it later expanded to 10.³ Each member has one vote, but the five states that are permanent members hold veto power. These five members, China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States, are known as the P5. The veto empowers each of them to prevent any substantive resolutions from passing, regardless of any other votes. As of 2015, the veto had been used 293 times in the Security Council's history. The permanent members are meant to use the veto to defend their national interests, uphold a part of their foreign policy, or promote an important issue to a state.⁴ The veto power has been heavily debated because it gives the P5 more power over the decisions of the UN than any other nation and tends to prevent the Council from acting in crises that warrant involvement.⁵

Historically, the Security Council has received criticism for not reflecting modern geopolitical relations. To account for that lack of representation, the UN General Assembly holds annual elections for a new set of five non-permanent members of the Security Council.⁶ The Security Council gives several seats per regional group for each election to provide geographical coverage and diversity when handling these issues. These groups are the African group (with three seats), the Asia-Pacific Group (with two seats), the Eastern European Group (with one seat), the Latin American and Caribbean Group (with two seats), and the Western European and Other Groups (WEOG, with two seats).⁷ From 2023–2024, Ecuador, Japan, Malta, Mozambique, and Switzerland will be joining and switching places with current sitting non-permanent members.⁸

Since its founding, the Security Council has passed 2648 resolutions, many of which have helped to protect or foster the growth of human rights and security across the globe.⁹ As the only UN body with authority to issue binding resolutions, the Security Council decides when and where a UN peace operation should be deployed and can enact international sanctions. Peacekeeping is one of the Council's most powerful modes of maintaining international security, having created over 70 peacekeeping missions over the years, with a total budget of approximately USD 6.3 billion for the most recent 12 missions alone.¹⁰ When more force is necessary, the Council can impose sanctions on states that are designed not to punish them but rather to support progress toward peaceful outcomes.¹¹ The Security Council also works with many other organizations and bodies. The Council and the United Nations at large have cooperated with NATO since the early 1990s, forming many international agreements with them that are meant to help cover the broader and higher complexity of today's security challenges.¹² Delegates representing nations of the Security Council have a critical role and hold massive amounts of power within the UN, so it's important that they do so with the utmost respect and diplomacy towards all those involved.

1 "United Nations Security Council," United Nations (United Nations), accessed August 19, 2022, <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/>.

2 "Security Council," United Nations | Model United Nations (United Nations), accessed August 19, 2022, <https://www.un.org/en/model-United-nations/security-council>.

3 "The UN Security Council," Council on Foreign Relations (Council on Foreign Relations), accessed August 19, 2022, <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/un-security-council>.

4 "UN Security Council Working Methods," The Veto (Security Council Report, December 16, 2020), <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un-security-council-working-methods/the-veto.php>.

5 "The Security Council's sine qua non: The Veto Power," Rutgers School of Arts and Science, 2018, <https://polisci.rutgers.edu/publications/occasional-paper-series/346-occasional-paper-8-florence-emmanuela-emmy-dallas/file>.

6 "Elections to the Security Council Publications," Security Council Report, accessed August 19, 2022, <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/elections-to-the-security-council/>.

7 "The UN Security Council".

8 "2023-2024 UN Security Council Elections and the Responsibility to Protect - World," ReliefWeb (Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, June 10, 2022), <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/2023-2024-un-security-council-elections-and-responsibility-protect>.

9 "Gender Inclusive Peacebuilding," United States Institute of Peace, accessed September 22, 2022, <https://www.usip.org/academy/catalog/gender-inclusive-peacebuilding>.

10 "UN Peacekeeping: 70 Years of Service & Sacrifice Peacekeeping," United Nations (United Nations), accessed August 20, 2022, <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/un-peacekeeping-70-years-of-service-sacrifice>.

11 "Sanctions," United Nations Security Council (United Nations), accessed October 2, 2022, <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/sanctions/information>.

12 NATO, "Relations with the United Nations," NATO (NATO, July 14, 2022), https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_50321.htm.

Simulation

As delegates serving on the Security Council at NHSMUN 2023, all members will have the opportunity to put forth resolutions aimed at addressing some of the world's most complex international issues. These resolutions are meant to embody the work of the UNSC and should reflect the central objective of the body: to maintain global security and stability.

The five permanent members of the Security Council, known as the P5, possess veto power on substantive issues. The ten remaining delegations, which bring total committee membership to fifteen, do not have veto power. If there are no permanent members voting against the resolution (i.e. vetoing the resolution), nine affirmative votes are required to pass a resolution regardless of the number of members in attendance. The Council may, from time to time, invite non-SC states, organizations, and/or members to participate in the proceedings. Such members may only vote on procedural matters; once the committee has entered formal voting procedure on any resolution, the invitee is not permitted to cast their vote.

In the simulation of the SC at NHSMUN, the Director and Assistant Director (AD) will chair debate. Together, the Director and AD are referred to as the dais. The dais is charged with the task of maintaining decorum throughout the committee session. The dais will also assist delegates in their use of parliamentary procedure and work to ensure that all points of order are handled appropriately. Furthermore, the Director and AD will provide directional advice, and delegates may ask the dais any questions they have about the topics themselves and/or procedural matters.

A delegate's first job before coming to committee is to research both topics before the committee and to feel comfortable advocating their assigned country's policies. It is important that even if someone does not agree personally with a country's policies, the delegate remains true to country policy and continues to voice these ideas to the committee, remaining cognizant of how these policies are reflected in resolutions written during the simulation. As members on a very specialized committee, delegates are encouraged to work together towards a viable solution, and all members should seek to collaborate with states whose policies and opinions on the issues similar to their own.

The first task in committee will be to set the agenda. To do this, a speakers list will be established solely for this purpose. Delegates are not allowed to substantively discuss the issues at this time, but instead, should voice their opinions on the order in which the issues will be debated. Following the vote on the setting of the agenda, delegates are encouraged to motion to open a new speakers list intended for substantive debate on the first issue on the agenda. Debate will move in the order of this speakers list until a vote by the Council moves the discussion into either a moderated or unmoderated caucus. As committee progresses, the dais might choose to introduce different debate styles (such as round robin or round table) as needed. These forms of debate may be utilized when in the best interest of the committee and will be explained further during the first committee session. Votes on procedural matters such as unmoderated or moderated caucuses are procedural matters and will require a simple majority vote with any abstentions being prohibited.

The goal of this simulation is to produce well-written, comprehensive resolutions to the issues at hand. Through formal and informal debate, delegates will begin this resolution writing process by creating a working paper, which is essentially a collection of ideas on possible solutions. Once the dais accepts the working paper it becomes a draft resolution and may be edited, withdrawn, or merged with another draft resolution at any time prior to formal voting procedure. When the dais accepts a motion to close debate or the speakers list is exhausted, the committee moves into voting procedure on the draft resolutions.

Throughout committee, as the dais sees fit, shorter resolutions focused on more short-term, immediate solutions may be accepted to be voted on more rapidly with less intense debate or amendment processes. During these times, veto power for the P5 is active and abstentions are permitted. Draft resolutions may be passed with any nine countries voting in favor; however,

if one or more of the P5 votes negatively on the resolution it automatically does not pass. Working on the Security Council at NHSMUN is a unique, unparalleled opportunity for students to take control of their own education. Delegates' abilities to work together, compromise, and accurately advocate the policies of the states they represent will determine the success of the committee.



UNSC B

NHSMUN 2023

TOPIC A:

THE SITUATION IN VENEZUELA

Photo Credit: Wilfredor

Introduction

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has long been bombarded with political, economic, and humanitarian instability. Difficult conditions have greatly increased in severity in the last five to ten years as government relations took a downward spiral with politically motivated abuse and violence against civilians by state security forces.¹ As sanctions were increasingly imposed and hyperinflation spiked, many people fell into poverty and decided to leave the country.² Millions of lives are at stake in Venezuela. Although other countries facing similar problems have received substantial humanitarian aid, Venezuela has not gotten as much international attention, preventing citizens from getting sufficient assistance.³

The root of the current problem is the conflict between two politicians with claims to the presidency. Nicolás Maduro has held office since 2013, but after he was re-elected in 2018, there were widespread concerns regarding fraud.⁴ Meanwhile, Juan Guaidó assumed the presidency on the basis that Maduro's re-election was not free or fair.⁵ Although Guaidó has support from dozens of countries around the world, his claim to the presidency is contested by the government, and Maduro remains in power.⁶ This political conflict has also led to mismanagement of the economy, namely the state-run oil industry.⁷ Venezuela is home to the largest oil reserves in the world, and its economy is also entirely dependent on this asset.⁸ Therefore, low production, less investment, oil sanctions, and a variety of other factors have all contributed to hyperinflation, which rose to excessively high levels in a very short period.⁹ Hyperinflation destroyed the economy, causing low salaries, making basic goods unaffordable, and leaving a

majority of the county in poverty.¹⁰ Failing healthcare, food shortages, and a poor quality of life have made it difficult to survive.¹¹ Additionally, people are at risk of unwarranted detainment and torture by the government.¹² These problems have resulted in one of the largest migration crises ever. Millions of Venezuelan refugees risk their lives each day to leave the country, often falling prey to organized crime and exploitation.¹³ Host countries have seen their infrastructure strained due to the large influx of migrants looking for a better life.

The United Nations has addressed the situation in Venezuela in various ways. The UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) and International Criminal Court (ICC) have both investigated crimes against humanity by Venezuelan security forces, including violating people's lives, physical health, and freedom through torture, abuse, and detainment.¹⁴ Many agencies have

1 Brian Pascus, "Understanding the Venezuelan presidential crisis: Who are Juan Guaidó and Nicolás Maduro?" *CBS News*, last modified May 1, 2019, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/who-is-venezuelas-president-juan-guaido-or-nicolas-maduro-understanding-the-venezuela-crisis-and-protests/>.

2 "Venezuela crisis: How the political situation escalated," *BBC News*, last modified August 12, 2021, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-36319877>.

3 Dany Bahar and Meagan Dooley, "Venezuela refugee crisis to become the largest and most underfunded in modern history," *Brookings*, last modified December 9, 2019, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2019/12/09/venezuela-refugee-crisis-to-become-the-largest-and-most-underfunded-in-modern-history/>.

4 Pascus, "Understanding the Venezuelan presidential crisis."

5 Pascus, "Understanding the Venezuelan presidential crisis."

6 ShareAmerica, "More than 50 countries support Venezuela's Juan Guaidó," *ShareAmerica*, last modified November 15, 2019, <https://share.america.gov/support-for-venezuelas-juan-guaido-grows-infographic/>.

7 "Venezuela crisis: How the political situation escalated."

8 Amelia Cheatham, Diana Roy, and Rocio Cara Labrador, "Venezuela: The Rise and Fall of a Petrostate," *Council on Foreign Relations*, last modified December 29, 2021, <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/venezuela-crisis>.

9 Cheatham, Roy, and Labrador, "Venezuela: The Rise and Fall of a Petrostate."

10 Valentina Sanchez, "Venezuela hyperinflation hits 10 million percent. 'Shock therapy' may be only chance to undo the economic damage," *CNBC*, last modified August 5, 2019, <https://www.cnn.com/2019/08/02/venezuela-inflation-at-10-million-percent-its-time-for-shock-therapy.html>.

11 OCHA, "Venezuela," Global Humanitarian Overview, accessed July 24, 2022, <https://gho.unocha.org/venezuela>.

12 OHCHR, "Venezuela: UN report urges accountability for crimes against humanity," Press Release, September 16, 2020, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2020/09/venezuela-un-report-urges-accountability-crimes-against-humanity?LangID=E&NewsID=26247>.

13 UNHCR, "Venezuela situation," Press Release, accessed July 23, 2022, <https://www.unhcr.org/venezuela-emergency.html>.

14 "Venezuela: Joint Statement from Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch at the UN Human Rights Council," *Human Rights Watch*, last modified September 24, 2021, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/09/24/venezuela-joint-statement-amnesty-international-and-human-rights-watch-un-human>.

provided different forms of humanitarian aid in the form of money, medicine, counseling, and other assistance, such as the refugee and migrant response plan notably created by the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and International Organization for Migration (IOM).¹⁵ The Security Council has also discussed the situation. However, strong contention among more influential countries on the council, such as the United States and the Russian Federation, and inconsistent cooperation from the Venezuelan government have been obstacles to solving these problems.¹⁶ As the most powerful agency of the UN, it is imperative that the delegates in the Security Council quickly steer Venezuela on the path to peace and prosperity.

History and Description of the Issue

Political Turmoil

While Maduro and Guaidó are defining figures of the democratic crisis today, economic and political problems stem from the era of Hugo Chavez, the previous president of Venezuela. Chavez was first elected to office in 1998 under a socialist platform. Socialism is an economic and political system where resources and property are owned publicly, typically by the state, rather than by private corporations.¹⁷ Chavez's platform promised to reduce poverty and expand social programs using Venezuela's vast oil reserves as an economic basis.¹⁸ One of Chavez's first actions as president was to rewrite the constitution of Venezuela, which extended his term and greatly expanded his power over the government

and military.¹⁹ He created a unified political party, the United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV), and he nationalized most companies and industries, including oil.²⁰ At this time, Venezuela had a booming oil industry due to its large reserves. In 2005, he founded Petrocaribe, an agreement between Caribbean and Central American countries that provided low-interest oil sales to nearby countries.²¹ Due to income from oil, new social programs were established that improved literacy rates and increased minimum wage, lifting many people out of poverty.²² Chavez also paid off Venezuela's debt and withdrew from the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF).²³ The changes that Chavez made to Venezuela are known as the Bolivarian Revolution.²⁴ Many of these decisions shaped the following presidential crisis.

Chavez died in 2013, and then Nicolás Maduro became president of Venezuela. Maduro previously served as the foreign minister to Chavez and notably ran a campaign of loyalty to Chavez and his administration.²⁵ After winning the elections, Maduro inherited economic problems such as a USD 30 billion fiscal deficit and a large loss of oil revenue valued at USD 1 trillion.²⁶ Conditions in the country further deteriorated as Maduro's rule was questioned in the 2018 presidential election. He was re-elected for another six-year term, but the National Assembly of Venezuela, largely controlled by members of the opposition party, did not recognize the results as fair.²⁷ They explained, "many candidates had been barred from running while others had been jailed or fled the country for fear of being imprisoned."²⁸

Despite much opposition from the Organization of American States (OAS) and national opposition groups, Maduro was

15 United Nations, "\$1.44 billion plan to respond to Venezuela refugee and migrant needs," *UN News*, last modified December 10, 2020, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/12/1079782>.

16 UN Security Council, "Real Negotiation among Venezuela's Main Political Actors 'Only Way Forward' to Resolving Protracted Crisis, Under-Secretary-General Tells Security Council," Press Release, May 20, 2020, <https://press.un.org/en/2020/sc14193.doc.htm>.

17 "Socialism," *National Geographic*, accessed July 15, 2022, <https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/socialism>.

18 Cheatham, Roy, and Labrador, "Venezuela: The Rise and Fall of a Petrostate."

19 William Partlett, "Hugo Chavez's Constitutional Legacy," *Brookings*, last modified March 14, 2013, <https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/hugo-chavez-constitutional-legacy/>.

20 "Venezuela's Chavez Era," *Council on Foreign Relations*, accessed July 15, 2022, <https://www.cfr.org/timeline/venezuelas-chavez-era>.

21 Rachel Glickhouse, "Explainer: What Is Petrocaribe?" *AS/COA*, last modified May 10, 2013, <https://www.as-coa.org/articles/explainer-what-petrocaribe>.

22 Victor Bulmer-Thomas, "Analysis: How Hugo Chavez changed Venezuela," *BBC News*, last modified March 6, 2013, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-15240081>.

23 "Venezuela's Chavez Era."

24 "Bolivarian revolution," *Oxford Reference*, accessed July 15, 2022, <https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803095516491>.

25 "Venezuelans go to the polls for new president," *CBS News*, last modified April 14, 2013, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/venezuelans-go-to-the-polls-for-new-president/>.

26 "Venezuelans go to the polls for new president."

27 "Venezuela crisis: How the political situation escalated."

28 "Venezuela crisis: How the political situation escalated."

sworn in for his second term in January 2019.²⁹

In response to the contested election, former National Assembly leader Juan Guaidó declared himself interim president.³⁰ He cited parts of the constitution that state the leader of the National Assembly can assume the presidency in the case of a disputed election, meaning that the presidency is vacant.³¹ Guaidó promised to restore democracy and bring humanitarian aid into Venezuela, gaining a lot of popular support domestically and internationally.³² However, without much actual political power, many of these promises fell flat.

The political instability in Venezuela gave rise to several coup attempts, uprisings, and protests. Supporters of Guaidó have long protested against Maduro in the streets of the capital city, Caracas.³³ In 2019, a video went public of Guaidó calling

on Venezuelans to fight back against Maduro's government and announced "Operation Liberty," a charge to reclaim the country, but this mostly hurt his public image.³⁴ There was also a failed coup attempt by a small group of former troops trying to attack Maduro's home, but it is unclear whether Guaidó was involved in this.³⁵ In the same year, a mystery drone attack aimed at Maduro during a military parade in Caracas failed, with the true origins of this plot unknown.³⁶ In response, the Maduro government, with the support of the armed forces, has denounced such uprisings, detained perpetrators, and repressed protests.³⁷

Support for either president is deeply divided. Different groups have contrasting justifications for the legitimacy of Maduro or Guaidó. Guaidó has maintained the support of the country's legislature as a former leader of the opposition-led National

²⁹ Stefano Pozzebon, Jason Hanna and Flora Charner, "Venezuela's Maduro starts another six-year term despite pressure from neighbors," *CNN*, last modified January 10, 2019, <https://www.cnn.com/2019/01/10/americas/venezuela-nicolas-maduro-sworn-in-second-term/index.html>.

³⁰ "Venezuela crisis: How the political situation escalated."

³¹ "Venezuela crisis: How the political situation escalated."

³² "Juan Guaidó: The man who wants to oust Maduro," *BBC News*, last modified January 23, 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-46985389>.

³³ Alex Ward, "Venezuelan opposition leader Juan Guaidó has launched a military uprising to topple Maduro," *Vox*, last modified April 30, 2019, <https://www.vox.com/2019/4/30/18523818/venezuela-guaido-maduro-military-video>.

³⁴ Ward, "Venezuelan opposition leader Juan Guaidó has launched a military uprising to topple Maduro."

³⁵ Alex Ward, "The "ridiculous" failed coup attempt in Venezuela, explained," *Vox*, last modified May 11, 2020, <https://www.vox.com/2020/5/11/21249203/venezuela-coup-jordan-goudreau-maduro-guaido-explain>.

³⁶ Walsh et al., "Inside the August plot to kill Maduro with drones," *CNN*, last modified June 21, 2019, <https://www.cnn.com/2019/03/14/americas/venezuela-drone-maduro-intl/index.html>.

³⁷ Stefano Pozzebon and Hande Atay Alam, "Venezuelan government quashes military revolt," *CNN*, last modified January 21, 2019, <https://www.cnn.com/2019/01/21/americas/venezuelan-government-military-uprising/index.html>.



Interim President Juan Guaidó leads a protest march in Caracas against the Maduro administration on February 2, 2019.

Credit: Alexcocopro

Assembly.³⁸ The public backing of Guaidó has wavered over the years, but a lot of Venezuelans still support him. In 2019, national data showed that more than half of the population believes Guaidó is the legitimate president.³⁹ Additionally, Guaidó has gained the acknowledgment of over 50 countries while rallying global support for his efforts.⁴⁰ According to national polls, only ten percent of the Venezuelan public supports Maduro, which is one of the lowest presidential approval ratings.⁴¹ Moreover, two-thirds of Venezuelans believe the government can't be trusted.⁴² However, state-run institutions continually stand by Maduro. The Venezuelan military and Supreme Court are filled with Maduro loyalists.⁴³ This has led to internal attacks against Guaidó and his allies. In 2021, Guaidó was threatened with arrest, and his close political ally, Freddy Guevara, was detained and charged with multiple offenses, including terrorism and treason.⁴⁴ Maduro also appointed many military officers to influential positions, such as controlling food distribution services or the state-owned oil sector.⁴⁵ Like Guaidó, Maduro is supported by sectors of the international community, especially in countries with similar political systems or that consume Venezuelan oil.⁴⁶ Keeping in mind the sovereignty of Venezuela, this committee must seek solutions to resolve the unique political dispute, encouraging diplomatic dialogue among primary political actors but taking further action if necessary to maintain peace.

The Oil Industry

Political turmoil in Venezuela is closely linked to the mismanagement of state-owned oil, which is the country's largest natural resource. The country has faced an intense decline in oil production and exportation over the past few years, greatly affecting Venezuela's economy and foreign relations. There are two major corporations in the Venezuelan oil industry. The primary one is *Petróleos de Venezuela, S.A. (PDVSA)*, a state-owned oil and natural gas company.⁴⁷ PDVSA is the fifth-largest oil producer in the world and accounts for about 95 percent of Venezuela's export earnings.⁴⁸ The president of PDVSA was a former officer in the National Guard, appointed by Maduro.⁴⁹ The second oil company is *Citgo Petroleum*, a US-based refinery subsidiary owned by PDVSA.⁵⁰ *Citgo Petroleum* is run by a board appointed by Guaidó.⁵¹

Venezuela has consistently led global oil production and has more crude oil and natural gas than any other country, owning 17.5 percent of total worldwide oil reserves at the end of 2018.⁵² Due to the abundance of oil and lack of economic diversification, Venezuela's economy has become dependent on this natural resource, making the country a "petrostate." A petrostate is a country where "government income is deeply reliant on the export of oil and natural gas" and "political institutions are weak and unaccountable, and corruption is

38 Scott Neuman, "Venezuela's Guaidó Vows To Reclaim Legislature After Takeover By Maduro Supporters," *NPR*, last modified January 7, 2020, <https://www.npr.org/2020/01/07/794137745/venezuelas-guaid-vows-to-retake-legislature-after-takeover-by-maduro-supporters>.

39 Angus Berwick and Mircely Guanipa, "Disappointed Venezuelans lose patience with Guaido as Maduro hangs on," *Reuters*, last modified July 1, 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-venezuela-politics-analysis/disappointed-venezuelans-lose-patience-with-guaido-as-maduro-hangs-on-idUSKCN1TW3ME>.

40 ShareAmerica, "More than 50 countries support Venezuela's Juan Guaidó."

41 Berwick and Guanipa, "Disappointed Venezuelans lose patience with Guaido as Maduro hangs on."

42 Laura Silver, Courtney Johnson and Kyle Taylor, "Venezuelans have little trust in national government, say economy is in poor shape," *Pew Research Center*, last modified January 25, 2019, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/01/25/venezuelans-have-little-trust-in-national-government-say-economy-is-in-poor-shape/>.

43 Reuters Staff, "Guaido vs Maduro: Who is backing whom in Venezuela?" *Reuters*, last modified April 30, 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-venezuela-politics-support-factbox/guaido-vs-maduro-who-is-backing-whom-in-venezuela-idUSKCN1S62DY>.

44 Sarah Kinossian and Vivian Sequera, "Venezuela announces terrorism charges against Guaido ally after highway arrest," *Reuters*, last modified July 12, 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/venezuelan-security-forces-attempt-detain-guaido-wife-rosales-says-2021-07-12/>.

45 "Venezuela crisis: Why the military is backing Maduro," *BBC News*, last modified January 28, 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-47036129>.

46 Sanchez, "Venezuela hyperinflation hits 10 million percent. 'Shock therapy' may be only chance to undo the economic damage."

47 "The Industry," *PDVSA*, accessed July 16, 2022, http://www.pdvsa.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=6541&Itemid=888&lang=en.

48 "PDVSA: Maduro names general to head Venezuela oil firm," *BBC News*, last modified November 26, 2017, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-42132694>.

49 "PDVSA: Maduro names general to head Venezuela oil firm."

50 "Fueling Venezuela's Future," *CITGO*, accessed July 16, 2022, <https://www.citgo.com/about/fueling-venezuelas-future>.

51 Marianna Parraga, "Venezuela's refining arm Citgo on the verge of yet another power shake-up," *Reuters*, last modified July 13, 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/venezuelas-refining-arm-citgo-verge-yet-another-power-shake-up-2022-07-13/>.

52 BP, *Statistical Review of World Energy 2019* (London: BP, 2019), <https://www.bp.com/content/dam/bp/business-sites/en/global/corporate/pdfs/energy-economics/statistical-review/bp-stats-review-2019-full-report.pdf>.

widespread.”⁵³ Venezuela’s reliance on the success of its oil sales means that when oil prices are high, the economy thrives, but when oil prices are low, it crashes.⁵⁴ This dependency makes it difficult to recover when oil prices or exports are low.

Venezuela’s oil industry has fluctuated for several decades, but steep declines have happened in the past few years. In 2017, the country faced a 3.5 percent loss in oil output, with production below the compliance level set by the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), a trend that continued for several months.⁵⁵ During 2019, production drastically decreased from 1.2 million barrels per day to 830,000 barrels per day over the course of about eight months.⁵⁶ Oil output declined to an all-time low in 2020 as Venezuela produced less than 500,000 barrels per day.⁵⁷ Despite these losses, in 2021, PDVSA was able to raise its output to 824,000 barrels per day and double its production.⁵⁸ After the COVID-19 pandemic, Citgo Petroleum recently began profiting again, making USD 245 million in 2022.⁵⁹

One reason behind the declining oil production in Venezuela is a lack of diluents needed to make crude oil exportable.⁶⁰ Diluent is a thinning agent that allows oil to flow through pipelines more easily so that it can be transported to market centers to be purified and sold.⁶¹ Another reason is the repairs of aging infrastructure at fuel refineries and plants.⁶² Labor

shortages, national power outages, and missed payments to service companies also play a role in the steep decline in oil production.⁶³ Overall, there is a long way to go in restoring the productivity and profitability of the oil industry.

Additionally, several countries, most notably the United States, have placed sanctions on economic sectors and individuals associated with the government in Venezuela. In January 2019, the US government subjected the oil sector, namely PDVSA, to sanctions under Executive Order 13850.⁶⁴ These sanctions were imposed on the basis that PDVSA was a corrupt company that supported the Maduro administration and diverted essential funds away from the Venezuelan people.⁶⁵ Later that year, former US President Trump signed Executive Order 13884, placing an embargo on Venezuela that froze their assets and prohibited transactions with the US.⁶⁶ Economic sanctions significantly hurt the oil industry, reducing foreign investments and markets for Venezuelan oil, resulting in decreased demand and low prices.⁶⁷ Selling oil normally accounts for one-quarter of Venezuela’s gross domestic product (GDP).⁶⁸ From 2014 to 2020, the GDP shrank by about two-thirds due to dropping oil sales.⁶⁹

In 2020, USD 2.62 billion in crude petroleum was exported from Venezuela; most went to India, Spain, Malaysia, Italy, and Greece.⁷⁰ Sanctions greatly affect foreign relations because

53 Cheatham, Roy, and Labrador, “Venezuela: The Rise and Fall of a Petrostate.”

54 Brinley Hineman, “Fact check: Socialist policies alone did not destroy Venezuela’s economy in last decade,” *USA Today*, last modified August 8, 2020, <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/factcheck/2020/08/08/fact-check-socialism-alone-did-not-destroy-venezuelas-economy/3323566001/>.

55 Frank A. Verrastro, “How Low Can Venezuelan Oil Production Go?” *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, last modified June 18, 2018, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/how-low-can-venezuelan-oil-production-go>.

56 Sanchez, “Venezuela hyperinflation hits 10 million percent. ‘Shock therapy’ may be only chance to undo the economic damage.”

57 “Venezuela Crude Oil: Production,” CEIC, accessed July 16, 2022, <https://www.ceicdata.com/en/indicator/venezuela/crude-oil-production>.

58 “How Venezuela this year almost doubled its oil output,” *Al Jazeera*, last modified December 27, 2021, <https://www.aljazeera.com/economy/2021/12/27/how-venezuela-this-year-almost-doubled-its-oil-output>.

59 Parraga, “Venezuela’s refining arm Citgo on the verge of yet another power shake-up.”

60 Reuters, “Venezuela crude output in key region plunges due to diluent shortage,” *Reuters*, last modified September 1, 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/venezuela-crude-output-key-region-plunges-due-diluent-shortage-2021-09-01/>.

61 Matt DiLallo, “Oil Sands 105: What is Diluent and Why is it Important?” *The Motley Fool*, last modified November 28, 2013, <https://www.fool.ca/2013/11/28/oil-sands-105-what-is-diluent-and-why-is-it-important/>.

62 Reuters, “Venezuela’s second largest refinery suspends gasoline production -sources,” *Reuters*, last modified June 29, 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/venezuelas-second-largest-refinery-suspends-gasoline-production-sources-2022-06-29/>.

63 “Country Analysis Executive Summary: Venezuela,” U.S. Energy Information Administration, last modified November 30, 2020, <https://www.eia.gov/international/analysis/country/VEN>.

64 Michael R. Pompeo, “Sanctions Against PDVSA and Venezuela Oil Sector,” Press Statement, January 28, 2019, <https://2017-2021.state.gov/sanctions-against-pdvsa-and-venezuela-oil-sector/index.html>.

65 U.S. Department of the Treasury, “Treasury Sanctions Venezuela’s State-Owned Oil Company Petroleos de Venezuela, S.A.,” Press Release, January 28, 2019, <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/sm594>.

66 Executive Office of the President, *E.O. 13884 of Aug 5, 2019* (Washington, D.C.: Federal Register, August 2019), <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2019/08/07/2019-17052/blocking-property-of-the-government-of-venezuela>.

67 U.S. Energy Information Administration, “Country Analysis Executive Summary: Venezuela.”

68 Cheatham, Roy, and Labrador, “Venezuela: The Rise and Fall of a Petrostate.”

69 Cheatham, Roy, and Labrador, “Venezuela: The Rise and Fall of a Petrostate.”

70 “Crude Petroleum in Venezuela,” Observatory of Economic Complexity, accessed July 16, 2022, <https://oec.world/en/profile/bilateral->



A Venezuelan woman selling bags and paintings crafted from cash currency devalued by hyperinflation.

Credit: Reg Natarajan

other countries risk breaking diplomatic ties with the country imposing sanctions, so they have less incentive to invest in sanctioned products. Despite economic casualties from US sanctions, the PSUV continues to ship to other countries like China, Russia, and Indonesia.⁷¹

Hyperinflation

Low oil production in Venezuela has long been related to hyperinflation, heightening the economic crisis. The country’s economy was crippled for over a decade as sharply rising inflation rates destroyed the market, eventually rendering Venezuelan banknotes useless.⁷² Hyperinflation in Venezuela is unique because it was not caused by armed conflict or natural disaster.⁷³ The main factors responsible for hyperinflation are overprinting currency, high deficit spending, and other

governmental policies.⁷⁴ While inflation refers to a measure of rising prices for goods and services, hyperinflation is defined as “rapid and unrestrained price increases in an economy, typically at rates exceeding 50 percent each month over time.”⁷⁵ The IMF predicted that the inflation rate would reach ten million percent the following year.⁷⁶ Between 2020 and 2021, the inflation rate decreased from 2,959.8 percent to 686.4 percent, showing a deceleration of consumer price growth.⁷⁷ As of 2022, Venezuela has the highest inflation rate of any country in the world at 500 percent.⁷⁸

Venezuela has a substantial amount of debt and owes money to external creditors. Venezuela’s total debt rose to more than double the level of the country’s GDP in 2019, indicating a significant imbalance of profits and money owed.⁷⁹ As of 2021, it was estimated that Venezuela had a debt of USD 150

product/crude-petroleum/reporter/ven.

71 Kenneth Rapoza, “How Venezuela’s Socialists United Is Finding Ways Around Oil Sanctions,” *Forbes*, last modified January 23, 2022, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/kenrapoza/2022/01/23/how-venezuelas-socialists-united-is-finding-ways-around-oil-sanctions/?sh=578882202bde>.

72 Hineman, “Fact check: Socialist policies alone did not destroy Venezuela’s economy in last decade.”

73 Sanchez, “Venezuela hyperinflation hits 10 million percent. ‘Shock therapy’ may be only chance to undo the economic damage.”

74 Michelle Caruso-Cabrera, “Creating inflation is easy. Just look at Venezuela,” *CNBC*, last modified October 13, 2014, <https://www.cnbc.com/2014/10/13/venezuelan-economy-creating-inflation-is-easy-just-look-at-venezuela.html>.

75 Will Kenton, “Hyperinflation,” Investopedia, last modified June 3, 2022, <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/h/hyperinflation.asp>.

76 Reuters Staff, “IMF sees Venezuela inflation at 10 million percent in 2019,” *Reuters*, last modified October 9, 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/venezuela-economy-idINKCN1MJ1YX>.

77 Mayela Armas, “Venezuela’s inflation hit 686.4% in 2021 - central bank,” *Reuters*, last modified January 8, 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/venezuelas-inflation-hit-6864-2021-central-bank-2022-01-08/>.

78 International Monetary Fund “Inflation rate, average consumer prices.”

79 Simon Constable, “Venezuela Sinks Further Into Oblivion — Debt Level Doubles Over One Year,” *Forbes*, last modified November 8, 2019, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/simonconstable/2019/11/08/venezuela-sinks-further-into--oblivion--debt-level-doubles-over-one-year/?sh=75ab37712c0b>.

billion, accumulated by both PDVSA and the state itself.⁸⁰ Countries such as China and Russia have somewhat alleviated Venezuelan debt by providing billions of dollars in loans and investments, but Venezuela will eventually have to pay interest on these loans.⁸¹ Additionally, day-to-day life for Venezuelan people is severely impacted. The currency of Venezuela, the bolivar, has lost value because of runaway inflation and economic downturn.⁸² This resulted in long lines outside of banks where people tried to get bolivars.⁸³ ATM machines have run out of banknotes, and restaurant waiters trust customers with their private bank details in hopes of receiving cash tips through a transfer.⁸⁴ One way to find cash is to go on social media and find cash vendors who sell bolivars for a fee.⁸⁵ However, instead of carrying around large loads of cash, people have resorted to using Colombian pesos or US dollars, driving the value of the unstable bolivar down even further.⁸⁶

These currency challenges make it difficult for people to purchase anything, especially basic needs like food or medicine. Supermarket shelves are often empty, causing a desperate rush of shoppers when groceries are restocked.⁸⁷ Financial company Bloomberg created a metric to show the reality of hyperinflation, called the Cafe con Leche Index, which tracks the price of a typical cup of coffee based on the country's inflation rates.⁸⁸ Over the past year, the price of a cup of coffee rose from 6.16 Bolivars to 13.88 Bolivars,

representing a 125 percent annual inflation rate.⁸⁹ This struggle created a currency black market. After the government set a fixed exchange rate, making it difficult to exchange bolivars to US dollars, many people began illegally selling US dollars on the black market and established an unofficial exchange rate. In 2014, middle-aged women were found crossing the border to Colombia, where they could withdraw US dollars at the official exchange rate from ATMs, then exchange them for bolivars on the black market to make a profit. This practice only increased the economy's instability.⁹⁰

The Venezuelan government has taken many actions in an attempt to curb hyperinflation. At first, they tried simply printing more money, which is a practical short-term solution. However, this only made the situation worse by devaluing the bolivar because there was so much physical cash in circulation.⁹¹ During the pandemic, the government set strict price controls, fixing the price of foods like eggs, meat, and butter above a minimum wage of 400,000 Bolivars.⁹² To control prices, Maduro deployed members of the National Guard to markets to monitor fraudulent sales.⁹³ In order to stabilize the bolivar exchange rate, the government cut down on spending and restricted credit.⁹⁴

One strategy to eliminate hyperinflation is 'shock therapy,' a practice that "supports the implementation of drastic economic policies...and transition from a state-controlled economy to a mixed one." Shock therapy was used to restore

80 Steven T. Kargman, "Venezuela: Prospects for Restructuring Sovereign Debt and Rebuilding a National Economy Against the Backdrop of a Failing State," University of Oxford Faculty of Law, last modified October 18, 2021, <https://www.law.ox.ac.uk/business-law-blog/blog/2021/10/venezuela-prospects-restructuring-sovereign-debt-and-rebuilding>.

81 Sanchez, "Venezuela hyperinflation hits 10 million percent. 'Shock therapy' may be only chance to undo the economic damage."

82 "Venezuelan bolivar - what can it buy you?" *BBC News*, last modified August 20, 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-45246409>.

83 Vladimir Hernandez, "Venezuelan cash crisis: Where a coffee costs wads of banknotes," *BBC* video, 1:55, March 3, 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-latin-america-43176522>.

84 Katy Watson, "How people live in cash-strapped Venezuela," *BBC* video, 1:17, November 3, 2017, <https://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-41850468>.

85 Hernandez, "Venezuelan cash crisis: Where a coffee costs wads of banknotes."

86 Michelle Carmody, "What caused hyperinflation in Venezuela: a rare blend of public ineptitude and private enterprise," *The Conversation*, last modified February 5, 2019, <https://theconversation.com/what-caused-hyperinflation-in-venezuela-a-rare-blend-of-public-ineptitude-and-private-enterprise-102483>.

87 Chris McGonigal and Jesselyn Cook, "Photos Of Empty Grocery Shelves Show Dire Situation In Venezuela," *HuffPost*, last modified January 10, 2018, https://www.huffpost.com/entry/venezuela-empty-grocery-shelves-photos_n_5a567751e4b08a1f624afcf6.

88 "Venezuelan Cafe Con Leche Index," Bloomberg, accessed July 16, 2022, <https://www.bloomberg.com/features/2016-venezuela-cafe-con-leche-index/?terminal=true>.

89 Bloomberg, "Venezuelan Cafe Con Leche Index."

90 Carmody, "What caused hyperinflation in Venezuela: a rare blend of public ineptitude and private enterprise."

91 Carmody, "What caused hyperinflation in Venezuela: a rare blend of public ineptitude and private enterprise."

92 Reuters Staff, "Venezuela sets new price controls, with eggs costing more than a month's wages," *Reuters*, last modified April 30, 2020, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-venezuela-economy/venezuela-sets-new-price-controls-with-eggs-costing-more-than-a-months-wages-idUSKBN22D41S>.

93 "Venezuela deploys soldiers to markets to check prices," *BBC News*, last modified June 21, 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-44561089>.

94 Armas, "Venezuela's inflation hit 686.4% in 2021 - central bank."

the economies of Poland and Russia post-communism and to end hyperinflation in Chile and Bolivia.⁹⁵ Intergovernmental financial organizations like the IMF and World Bank can help Venezuela by funding infrastructure development or providing loans for debt recovery. For example, the World Bank loaned USD 250 million to Bolivia in 1985 to uplift their economy and gave money to Chile during the 1970s to combat rising inflation rates.⁹⁶ Foreign investment from the global community can also help Venezuela bring down inflation and restore its economy.

Lack of Basic Survival Needs

Rampant hyperinflation throughout Venezuela is one of the main reasons behind low salaries and high costs for basic necessities. This results in reduced purchasing power for the people, meaning that people now struggle to afford basic goods with an average salary.⁹⁷ Thus, people struggle to survive on a daily basis. Poverty levels are very high; reports from 2017 show that 87 percent of the population was living in poverty, with 61.2 percent being in extreme poverty.⁹⁸ It is difficult for the government to provide assistance because the country is bankrupt and unable to fund projects to rebuild infrastructure and strengthen social programs.⁹⁹ This leaves people with no choice but to take desperate measures for survival or simply leave the country altogether.

It is especially hard to purchase basic food staples because supermarkets are often empty or low on supply.¹⁰⁰ Due to severe food shortages in 2017, many people were found

chasing garbage trucks to scavenge for food scraps.¹⁰¹ People would label food waste so that others could find it more easily while scavenging in bins.¹⁰² Many people in cities would beg or join long lines at soup kitchens just to get breakfast.¹⁰³ Others travel hours each day to Colombia to make a living and get a daily meal.¹⁰⁴ The lack of available food has led to a black market; shoppers in some areas even buy supplies from local inmates.¹⁰⁵ Because reliable food is scarce, many have become malnourished. A 2016 study estimated that 75 percent of people experienced “involuntary weight loss.”¹⁰⁶ Malnutrition has disproportionately affected the country’s youth and is linked to increasing child mortality. Reports show that 54 percent of children showed signs of malnutrition, and some measured around half of the average weight for their age.¹⁰⁷ In 2016, child mortality increased by 30 percent.¹⁰⁸ Sometimes, parents can only find enough to feed their children one meal daily, demonstrating the desperate sacrifices people make to find food daily in Venezuela.¹⁰⁹ Desperate measures taken by Venezuelans to get food and the drastic effects of shortages highlight the gravity of the situation in the country.

Not only do sanctions and other restrictions prevent much-needed imports, but low levels of domestic agricultural production and strict price controls hinder access to food within the country. In 2017, the Confederation of Associations of Agricultural Producers of Venezuela announced that there was only enough domestic food production to maintain 30 percent of the population.¹¹⁰ Some indigenous populations in rural areas have established community gardens to promote

95 Sanchez, “Venezuela hyperinflation hits 10 million percent. ‘Shock therapy’ may be only chance to undo the economic damage.”
 96 Sanchez, “Venezuela hyperinflation hits 10 million percent. ‘Shock therapy’ may be only chance to undo the economic damage.”
 97 Yohama Caraballo-Arias, Jesús Madrid, and Marcial Barrios, “Working in Venezuela: How the Crisis has Affected the Labor Conditions,” *Annals of Global Health* 84, no. 3 (2018), <http://doi.org/10.29024/aogh.2325>.
 98 Caraballo-Arias, Madrid, and Barrios, “Working in Venezuela: How the Crisis has Affected the Labor Conditions.”
 99 Sanchez, “Venezuela hyperinflation hits 10 million percent. ‘Shock therapy’ may be only chance to undo the economic damage.”
 100 McGonigal and Cook, “Photos Of Empty Grocery Shelves Show Dire Situation In Venezuela.”
 101 Vladimir Hernandez, “Venezuela’s child malnutrition crisis grows,” *BBC* video, 3:54, June 15, 2017, <https://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-latin-america-40130224>.
 102 “Venezuelans asked to help others find food in their bin,” *BBC News*, last modified March 2, 2017, <https://www.bbc.com/news/blogs-news-from-elsewhere-39140060>.
 103 Vladimir Hernandez, “How Venezuelans stave off hunger amidst a food crisis,” *BBC* video, 4:06, February 22, 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-latin-america-43146806>.
 104 Katy Watson, “Venezuelans cross into Colombia as crisis deepens,” *BBC News*, last modified September 28, 2017, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-41305735>.
 105 Mariana Zuñiga, “For Some Venezuelans, a Failing Economy Means Shopping in Prison,” *Newsweek*, last modified January 12, 2017, <https://www.newsweek.com/2017/01/20/venezuela-economy-tocoron-prison-supermarket-541648.html>.
 106 Hineman, “Fact check: Socialist policies alone did not destroy Venezuela’s economy in last decade.”
 107 Hernandez, “Venezuela’s child malnutrition crisis grows.”
 108 Hernandez, “Venezuela’s child malnutrition crisis grows.”
 109 Hernandez, “Venezuela’s child malnutrition crisis grows.”
 110 “Venezuela only produces 30% of the food needed to maintain its population,” *Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations*, last modified November 12, 2017, <https://www.fao.org/in-action/agronoticias/detail/en/c/1071630/>.

self-sufficiency.¹¹¹ The government has also taken unusual measures to address food shortages. One effort in 2017 called the “Rabbit Plan” involved authorities encouraging people to raise and eat rabbits.¹¹² During a televised broadcast, Freddy Bernal, Minister of Urban Agriculture, stated that “a rabbit is not a pet; it’s two and a half kilos (5.5 pounds) of meat that is high in protein, with no cholesterol.”¹¹³ However, this method was harshly criticized, as rabbits are rarely consumed in Venezuelan culture, and it would be difficult to begin raising rabbits on a national scale.¹¹⁴

In addition to food shortages, another major barrier to survival is the public health crisis. Several public hospitals cannot afford to maintain equipment and infrastructure or do not have enough space to serve the number of patients coming in.¹¹⁵ Patients themselves must bear the responsibility of treatments in some cases. Families of dying patients have had to leave

a hospital to buy treatments privately and bring them back for the doctors.¹¹⁶ Poor hospitals cannot care for mentally ill patients. Without sedatives readily available, patients have to either be physically restrained or are simply sent home.¹¹⁷ With the country facing a 95 percent shortage of antipsychotic medication, people ration medication by halving the dosage to make it last longer or turning to the black market.¹¹⁸ Both of these measures are unideal and unsustainable. Another aspect of the public health crisis is low vaccination rates, especially among children. For example, data from WHO and UNICEF show that 70 percent of children globally received the required second dose of the measles shot, compared to 30 percent of Venezuelan children.¹¹⁹ Because vaccines are scarce, people cannot meet national health requirements and instead may even travel to neighboring countries for vaccinations, which puts other countries at risk of outbreaks.¹²⁰

111 United Nations, “A safe space for Venezuela’s indigenous women,” *UN News*, last modified July 16, 2022, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/07/1122472>.

112 Reuters Staff, “Venezuela’s new plan to beat hunger: Breed rabbits,” *Reuters*, last modified September 24, 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-venezuela-rabbits/venezuelas-new-plan-to-beat-hunger-breed-rabbits-idUSKCN1BP232>.

113 Reuters Staff, “Venezuela’s new plan to beat hunger: Breed rabbits.”

114 Reuters Staff, “Venezuela’s new plan to beat hunger: Breed rabbits.”

115 Katy Watson, “Venezuela doctor on how hospitals are at breaking point,” *BBC* video, 00:46, August 10, 2017, <https://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-latin-america-40888352>.

116 “Venezuela: Patients dying as crisis hits hospitals,” *AlJazeera*, last modified May 30, 2016, <https://www.aljazeera.com/economy/2016/5/30/venezuela-patients-dying-as-crisis-hits-hospitals>.

117 Sofia Barbarani, “Venezuela’s spiralling mental healthcare crisis,” *AlJazeera*, last modified March 20, 2017, <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2017/3/20/venezuelas-spiralling-mental-healthcare-crisis>.

118 Barbarani, “Venezuela’s spiralling mental healthcare crisis.”

119 Regina Garcia Cano, “Venezuela’s alarmingly low vaccine rate among worst in world,” *AP News*, last modified July 14, 2022, <https://apnews.com/article/covid-health-venezuela-public-caribbean-93dced67f765654da6d616b534377566>.

120 Cano, “Venezuela’s alarmingly low vaccine rate among worst in world.”



Empty shelves in Venezuelan supermarkets make it difficult to even find basic goods.

Credit: Wilfredor

Teenage pregnancies have also been on the rise. According to 2017 data from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), 25 percent of all babies born in Venezuela are from adolescent mothers, giving the country one of the highest teenage pregnancy rates in Latin America.¹²¹ One reason for this is a lack of contraceptives. For example, a pharmacy in the town of Barquisimeto did not receive any deliveries of contraceptive pills for a whole year.¹²² Even when available, the price of condoms has increased by 200 percent, and one box of contraceptives could cost more than an entire month's salary.¹²³ After giving birth, almost 80 percent of students leave school.¹²⁴ The lack of contraceptives affects teenagers' education and their future outlook, as they are forced to choose between school and caring for their newborn child.

Due to all these poor quality-of-life situations, research shows that those who stay in the country experience frustration, stress, fear, and despair from insecurity, resource shortages, and sociopolitical conflict.¹²⁵ The mental health of women and children is highly affected by humanitarian issues. According to the American Psychological Association, violence against children is rising in conjunction with parents' frustration and anger over an inability to provide for their children.¹²⁶ These problems affect workers who can't afford to purchase goods at highly inflated prices.¹²⁷ In other countries, a high salary means lots of disposable income to enjoy life, but having a high salary in Venezuela does not even guarantee survival.¹²⁸ To alleviate Venezuela's shortages, other countries have sent humanitarian assistance. For example, the Venezuelan government accepted 300 tons of food and medical supplies from Russia in 2019.¹²⁹

121 UNFPA, *The State of World Population 2017* (New York: UNFPA, 2017), https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/sowp/downloads/UNFPA_PUB_2017_EN_SWOP.pdf.

122 Katy Watson, "Venezuela pill shortage triggers rise in teenage pregnancies," *BBC News*, last modified January 10, 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-42620379>.

123 Watson, "Venezuela pill shortage triggers rise in teenage pregnancies."

124 Watson, "Venezuela pill shortage triggers rise in teenage pregnancies."

125 Rebecca A. Clay, "Despair in Venezuela," *Monitor on Psychology* 50, no. 1 (January 2019): 28, <https://www.apa.org/monitor/2019/01/venezuela>.

126 Clay, "Despair in Venezuela," 28.

127 Caraballo-Arias, Madrid, and Barrios, "Working in Venezuela: How the Crisis has Affected the Labor Conditions."

128 Caraballo-Arias, Madrid, and Barrios, "Working in Venezuela: How the Crisis has Affected the Labor Conditions."

129 Jack Goodman, "Venezuela crisis: How much aid is getting in?" *BBC News*, last modified February 28, 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-47369768>.

130 "Fire on the Border: Analyzing Venezuela's February 23 Border Clashes," *Bellingcat*, last modified March 10, 2019, <https://www.bellingcat.com/news/americas/2019/03/10/fire-on-the-border-analyzing-venezuelas-february-23-border-clashes/>.

131 "Venezuela crisis: Brazil vows to deliver aid, defying Maduro," *BBC News*, last modified February 20, 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-47300962>.

132 USA for UNHCR, "Venezuela Humanitarian Crisis," accessed July 23, 2022, <https://www.unrefugees.org/emergencies/venezuela/>.

133 Doctors Without Borders, "Venezuela," accessed July 23, 2022, <https://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/what-we-do/where-we-work/venezuela>.

134 Goodman, "Venezuela crisis: How much aid is getting in?"

135 UNHCR, "Venezuela situation."

However, ideological conflicts between Maduro and Guaidó have complicated the intake of foreign aid. The government closed various air and sea borders, and the military blocked several shipments across the Colombian border.¹³⁰ Vladimir Padrino, Venezuela's Minister of Defense and member of the PSUV, stated that armed forces would block aid sent by the US and other countries who recognize Guaidó as president.¹³¹ Political issues only intensify the damage to the Venezuelan population.

The UN and related organizations have also sent aid to Venezuela. The UNHCR provides direct humanitarian assistance to meet basic needs, including healthcare, education, temporary shelters, and cash-based interventions.¹³² Doctors Without Borders helps to rehabilitate hospitals, distribute medical supplies to doctors and patients, and rebuild water and sanitation systems throughout the country.¹³³ Finally, several agencies, including the World Health Organization (WHO) and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), have spearheaded fundraising efforts, raising over USD 15 million in foreign aid to Venezuela.¹³⁴

Migration Crisis

According to the UNHCR, there are an estimated six million refugees and migrants from Venezuela around the world, making it the second-largest external displacement crisis in the world.¹³⁵ The scale of the Venezuelan refugee crisis is comparable to that of Syria. The country lost 65 percent of its GDP between 2013 and 2018, in comparison with Liberia, which lost 90 percent of its GDP during a civil war.

These conditions do not result from war or conflict; rather, they originated within Venezuela's government.¹³⁶ Moreover, host countries of Venezuelan migrants have historically received less support from other countries. The international community collectively spent USD 7.4 billion over four years of the Syrian crisis, whereas funding for the Venezuelan crisis only reached USD 580 million over the same period.¹³⁷

More than 80 percent of migrants from Venezuela go to nearby countries in Latin America and the Caribbean.¹³⁸ Destination countries include Brazil, Ecuador, Peru, Chile, and Trinidad and Tobago; Colombia, Venezuela's neighbor, is the most popular.¹³⁹ As of spring 2021, it was estimated that 5.5 million refugees have migrated to Colombia since 2015, and 25 municipalities host 70 percent of all Venezuelan migrants.¹⁴⁰ More than 25,000 refugees enter Colombia daily through the Simón Bolívar International Bridge and head to the capital of Bogotá.¹⁴¹ There are an estimated 40,000 Venezuelan refugees in Trinidad and Tobago, an easy-accessible Caribbean island seven miles off the coast of Venezuela with a population of 1.4 million.¹⁴² It is important to note that official counts of refugees are likely underestimated due to high amounts of illegal (and therefore uncounted) migration.

People often have no choice but to leave their homes, despite the risks. Migrants face a multitude of dangers during their journey to other countries. These include separation from their families, harassment by smugglers and traffickers, and risking their lives.¹⁴³ Some refugees crossing the Colombian border do

so illegally, exposing themselves to recruitment by organized criminal groups, such as gangs and sex trafficking rings, which makes women and children even more vulnerable.¹⁴⁴ One of the most dangerous routes is the Darien Gap along the border between Colombia and Panama, which is full of unpredictable wilderness, steep mountains, and rivers.¹⁴⁵ Despite natural hazards and violent crimes such as robbery and rape, more than 8,000 people crossed the jungle in the first two months of 2022.¹⁴⁶ Traveling by sea also presents huge hazards to refugees. For example, in December of 2020, a boat on its way to Trinidad and Tobago capsized, leaving more than two dozen migrants, including several children, missing or dead.¹⁴⁷

Not only is it life-threatening leaving Venezuela, but migrants face many issues upon arrival in host countries. In Colombia, thousands of Venezuelans live in overcrowded rooms without access to clean toilets, enough food, healthcare, or education.¹⁴⁸ Pregnant women must cross borders just to get food, vitamins, and medicine for their babies.¹⁴⁹ Brazil has also felt the pressure of housing refugees, where entire families may live outside under tarpaulin tents, or more than 300 people sleep on the floor of a concrete shelter.¹⁵⁰ Often, migrants must resort to whatever jobs they can find just to feed themselves and their families. A big problem for migrants is a lack of citizenship or verification in the destination country. In Colombia, national ID cards are required for most tasks, whether it be getting health insurance, booking flights, or finding jobs, but the government recently revoked citizenship

136 Bahar and Dooley, "Venezuela refugee crisis to become the largest and most underfunded in modern history."

137 Bahar and Dooley, "Venezuela refugee crisis to become the largest and most underfunded in modern history."

138 "No home away from home," R4V, accessed July 23, 2022, <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/fc308b616de34a129c86f0d658f2ccd3>.

139 "Venezuela crisis: How the political situation escalated."

140 "Supporting Colombian Host Communities and Venezuelan Migrants During the COVID-19 Pandemic," The World Bank, last modified October 31, 2021, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/results/2021/10/31/supporting-colombian-host-communities-and-venezuelan-migrants-during-the-covid-19-pandemic>.

141 "Venezuela's crisis drives couple to settle in Colombia," *BBC* video, 2:32, September 28, 2017, <https://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-latin-america-41412064>.

142 Georgina Chami and Florence Seemungal, "The Venezuelan Refugee Crisis in Trinidad and Tobago," *University of Oxford Faculty of Law Blogs*, last modified April 9, 2021, <https://blogs.law.ox.ac.uk/research-subject-groups/centre-criminology/centreborder-criminologies/blog/2021/04/venezuelan>.

143 "Venezuelan Refugee and Migrant Crisis," IOM, accessed July 24, 2022, <https://www.iom.int/venezuelan-refugee-and-migrant-crisis>.

144 "Colombia," International Rescue Committee, accessed July 23, 2022, <https://www.rescue.org/country/colombia>.

145 UNHCR, "Number of Venezuelans crossing the Darien Gap soars," Press Release, last modified March 29, 2022, <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/news/press/2022/3/6243298f4/number-venezuelans-crossing-darien-gap-soars.html>.

146 UNHCR, "Number of Venezuelans crossing the Darien Gap soars."

147 UNHCR, "UNHCR and IOM saddened at deaths of refugees and migrants in shipwreck off Venezuela coast," Press Release, last modified December 15, 2020, <https://www.unhcr.org/news/press/2020/12/5fd7db764/unhcr-iom-saddened-deaths-refugees-migrants-shipwreck-venezuela-coast.html>.

148 International Rescue Committee, "Colombia."

149 Katy Watson, "Why mums-to-be are fleeing Venezuela," *BBC* video, 2:45, May 17, 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-latin-america-44145380>.

150 Katy Watson, "Crisis-hit Venezuelans leave for Brazil in search of new life," *BBC News*, last modified July 19, 2017, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-40631022>.



Venezuelan refugees sleeping on the street in Cúcuta, Colombia.

Credit: PROVEA

for more than 40,000 Venezuelans due to the possibility of mistakes or forged documents, meaning individuals must reapply or face legal consequences.¹⁵¹ Without IDs, migrants cannot receive salaries, access bank accounts, register for school, or even receive cancer treatment.¹⁵²

Legal identification requirements pose challenges for healthcare, education, and simply staying in the country. A lot of migrants in Colombia can't meet immunization requirements because vaccination centers require proof of residency or national ID cards, which is impossible for the people who lost their house or got their citizenship revoked.¹⁵³ Many schools in Peru can't accept undocumented migrant children, and families must pay out-of-pocket for a chance at enrollment.¹⁵⁴

A recent study found that 25 percent of Venezuelan children in the most populated areas of Peru are not enrolled in school, while those who are in school experience bullying and have difficulties integrating.¹⁵⁵ Without proper documentation,

some refugees are ultimately subject to deportation, such as migrants in the US who could be sent back to Venezuela once their temporary asylum expires.¹⁵⁶

Due to a mass influx of refugees, countries must divert resources, which strains their infrastructure. For example, Colombia has tried to enroll more migrant children in school, but efforts were limited because schools lack space and resources.¹⁵⁷ Pregnant Venezuelans migrating to Brazil have overburdened social services in maternity hospitals, but these mothers have no choice because their home country's hospitals would put their newborns at risk.¹⁵⁸ In 2018, the only maternity hospital in Brazil's Roraima state saw a 228 percent increase in Venezuelan births, and demands for public health services increased by 3,500 percent.¹⁵⁹ It is evident that refugees greatly impact the services and infrastructure of host countries.

There have been various initiatives from the international

151 Rueda, "Amid immigration crackdown, Colombia revokes national IDs for thousands of Venezuelans without warning."
 152 Rueda, "Amid immigration crackdown, Colombia revokes national IDs for thousands of Venezuelans without warning."
 153 Manuel Rueda, "Many Venezuelan migrants in Latin America struggle to get vaccinated," *The World*, last modified September 27, 2021, <https://theworld.org/stories/2021-09-27/many-venezuelan-migrants-latin-america-struggle-get-vaccinated>.
 154 Natalie Alcoba, "Venezuelan migrant children struggle to access education," *Al Jazeera*, last modified July 4, 2022, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/7/4/venezuelan-migrant-children-struggle-to-access-education>.
 155 Alcoba, "Venezuelan migrant children struggle to access education."
 156 Al Jazeera Staff, "Biden administration extends TPS protection for Venezuelans," *Al Jazeera*, last modified July 11, 2022, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/7/11/biden-administration-extends-tps-protection-for-venezuelans>.
 157 Alcoba, "Venezuelan migrant children struggle to access education."
 158 "My baby would have died if I had stayed in Venezuela," *BBC News*, last modified August 22, 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/in-pictures-45270708>.
 159 Watson, "Why mums-to-be are fleeing Venezuela."

community to provide assistance, including direct aid to migrants and assistance to host countries. In the US, 343,000 Venezuelans are eligible for Temporary Protected Status (TPS), a designation that shields foreign nationals from deportation to an unsafe home country and allows them to get jobs and travel.¹⁶⁰ TPS was recently extended for 18 months to March 10, 2024, although this designation does not include those who entered the country after March 8, 2021.¹⁶¹ Colombia offers a variety of programs and services to help migrants, such as free healthcare for emergencies, thousands of special work permits, and access to education.¹⁶² Like the US, Colombia also provides TPS, announcing naturalization and ten-year TPS for millions of Venezuelans.¹⁶³ UNHCR and the IOM set up shelters in Panama for migrants crossing the Darien Gap, supplying resources like mattresses, blankets, solar lamps, and hygiene kits.¹⁶⁴ Finally, UNHCR has contributed to improvements in mental health for refugees by facilitating therapy sessions and distributing medications.¹⁶⁵

Also, IOM and UNHCR established the Regional Inter-Agency Coordination Platform (R4V) and Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan (RMRP) to respond with collaboration between host governments, UN agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and other movements.¹⁶⁶ UNHCR and IOM support governments through the distribution of emergency kits, temporary accommodations, healthcare, food, work opportunities, documentation services, and social integration. Venezuela's Latin American neighbors established the Quito Process, a regional response plan aimed at protecting migrants from crimes like human trafficking.¹⁶⁷ Delegates

can look to such initiatives when expanding social services support, developing stronger measures regarding asylum, and protecting refugees from the dangers of migration.

Past UN Actions

The UN Charter states the goals of maintaining international peace and security, suppressing acts of aggression and other threats to peace, and fostering international cooperation and respect for human rights and freedoms.¹⁶⁸ To that end, the UN has taken many actions regarding the situation in Venezuela. State authorities in Venezuela have been accused of crimes against humanity, prompting investigations by UN agencies like the ICC and the OHCHR. Numerous attempts have been made to relieve the political and humanitarian situations from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), UNHCR, IOM, and other UN bodies.

Amid citizen protests against political, economic, and social instability, concerns have been raised regarding government corruption and oppression by the state.¹⁶⁹ Human rights abuses by the state have taken place for years, usually in response to protests.¹⁷⁰ In 2017, the government responded to public demonstrations in the streets by detaining anti-government protesters, denying them their due process rights, and using lethal force. Authorities also detained and prosecuted bystanders and even pulled people from their homes. Former detainees report being subjected to torture techniques such as beatings, asphyxiation, and electric shocks. Government officials do not appear to have taken steps to prevent or punish violations. Instead, they blame violence on

160 Al Jazeera Staff, "Biden administration extends TPS protection for Venezuelans."

161 Al Jazeera Staff, "Biden administration extends TPS protection for Venezuelans."

162 Dylan Baddour, "Colombia sees new migrant wave from Venezuela amid US sanctions," *Al Jazeera*, last modified August 14, 2019, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/8/14/colombia-sees-new-migrant-wave-from-venezuela-amid-us-sanctions>.

163 UNHCR and IOM, "UNHCR and IOM welcome Colombia's decision to regularize Venezuelan refugees and migrants," press release, February 8, 2021, <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/news/press/2021/2/60214cf74/unhcr-iom-welcome-colombias-decision-regularize-venezuelan-refugees-migrants.html>.

164 UNHCR, "Number of Venezuelans crossing the Darien Gap soars."

165 Jenny Barchfield, "Mental health issues can be both the driver and result of displacement," *UNHCR*, last modified April 6, 2022, <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/news/stories/2022/4/622b9f7e4/mental-health-issues-both-driver-result-displacement.html>.

166 R4V, RMRP 2022, (Panama City: R4V, January 2022), https://www.r4v.info/sites/default/files/2022-03/RMRP%202022_Final%20Version_WEB2.pdf.

167 "Quito Process: Regional Technical Meeting of National Committees against Human Trafficking, Human Mobility Approach," *Argentina Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship*, last modified October 3, 2019, <https://www.cancilleria.gob.ar/en/announcements/news/quito-process-regional-technical-meeting-national-committees-against-human>.

168 United Nations, "United Nations Charter (full text)," United Nations, accessed August 23, 2022, <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/full-text>.

169 "Venezuela: UN investigators accuse authorities of crimes against humanity," *BBC News*, last modified September 16, 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-54176927>.

170 Human Rights Watch, *Crackdown on Dissent: Brutality, Torture, and Political Persecution in Venezuela* (New York: Human Rights Watch, November 29, 2017), <https://www.hrw.org/report/2017/11/30/crackdown-dissent/brutality-torture-and-political-persecution-venezuela>.

protesters.¹⁷¹ A 2018 OHCHR report revealed possibly more than 500 extrajudicial killings.¹⁷² However, UN investigators were denied access to Venezuela and had to conduct research online, including virtual interviews with witnesses and victims.¹⁷³ UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, said, “the failure to hold security forces accountable for such serious human rights violations suggests that the rule of law is virtually absent in Venezuela.”¹⁷⁴

On September 27, 2019, OHCHR established the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to investigate allegations of human rights abuse.¹⁷⁵ The Mission released its first report in September 2020. The main findings are evidence of forced disappearances, unlawful executions, arbitrary detention, and torture. President Maduro and the Ministers of the Interior and Defense gave direct orders, coordinated activities, and supplied resources to assist in crimes against humanity. Files reviewed by the Mission identified patterns of violations and crimes that were coordinated by the State, including crime-fighting operations, politically motivated detention and torture, and increasing violence against opposition protesters. Furthermore, the Mission reviewed more than 100 cases that resulted in the deaths of 413 people, some of whom were shot at point-blank range. In total, the data shows more than 5,000 killings by government security forces, giving Venezuela one of Latin America’s highest rates of deaths by state agents. Ultimately, there was no record of investigating the officials

involved in organized crime; instead, a common practice was covering up killings by planting weapons to simulate confrontations that would allow officers to use lethal force.¹⁷⁶

In 2020, the Fact-Finding Mission mandate was extended until September 2022.¹⁷⁷ The Mission produced a second report in September 2021. This report highlighted a lack of independent and impartial justice systems which could protect the rights of Venezuelans.¹⁷⁸ After examining several legal cases, the Mission concluded that judges and prosecutors denied rights to government opponents due to the influences of political actors.¹⁷⁹ Moreover, there was evidence that these judges and prosecutors ignored illegal and arbitrary arrests and detentions.¹⁸⁰ The Mission also believes that the judicial system deprived detainees of their legal defense rights and that authorities responsible for investigating violations of human rights and international law took part in this repression.¹⁸¹

The global community has taken note of government corruption in Venezuela. In 2018, Argentina, Canada, Colombia, Chile, Paraguay, and Peru submitted a request to the ICC for the Prosecutor to initiate an investigation of crimes against humanity in Venezuela.¹⁸² After closely reviewing reports and communications documenting these allegations, former ICC Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda opened a preliminary examination of the situation in Venezuela.¹⁸³ The results of this examination showed evidence of crimes against humanity, especially detention.¹⁸⁴ Current ICC Prosecutor Karim A. A. Khan QC visited Venezuela in 2021 and engaged in dialogue

171 Human Rights Watch, *Crackdown on Dissent: Brutality, Torture, and Political Persecution in Venezuela*.

172 OHCHR, “Venezuela: Continued impunity amid dismal human rights situation - UN report,” Press Release, June 22, 2018, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2018/06/venezuela-continued-impunity-amid-dismal-human-rights-situation-un-report?LangID=E&NewsID=23242>.

173 “Venezuela crisis: UN says security forces killed hundreds,” *BBC News*, last modified June 22, 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-44575599>.

174 “Venezuela promotes 16,900 soldiers for ‘loyalty,’” *BBC News*, last modified July 3, 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-44698122>.

175 UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, A/HRC/RES/42/25 (September 27, 2019), <https://undocs.org/A/HRC/RES/42/25>.

176 OHCHR, “Venezuela: UN report urges accountability for crimes against humanity.”

177 UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, A/HRC/RES/45/20, (October 6, 2020), <https://undocs.org/A/HRC/RES/45/20>.

178 “Venezuela: Joint Statement from Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch at the UN Human Rights Council.”

179 UN Human Rights Council, Report of the independent international fact-finding mission on the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, A/HRC/48/69 (September 16, 2021), https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/FFMV/A.HRC.48.69_EN.pdf.

180 A/HRC/48/69.

181 A/HRC/48/69.

182 ICC, “Statement of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, Fatou Bensouda, on the referral by a group of six States Parties regarding the situation in Venezuela,” Statement, September 27, 2018, <https://www.icc-cpi.int/news/statement-prosecutor-international-criminal-court-fatou-bensouda-referral-group-six-states>.

183 ICC, “Statement of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, Fatou Bensouda, on the referral by a group of six States Parties regarding the situation in Venezuela.”

184 “Venezuela I,” ICC, accessed July 24, 2022, <https://www.icc-cpi.int/venezuela>.

with Maduro and other authorities, consequently deciding to open a formal investigation but noting that there were no targets or suspects at that stage.¹⁸⁵ The Venezuelan government signed a Memorandum of Understanding, indicating their agreement to investigation proceedings, sustained dialogue, and cooperation.¹⁸⁶ In April of 2022, the government even granted visas to ICC officials to open an office in Caracas.¹⁸⁷ However, just a few weeks later, the country requested that the ICC delay its investigation, citing domestic authorities who were already on the case.¹⁸⁸ Prosecutor Khan has indicated his intention to deny this request.¹⁸⁹

The UN also supports relief efforts for political and humanitarian situations; it has encouraged peaceful dialogue between Maduro and Guaidó. Rosemary A. DiCarlo, the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, told the Security Council in 2020 that “a real negotiation among Venezuela’s main political actors is the only way forward.”¹⁹⁰ Without dialogue, there are concerns that violence against either president will escalate.¹⁹¹ The international community is divided on this issue, but entities such as the Lima Group and the European Union generally support democratic dialogue and restoring the rule of law.¹⁹² There are not many concrete actions to curb political conflict, though, as this could violate the country’s sovereignty.

In 2021, OCHA updated an existing program called the 2020 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP), which seeks to

185 ICC, “ICC Prosecutor, Mr Karim A.A. Khan QC, opens an investigation into the Situation in Venezuela and concludes Memorandum of Understanding with the Government,” Press Release, November 5, 2021, <https://www.icc-cpi.int/news/icc-prosecutor-mr-karim-aa-khan-qc-opens-investigation-situation-venezuela-and-concludes>.

186 ICC, “ICC Prosecutor, Mr Karim A.A. Khan QC, opens an investigation into the Situation in Venezuela and concludes Memorandum of Understanding with the Government.”

187 “ICC to open office in Venezuela to investigate rights abuses,” *Al Jazeera*, last modified April 1, 2022, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/4/1/icc-to-open-office-in-venezuela-to-investigate-rights-abuses>.

188 “Venezuela: Maduro Government Seeks to Delay ICC Investigation,” *Human Rights Watch*, last modified April 22, 2022, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/04/22/venezuela-maduro-government-seeks-delay-icc-investigation>.

189 “Venezuela: Maduro Government Seeks to Delay ICC Investigation.”

190 “UN Security Council, Real Negotiation among Venezuela’s Main Political Actors ‘Only Way Forward’ to Resolving Protracted Crisis, Under-Secretary-General Tells Security Council.”

191 “UN Security Council, Real Negotiation among Venezuela’s Main Political Actors ‘Only Way Forward’ to Resolving Protracted Crisis, Under-Secretary-General Tells Security Council.”

192 “UN Security Council, Real Negotiation among Venezuela’s Main Political Actors ‘Only Way Forward’ to Resolving Protracted Crisis, Under-Secretary-General Tells Security Council.”

193 OCHA, *Venezuela: Humanitarian Response Plan Update 2021* (New York: OCHA, June 2021), https://reliefweb.int/attachments/385cad01-010d-3c8e-89f0-ba49241ee832/venezuela_humanitarian_response_plan_update_2021_june2021.pdf.

194 United Nations, “United Nations launches the 2021 Venezuela Humanitarian Response Plan to assist 4.5 million people,” Press Release, June 18, 2021, <https://reliefweb.int/report/venezuela-bolivarian-republic/united-nations-launches-2021-venezuela-humanitarian-response>.

195 United Nations, “United Nations launches the 2021 Venezuela Humanitarian Response Plan to assist 4.5 million people.”

196 OCHA, “Venezuela.”

197 United Nations, “A safe space for Venezuela’s indigenous women.”

198 Kevin Leonard, “Mental Health in Venezuela,” *The Borgen Project*, last modified October 6, 2021, <https://borgenproject.org/mental-health-in-venezuela/>.

199 “Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of),” WHO Health Emergency Dashboard, accessed August 9, 2022, <https://covid19.who.int/region/amro/country/ve>.

address critical issues of health, malnutrition, and food insecurity, provision of and access to essential services, and coping mechanisms of those affected.¹⁹³ Up until the updated plan was released, more than USD 80 million was raised by international donors.¹⁹⁴ The plan appeals for USD 708.1 million and aims to help 4.5 million people.¹⁹⁵ The future response priorities of OCHA include providing life-saving healthcare, improving living standards through work and essential goods, and protecting the exploitation and abuse of children and adolescents.¹⁹⁶ Other forms of assistance include agricultural training and donations from UNHCR and IOM to promote sustainable small farming and sources of income among indigenous communities.¹⁹⁷ Finally, UNICEF has worked to address the mental health of Venezuelan youth by spreading awareness about domestic abuse and assigning counselors to manage disputes.¹⁹⁸

Current Status

Impacts of COVID-19

The coronavirus pandemic exacerbated a lot of ongoing problems. According to the WHO, more than 538,000 confirmed cases of COVID-19 and over 5,700 related deaths have been reported.¹⁹⁹ At the beginning of 2022, there was a large spike in cases recorded. One week in January saw a 40 percent increase of over 14,000 cases and a 29 percent increase



A medical worker performs a COVID-19 antigen test on a patient in Venezuela.

Credit: Mustafa Özdemir

of more than 500 deaths.²⁰⁰ As of the summer of 2022, only half of the entire population has been vaccinated, with almost 38 million vaccine doses administered.²⁰¹ The vaccines administered in Venezuela are primarily China's Sinopharm vaccine and Russia's Sputnik V vaccine (not approved by the WHO), along with Cuba's Abdala vaccine and others through the COVAX mechanism led by the WHO and UNICEF.²⁰²

The ongoing healthcare crisis in Venezuela made it difficult to address the coronavirus pandemic, ultimately leading to preventable cases and deaths. In the early months of the pandemic, a third of all COVID-19 deaths were healthcare workers.²⁰³ This impacts the number of doctors and nurses available to care for patients who contract the virus. Furthermore, coronavirus spreads easily because personal

protective equipment (PPE), such as masks and gloves, and cleaning supplies, like soap and alcohol disinfecting gel, are scarce.²⁰⁴ Due to hyperinflation, a doctor's salary for a month was about the same as the cost of an N95 mask or face shield.²⁰⁵ Doctors in the country relied on crowdsourced funding and donations on platforms like GoFundMe just to be able to afford medical supplies, or they turned to the black market for their needs.²⁰⁶ Additionally, testing and vaccinations are not readily available. In 2021, there were only two official laboratories for processing polymerase chain reaction (PCR) tests.²⁰⁷ Further, Venezuela's weak economy prolonged the time for shipments of WHO-approved vaccine doses to enter the country.²⁰⁸

The most glaring part of Venezuela's coronavirus struggle is

200 "Venezuelan Humanitarian and Refugee Crisis," Center for Disaster Philanthropy, accessed August 9, 2022, <https://disasterphilanthropy.org/disasters/venezuelan-refugee-crisis/>.

201 "Venezuela - COVID-19 Overview," Johns Hopkins University & Medicine, accessed August 9, 2022, <https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/region/venezuela>.

202 Reuters, "Venezuela receives second batch of 2.5 million vaccines via COVAX," *Reuters*, last modified October 10, 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/venezuela-receives-second-batch-25-million-vaccines-via-covax-2021-10-10/>.

203 Tim Padgett, "Venezuelan Medical Workers Dying Of COVID-19 At Alarming Rate. How Can The World Get PPE To Them?" *WLRN*, last modified September 14, 2020, <https://www.wlrn.org/2020-09-14/venezuelan-medical-workers-dying-of-covid-19-at-alarming-rate-how-can-the-world-get-ppe-to-them>.

204 Moises Rendon, "Covid-19 in Venezuela: How the Pandemic Deepened a Humanitarian Crisis," *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, last modified September 23, 2020, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/covid-19-venezuela-how-pandemic-deepened-humanitarian-crisis>.

205 Padgett, "Venezuelan Medical Workers Dying Of COVID-19 At Alarming Rate. How Can The World Get PPE To Them?"

206 Padgett, "Venezuelan Medical Workers Dying Of COVID-19 At Alarming Rate. How Can The World Get PPE To Them?"

207 Luke Taylor, "The Venezuelan health-care workers secretly collecting COVID stats," *Nature*, August 25, 2021, <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-021-02276-1>.

208 Cassandra Garrison, Diego Oré, and Brian Ellsworth, "Cash-strapped Venezuela cannot join COVAX vaccine program, PAHO says," *Reuters*, last modified January 19, 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-paho/cash-strapped-venezuela-cannot-join-covax-vaccine-program-paho-says-idUSKBN29O21K>.

the already-failing hospital system, which doctors described as “working in a warzone.”²⁰⁹ Physicians’ lives are at heightened risk in Venezuela’s hospitals without water to wash their hands, electricity to sterilize medical instruments, and insufficient PPE to limit the airborne virus.²¹⁰ One hospital in San Cristóbal only had 16 intensive care unit beds and around six ventilators.²¹¹ Treatment medications are virtually unavailable, such as dexamethasone, a respiratory drug that helps reduce COVID-19 mortality.²¹² The inability to respond to critical COVID-19 cases, coupled with the pervasive spread of the virus, has seriously impacted mental health, especially for children who are often the target of adult stress and frustration with the current situation.²¹³

The humanitarian and economic situations have both devolved as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. Production and importation of food have declined, and fuel shortages and strict curfews have prevented people from accessing the food still available.²¹⁴ Even prisoners have a hard time getting food because quarantine measures keep family members from bringing in nutritional options.²¹⁵ In late 2020, Venezuela had received less than 20 percent of the global aid required to effectively combat the pandemic, much less than other countries with similar humanitarian situations.²¹⁶ The national GDP also declined due to previous economic trends and a global decline in oil demand during the pandemic.²¹⁷ Not only did the economy suffer, but people’s financial situations

did as well. Public health protocols led to drastic job losses and job opportunities, affecting many without savings or social safety nets.²¹⁸ Further, many Venezuelan migrants in places like Colombia already struggled with verifying national IDs, making it harder for them to get vaccinated.²¹⁹ Migrant shelters were closed to prevent large indoor gatherings, leaving migrants to sleep outside.²²⁰ In host countries, there is a fear that migrants cause COVID-19 outbreaks, which establishes a harmful ideology that promotes the rejection of migrants.²²¹

The international community has attempted to alleviate the COVID-19 situation in Venezuela. OCHA’s 2020 HRP addressed COVID-19, and the organization made multi-million dollar aid appeals, but unfortunately, a majority of these financial targets were not even closely met.²²² The World Bank has also provided a lot of funding and recovery assistance (including vaccines) to Colombia in support of the numerous Venezuelan migrants.²²³ The WHO partnered with regional development banks in Latin America to fund lab testing, hospital equipment, PPE, and ventilators.²²⁴ UNICEF supports rural populations and provides counseling for children, and NGOs like Doctors Without Borders set up dedicated coronavirus hospital wings with triage systems.²²⁵

There has been widespread suspicion that the government underreports COVID-19 statistics.²²⁶ The government has relied on Chinese-donated rapid tests, which are considered

209 Luke Taylor, “Covid-19: Venezuela’s doctors refuse to be gagged,” *The BMJ* 2020, no. 371 (October 19, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.m3938>.

210 Padgett, “Venezuelan Medical Workers Dying Of COVID-19 At Alarming Rate. How Can The World Get PPE To Them?”

211 Tim Padgett, “Venezuela’s Health System Was Already Destroyed. Now Comes The COVID Calamity?” *WLRN*, last modified July 28, 2020, <https://www.wlrn.org/show/latin-america-report/2020-07-27/venezuelas-health-system-was-already-destroyed-now-comes-the-covid-calamity>.

212 The RECOVERY Collaborative Group, “Dexamethasone in Hospitalized Patients with Covid-19,” *New England Journal of Medicine* 2021, no. 384 (February 25, 2021), <https://doi.org/10.1056/NEJMoa2021436>.

213 Sarah Ferguson, “Protecting Children’s Mental Health in Venezuela During the Pandemic,” *UNICEF USA*, last modified October 9, 2020, <https://www.unicefusa.org/stories/protecting-childrens-mental-health-venezuela-during-pandemic/37694>.

214 Rendon, “Covid-19 in Venezuela: How the Pandemic Deepened a Humanitarian Crisis.”

215 Angus Berwick and Vivian Sequera, “Anarchy in Venezuela’s jails laid bare by massacre over food,” *Reuters*, last modified May 8, 2020, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-venezuela-security-prison-insight/anarchy-in-venezuelas-jails-laid-bare-by-massacre-over-food-idUSKBN22K2FL>.

216 Rendon, “Covid-19 in Venezuela: How the Pandemic Deepened a Humanitarian Crisis.”

217 Center for Disaster Philanthropy, “Venezuelan Humanitarian and Refugee Crisis.”

218 R4V, “No home away from home.”

219 Rueda, “Many Venezuelan migrants in Latin America struggle to get vaccinated.”

220 Manuel Rueda, “Venezuelans brave ‘brutal’ migrant route made tougher by pandemic,” *BBC News*, last modified October 7, 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-54418542>.

221 Rueda, “Venezuelans brave ‘brutal’ migrant route made tougher by pandemic.”

222 OCHA, “Venezuela 2020,” Financial Tracking Service, accessed August 10, 2022, <https://fts.unocha.org/appeals/928/summary>.

223 The World Bank, “Supporting Colombian Host Communities and Venezuelan Migrants During the COVID-19 Pandemic.”

224 “Venezuelans can rely on CAF and PAHO to cope with COVID-19,” *CAF - Development Bank of Latin America*, last modified August 5, 2020, <https://www.caf.com/en/currently/news/2020/08/venezuelans-can-rely-on-caf-and-paho-to-cope-with-covid-19/>.

225 Doctors Without Borders, “Venezuela.”

226 Padgett, “Venezuelan Medical Workers Dying Of COVID-19 At Alarming Rate. How Can The World Get PPE To Them?”

less reliable than PCR tests.²²⁷ Additionally, the National Institute of Hygiene only has the capacity to process about 100 samples per day, leading to a backlog of testing and artificially low case counts.²²⁸ The government also failed to release genomic surveillance data, such as on Beta and Gamma variants.²²⁹ Many healthcare workers fear government repercussions and must collect data in secret, or they risk being fired, publicly humiliated, detained, and even prosecuted for terrorism or conspiracy for speaking out about poor working conditions or the true scale of the pandemic in Venezuela.²³⁰

Political complications pose great obstacles to relief efforts. US sanctions hindered humanitarian NGOs from providing aid. When Guaidó acquired money seized by the US from the Maduro government, he attempted to distribute bonuses to doctors on a digital platform called AirTM, but the platform was made illegal by the government.²³¹ Even conspiracy theories plant ideologies that make it difficult to combat the pandemic effectively. On national television, PSUV Vice President and former National Assembly President Diosdado Cabello called for scientists who explained the gravity of the pandemic to be arrested and raided by state security agencies.²³² Maduro himself also blamed new infections on migrants returning from Colombia. Some government officials went as far as to call them “bioterrorists” and suggested it was part of a Colombian government scheme.²³³ Overall, challenges to addressing the widespread coronavirus pandemic are rampant in almost every sector in Venezuela.

Current International Relations

There are a few key global players involved in Venezuela’s affairs. The US is one of the most influential countries in Venezuela’s foreign economic relations. For over 15 years, the US has imposed sanctions on Venezuela.²³⁴ Some of the earliest sanctions were for efforts against drugs, terrorism, and corruption but have expanded over time to restrict the economy and the booming oil industry.²³⁵ Other sanctions address anti-democratic actions, human rights violations, and trading imports, along with freezing Venezuela’s assets overseas.²³⁶ Entire economic sectors, large corporations, and individual people are targets of US sanctions on Venezuela. These sanctions prevent foreign interests from buying Venezuelan oil stocks and prevent the implementation of economic recovery strategies, like foreign currency transactions and easing price controls.²³⁷ Because of these restrictions, the world has shifted its reliance from Venezuela to Russia, which has recently been exporting more oil than Venezuela.²³⁸ This is a risky move due to the war in Ukraine and the related diplomatic fallout.²³⁹ Due to this and the world’s oil shortage, there is a possibility of easing sanctions and investing in the Venezuelan supply, which would lower the domestic price of oil while relieving Venezuela’s foreign debt.²⁴⁰ However, diplomatic relations have been tense with the US, as there are several cases of Americans detained in Venezuela. Take, for example, the “Citgo 6” hostage situation, in which six oil executives from the American subsidiary of PDVSA were jailed in 2017 and sentenced to prison three

227 Joe Parkin Daniels, “Under Cover of Coronavirus, Maduro Is Consolidating Control,” *Foreign Policy*, last modified August 10, 2020, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/08/10/coronavirus-maduro-consolidating-control-venezuela/>.

228 Angus Berwick and Vivian Sequera, “In run-down Caracas institute, Venezuela’s coronavirus testing falters,” *Reuters*, last modified April 17, 2020, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-venezuela-tests-in/in-run-down-caracas-institute-venezuelas-coronavirus-testing-falters-idUSKBN21Z1BR>.

229 Taylor, “The Venezuelan health-care workers secretly collecting COVID stats.”

230 Taylor, “Covid-19: Venezuela’s doctors refuse to be gagged.”

231 Rendon, “Covid-19 in Venezuela: How the Pandemic Deepened a Humanitarian Crisis.”; Padgett, “Venezuelan Medical Workers Dying Of COVID-19 At Alarming Rate. How Can The World Get PPE To Them?”

232 Rodrigo Pérez Ortega, “Scientists rush to defend Venezuelan colleagues threatened over coronavirus study,” *Science*, last modified June 2, 2020, <https://www.science.org/content/article/scientists-rush-defend-venezuelan-colleagues-threatened-over-coronavirus-study>.

233 Padgett, “Venezuela’s Health System Was Already Destroyed. Now Comes The COVID Calamity?”

234 *Venezuela: Overview of U.S. Sanctions*, Congressional Research Service, last modified May 23, 2022, <https://sgp.fas.org/crs/row/IF10715.pdf>.

235 Congressional Research Service, *Venezuela: Overview of U.S. Sanctions*.

236 Congressional Research Service, *Venezuela: Overview of U.S. Sanctions*.

237 Nicolle Yapur, “Maduro Embraces Stock Market in Latest Venezuela Nod to Normalcy,” *Bloomberg*, last modified August 1, 2022, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-08-01/maduro-embraces-stock-market-in-latest-venezuela-nod-to-normalcy#xj4y7vzkg>.

238 Warda Imran, “Can Venezuela help tame global energy prices?” *Deutsche Welle*, last modified March 13, 2022, <https://www.dw.com/en/can-venezuela-help-tame-global-energy-prices/a-61094025>.

239 Steven Pifer, “U.S.-Russia relations, one year after Geneva,” *Brookings*, last modified June 16, 2022, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2022/06/16/u-s-russia-relations-one-year-after-geneva/>.

240 Imran, “Can Venezuela help tame global energy prices?”

years later in Venezuela.²⁴¹ The US government and families of the hostages, five of whom were US citizens, appealed to get them back, but negotiations have been unsuccessful. Since then, more Americans have been detained after entering Venezuela, including three citizens as recently as July 2022.²⁴² There is currently a travel advisory warning American citizens not to travel to Venezuela.²⁴³ Despite tensions, both countries have recently begun exploring the restoration of diplomatic relations. A US delegation made its first visit to Caracas in March 2022 after five years.²⁴⁴ In response to the meeting, the Maduro government released two hostages, potentially signaling Venezuela's willingness to cooperate with the US²⁴⁵

China is also a major player in Venezuela's international affairs. Most of the oil Venezuela produces goes to China.²⁴⁶ In 2014, China and Venezuela signed a USD four billion oil deal. This money is in addition to millions of dollars of Chinese investments that Venezuela owes to China, highlighting the huge economic ties between the two countries.²⁴⁷ Furthermore, despite US sanctions, China has not wavered as the main recipient of Venezuela's oil. Chinese oil refiners use a variety of tactics to work around the sanctions, such as transferring oil between vessels mid-shipment to hide the origins of illegal exports.²⁴⁸ This way, the country still has access to cheap oil without being penalized by the US. It is important to both China and Venezuela that they maintain

their trading relationship.

In 2018, Iran had the world's fourth-largest oil reserves.²⁴⁹ Like Venezuela, Iran's economy is entirely dependent on oil production, making it a petrostate, too.²⁵⁰ Both countries are heavily sanctioned by the US, leading to their relationship of mutual assistance.²⁵¹ Venezuela recently provided Iran with one million hectares of farmland to cultivate natural resources that create value and boost their economy.²⁵² Iran has also helped Venezuela restore its oil industry by sending fuel, crude oil, and oil tankers.²⁵³ Most significantly, both countries signed a 20-year agreement to expand their oil industries, militaries, and economies.²⁵⁴ This deal also includes cooperation in the agricultural, tourism, and cultural sectors. Other countries are also slowly starting to reinvest in Venezuela's oil. For instance, France wants to diversify global oil sources and recommends that the world re-invest in Venezuela and Iran's oil supply.²⁵⁵ Foreign investment has resulted in a 36.3 percent increase in oil production and a 16.6 percent increase in GDP during the second quarter of 2022.²⁵⁶

Venezuela has complex regional relations in Latin America, such as with Colombia. Numerous armed conflicts along the Venezuelan-Colombian border have elicited coup accusations from both governments.²⁵⁷ In 2019, the border, embassies, and air travel were closed for two years.²⁵⁸ After reopening, Colombia's decision to send 14,000 troops raised the concern

241 Jaclyn Diaz, "6 U.S. Citgo Executives Convicted And Sentenced In Venezuela," *NPR*, last modified November 27, 2020, <https://www.npr.org/2020/11/27/939418623/six-u-s-citgo-executives-convicted-and-sentenced-in-venezuela>.

242 Matt Spetalnick and Humeyra Pamuk, "Venezuela holding three Americans accused of entering country illegally -sources," *Reuters*, last modified July 12, 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/venezuela-holding-3-more-americans-jailed-earlier-this-year-source-2022-07-12/>.

243 "Venezuela Travel Advisory," U.S. Department of State, accessed August 14, 2022, <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories/venezuela-travel-advisory.html>.

244 Phil Gunson, "A Twist in Caracas: Is a Venezuela-U.S. Reboot on the Cards?" *International Crisis Group*, last modified March 16, 2022, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/latin-america-caribbean/andes/venezuela/twist-caracas-venezuela-us-reboot-cards>.

245 Gunson, "A Twist in Caracas: Is a Venezuela-U.S. Reboot on the Cards?"

246 Imran, "Can Venezuela help tame global energy prices?"

247 Rendon and Fernandez, *The Fabulous Five: How Foreign Actors Prop up the Maduro Regime in Venezuela*.

248 Rapoza, "How Venezuela's Socialists United Is Finding Ways Around Oil Sanctions."

249 BP, *Statistical Review of World Energy 2019*.

250 Chris Miller, "Demise of the Petrostates," *Foreign Policy*, last modified March 12, 2020, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/03/12/demise-of-petrostates-iran-nigeria-algeria-kazakhstan/>.

251 Amir Vahdat, "Venezuelan leader, Iranian president sign 20-year agreement," *AP News*, last modified June 11, 2022, <https://apnews.com/article/politics-nicolas-maduro-middle-east-venezuela-a245f25ba23227b026fe5ff455c3c3cd>.

252 Tasnim News Agency, "Venezuela Provides Iran With 1 Million Hectares Of Farmland," *Eurasia Review*, last modified July 27, 2022, <https://www.eurasiareview.com/27072022-venezuela-provides-iran-with-1-million-hectares-of-farmland/>.

253 Reuters, "Under U.S. sanctions, Iran and Venezuela sign 20-year cooperation plan," *Reuters*, last modified June 12, 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/iran-venezuela-sign-20-year-cooperation-plan-state-tv-2022-06-11/>.

254 Vahdat, "Venezuelan leader, Iranian president sign 20-year agreement."

255 John Irish, "Powers need to study all oil options, including Iran, Venezuela -France," *Reuters*, last modified June 27, 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/france-wants-iran-venezuela-return-oil-markets-2022-06-27/>.

256 "Venezuelan Economy Grows 12.3% in Q1 2022," *TeleSUR*, last modified July 26, 2022, <https://www.telesurenglish.net/news/Venezuelan-Economy-Grows-12.3-in-Q1-2022-20220726-0004.html>.

257 "Venezuela and Colombia agree to re-establish diplomatic ties," *Al Jazeera*, last modified July 28, 2022, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/7/28/venezuela-and-colombia-agree-to-re-establish-diplomatic-ties>.

258 "Venezuela and Colombia agree to re-establish diplomatic ties."

of renewed conflict with Venezuela.²⁵⁹ Illegal refugee crossings administered by criminal groups might also damage the diplomatic relationship. Despite these disagreements, the presidents of Colombia and Venezuela have expressed a desire to normalize diplomatic relations and guarantee peace and security at their border.²⁶⁰ In addition, Venezuela seeks to re-establish military relations with Colombia.²⁶¹

Cuba and Nicaragua have been some of the country's loyal supporters in the region. Cuba has maintained relations with Venezuela since the Chavez administration and holds plenty of influence in the Venezuelan government's intelligence, military, and ideological rhetoric.²⁶² Today, there is a mutual exchange between the two states in the form of oil and debt relief for Cuba, and doctors, teachers, military officers, and intelligence advisers for Venezuela.²⁶³ Nicaragua has pledged to support Venezuela and Cuba while condemning international sanctions placed on these countries.²⁶⁴ Maduro recently vowed to strengthen bilateral ties with Nicaragua, renewing cooperation in the economic, agricultural, energy, cultural, and political sectors.²⁶⁵ All three countries support the "One China" principle that recognizes Taiwan as a province of China rather than an independent state. They further condemned recent US involvement in Taiwan.²⁶⁶ Cuba, Nicaragua, and Venezuela were all not invited to the Summit of the Americas, with the US citing their lack of democracy and respect for human rights.²⁶⁷

Sustainable Development Agenda

In 2015, all UN member states adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, an urgent call to action for the international community to end poverty, improve health and education, reduce inequality, spur economic growth, and tackle climate change.²⁶⁸ The situation in Venezuela encompasses economic, humanitarian, political, medical, educational, and social realms.

SDG 1: No Poverty: This goal aims to "end poverty in all its forms everywhere."²⁶⁹ The Venezuelan people have struggled with poverty for a long time. In late 2021, extreme poverty was at a rate of 76.6 percent.²⁷⁰ Years of uncontrolled hyperinflation caused the prices of basic goods to skyrocket, leaving people unable to afford survival needs. Furthermore, many people faced salary cuts or simply lost their jobs altogether. Migrants also live in poverty in host countries. Many are crowded in shelters or forced to sleep outside with their entire families. Target indicators for this SDG include lowering the proportion of the population living below the poverty line and ensuring that people have services and resources to become resilient to financial hardships and invest in their future.²⁷¹

SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth: This goal seeks to "promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all."²⁷² Addressing this goal is essential to promoting Venezuela's economic recovery. On a national level, this

259 Steven Grattan, "Colombia troop deployment at Venezuela border raises questions," *Al Jazeera*, last modified October 8, 2021, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/10/8/colombia-troop-deployment-at-venezuela-border-raises-questions>.

260 "Venezuela and Colombia agree to re-establish diplomatic ties," *Al Jazeera*.

261 Reuters, "Venezuela seeks to reestablish military relations with Colombia, says minister," *Reuters*, last modified August 9, 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/venezuela-seeks-reestablish-military-relations-with-colombia-says-minister-2022-08-09/>.

262 Rendon and Fernandez, *The Fabulous Five: How Foreign Actors Prop up the Maduro Regime in Venezuela*.

263 Patrick Oppman, "The history that chains Cuba to Venezuela's crisis," *CNN*, last modified February 2, 2019, <https://www.cnn.com/2019/02/02/americas/venezuela-cuba-history-oil>.

264 Daliana Ocaña, "Nicaragua, Only Central American Country To Support Maduro," *Diálogo Américas*, last modified December 12, 2019, https://dialogo-americas.com/articles/nicaragua-only-central-american-country-to-support-maduro/#.Yv_i9nbMK2G.

265 Ricardo Vaz, "Venezuela to Establish 'New Map of Cooperation' with Nicaragua," *Venezuelananalysis.com*, last modified January 12, 2022, <https://venezuelananalysis.com/news/15429>.

266 "Venezuela, Cuba, Nicaragua Reject US Interference in Taiwan," *TeleSUR*, last modified August 3, 2022, <https://www.telesurenglish.net/news/Venezuela-Cuba-Nicaragua-Reject-US-Interference-in-Taiwan-20220803-0008.html>.

267 Eric Martin, "The U.S. Excludes Cuba, Venezuela and Nicaragua From the Summit of the Americas," *Time*, last modified June 6, 2022, <https://time.com/6184340/summit-of-the-americas/>.

268 United Nations, "The 17 Goals - Sustainable Development Goals," Department of Economic and Social Affairs, accessed August 10, 2022, <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>.

269 United Nations, "Goal 1," Department of Economic and Social Affairs, accessed August 10, 2022, <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal1>.

270 Reuters, "Extreme poverty in Venezuela rises to 76.6% - study," *Reuters*, last modified September 29, 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/extreme-poverty-venezuela-rises-766-study-2021-09-29/>.

271 United Nations, "Goal 1."

272 United Nations, "Goal 8," Department of Economic and Social Affairs, accessed August 11, 2022, <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal8>.

pertains to hyperinflation and the oil industry. The country's complete dependence on its oil industry has had great ramifications, notoriously, in the face of foreign sanctions and the global decline in oil demand. This has greatly contributed to spikes in the inflation level. At an individual level, the labor market is inadequate, with experienced professionals leaving the country and those who remain being paid a salary with which they can barely get by. Targets for this SDG include sustained GDP growth, economic production diversification, and sustainable job opportunities.²⁷³

SDG 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions: This goal strives to “promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.” Arguably the biggest problem in Venezuela is political corruption, which has given way to many other issues and consequently made them harder to fix. The UN has already investigated and confirmed evidence of human rights abuses by the government. In many situations, the government has covered up the truth of the domestic situation, whether it be reporting Covid-19 data, to unwarranted arrests, torture, and prosecution of protesters and civilians. Some of the targets for this SDG include reducing corruption, strengthening international cooperation, and increasing transparency and representative decision-making.²⁷⁴

Actions have already been initiated toward advancing the SDGs in Venezuela. The RMRP integrated sustainable development indicators as measures of impact for the program.²⁷⁵ Objectives include safe and dignified access to essential goods and critical services, improved living conditions for refugees and affected host community members, and strategic partnerships with financial institutions under the Agenda's 2030 target.²⁷⁶ The RMRP also recognizes that the coronavirus pandemic has limited individual countries' capacity to contribute to the agenda and has accommodated this accordingly.²⁷⁷ As of the

end of 2021, RMRP has met a few of its goals, reaching just under half of the people in need and securing 40 percent of funding targets.²⁷⁸ The Sustainable Development Agenda is one of the major objectives of the UN as a whole and should be a focus of this committee when it comes to developing solutions and writing resolutions.

Bloc Analysis

Points of Division

The world is strongly divided regarding the situation in Venezuela. The primary reason is countries' disagreement about supporting Maduro or Guaidó. In fact, political leaning is the main point of division in the Security Council, as member states firmly argue for or against the legitimacy of either president.²⁷⁹ Communist or socialist countries are more likely to support Maduro, while democratic countries are more likely to recognize Guaidó. It is important to remember that each country may have unique reasons for supporting a particular side.

Countries Recognizing Maduro as President

The Maduro government has a small number of strategic allies. Some of these are countries with strong relationships dating back to the Chavez administration that still provide financial, diplomatic, and intelligence support to Maduro and even serve as lifelines in Venezuela's times of need.²⁸⁰ Although Maduro does not have as many international supporters as Guaidó, his allies are quite powerful on the world stage. Russia and China are Maduro's main allies, especially in the Security Council. There, Russia leads a resolution bloc that opposes the US's and Guaidó's interests. Amid mounting international pressure, Russia remains a last-resort lender to Venezuela, helping the country circumvent oil sanctions and

²⁷³ United Nations, “Goal 8.”

²⁷⁴ United Nations, “Goal 16,” Department of Economic and Social Affairs, accessed August 11, 2022, <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal16>.

²⁷⁵ R4V, *RMRP 2022*.

²⁷⁶ R4V, *RMRP 2022*.

²⁷⁷ R4V, *RMRP 2022*.

²⁷⁸ “RMRP 2021 End-Year Report,” R4V, accessed August 23, 2022, <https://rmp.r4v.info/eyr/>.

²⁷⁹ United Nations, “Venezuela: Competing US, Russia resolutions fail to pass in Security Council,” *UN News*, last modified February 28, 2019, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2019/02/1033832>.

²⁸⁰ Moises Rendon and Claudia Fernandez, *The Fabulous Five: How Foreign Actors Prop up the Maduro Regime in Venezuela* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, October 2020), https://csis-website-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/publication/201019_Rendon_Venezuela_Foreign_Actors.pdf.

providing military support to the government.²⁸¹ Russia’s draft resolution introduced to the Security Council in early 2019 calls for dialogue between the Maduro and Guaidó camps.²⁸² This dialogue would align with the Montevideo Mechanism established by Mexico and Uruguay, which involves non-intervention, peaceful settlement, and conciliatory diplomacy.²⁸³ A Russian delegate to the UN stated that a failed coup attempt in 2020 led by former military officials from the US was “a direct threat to its peace, as well as that of the region, and it violated the Charter of the United Nations.”²⁸⁴

China also has a strong partnership with the Maduro government and is a large supporter of the PSUV through its investment in PDVSA.²⁸⁵ China has loaned billions of dollars to Venezuela, which pays off the debt by selling oil back to China.²⁸⁶ Despite these strong economic ties, China has been relatively silent about humanitarian and political issues, perhaps due to a non-interference policy and fear of the international

community meddling in their affairs.²⁸⁷ Both China and Russia vetoed a US-led resolution in the Council.²⁸⁸ It is a priority of the countries in this bloc that the sovereignty and self-determination of people in Venezuela are not violated.

Countries Recognizing Guaidó as President

The countries in this bloc tend to be part of the coalition of over 50 countries that have recognized Guaidó as the rightful president of Venezuela.²⁸⁹ Some countries, like the US and the United Kingdom, are vocal supporters who have taken action against the Maduro government. Other countries, such as Albania, Brazil, and Japan, are less direct, having only released official statements expressing their support for Guaidó. In the Security Council, the US leads the bloc backing Guaidó and the Venezuelan opposition in resolutions. Their draft proposes holding new elections that are free and fair and officially recognizing interim-president Guaidó.²⁹⁰ Like

281 Rendon and Fernandez, *The Fabulous Five: How Foreign Actors Prop up the Maduro Regime in Venezuela*.

282 United Nations, “Venezuela: Competing US, Russia resolutions fail to pass in Security Council.”

283 Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, “Mexico, Uruguay and CARICOM Present Montevideo Mechanism,” *Gobierno de México*, last modified February 6, 2019, <https://www.gob.mx/sre/articulos/mexico-uruguay-and-caricom-present-montevideo-mechanism-189816>.

284 “UN Security Council, Real Negotiation among Venezuela’s Main Political Actors ‘Only Way Forward’ to Resolving Protracted Crisis, Under-Secretary-General Tells Security Council.”

285 Rapoza, “How Venezuela’s Socialists United Is Finding Ways Around Oil Sanctions.”

286 Rendon and Fernandez, *The Fabulous Five: How Foreign Actors Prop up the Maduro Regime in Venezuela*.

287 Anthony Navone, “Could China Play a Role in Venezuela’s Crisis?” *United States Institute of Peace*, last modified July 27, 2021, <https://www.usip.org/publications/2021/07/could-china-play-role-venezuelas-crisis>.

288 United Nations, “Venezuela: Competing US, Russia resolutions fail to pass in Security Council.”

289 ShareAmerica, “More than 50 countries support Venezuela’s Juan Guaidó.”

290 United Nations, “Venezuela: Competing US, Russia resolutions fail to pass in Security Council.”

Nicolás Maduro and Vladimir Putin during negotiations at the Kremlin in September of 2019.

Credit: Press Service of the President of the Russian Federation



the US, the U.K. calls for free and fair elections, citing a lack of cooperation from the other side as an obstacle to achieving this goal.²⁹¹ The U.K. recently ruled in favor of Guaidó for control of nearly USD two billion in gold reserves held in the Bank of England, further showing their recognition of him as president.²⁹² Justification from the countries in this bloc often focuses on human rights abuses by the Maduro government, reiterating the need for more investigations.²⁹³

The European Union has also asserted Guaidó as president, although in 2021, he lost official E.U. recognition after failing to secure his position as head of parliament.²⁹⁴ Several E.U. member states have supported him individually. Within the Security Council, France has spoken in Guaidó's favor, calling for respect of international law and the Venezuelan people's

291 "UN Security Council, Real Negotiation among Venezuela's Main Political Actors 'Only Way Forward' to Resolving Protracted Crisis, Under-Secretary-General Tells Security Council."

292 Stefano Pozzebon, "UK court rules in favor of Venezuelan opposition leader Juan Guaidó in battle for country's gold," *CNN*, last modified July 29, 2022, <https://www.cnn.com/2022/07/29/world/venezuelan-leader-juan-guaido-sovereign-gold-dispute-intl-scli/index.html>.

293 "UN Security Council, Real Negotiation among Venezuela's Main Political Actors 'Only Way Forward' to Resolving Protracted Crisis, Under-Secretary-General Tells Security Council."

294 Reuters Staff, "EU states no longer recognise Guaido as Venezuela's interim president," *Reuters*, last modified January 25, 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-venezuela-politics-eu-idUSKBN29U1A3>.

295 "UN Security Council, Real Negotiation among Venezuela's Main Political Actors 'Only Way Forward' to Resolving Protracted Crisis, Under-Secretary-General Tells Security Council."

296 Griselda Qosja, "From the margin of the periphery: Albania on Venezuela," *LeftEast*, last modified April 17, 2019, <https://lefteast.org/from-the-margin-of-the-periphery-albania-on-venezuela/>.

297 "Brazil recalls diplomats, officials from Venezuela," *AlJazeera*, last modified March 6, 2020, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/3/6/brazil-recalls-diplomats-officials-from-venezuela>.

298 Riyaz Ul Khaliq, "Japan recognizes Guaido as Venezuelan president," *Anadolu Agency*, last modified February 2, 2019, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/americas/japan-recognizes-guaido-as-venezuelan-president/1397263>.

299 "Venezuela's Guaido, in Ecuador, says next stop is home," *AP News*, last modified March 2, 2019, <https://apnews.com/article/juan-guaido-lenin-moreno-nicolas-maduro-latin-america-ecuador-0b7fb3566dba4470afd612df3c589b84>.

rights.²⁹⁵ Albania, set to become an E.U. member state, also officially recognized Guaidó as temporary president.²⁹⁶ In addition, various countries from regions outside the E.U. stand by Guaidó, such as Venezuela's neighbor Brazil.²⁹⁷ Japan has not been particularly vocal on the matter and initially was one of the neutral countries that called for re-elections but ended up backing the opposition.²⁹⁸ Ecuador has not released an official statement but received Guaidó on a diplomatic visit.²⁹⁹

Countries with No Defined Partisanship

Despite a clear position on the presidential dispute, some countries may have socio-economic ties to Venezuela. Primarily, this pertains to partnerships in the oil industry.

Primarily, this pertains to partnerships in the oil industry.



Guaidó addresses a crowd of his supporters.

Credit: Voice of America

For instance, Gabon has strengthened its cooperation with Venezuela to gain experience in the oil sector.³⁰⁰ Ghana also had diplomatic relations with Venezuela, primarily to enhance trade and investment activities in oil and gas.³⁰¹ While the UAE does not have a clear position, it has purchased over one billion dollars of oil from PDVSA, which some claim is to keep Maduro's government in power.³⁰² Some countries have relationships with Venezuela that are a bit unclear. Switzerland, for example, has previously denounced human rights abuses and imposed sanctions on sales and exports.³⁰³ However, they have had bilateral relations in research, education, and innovation and provide humanitarian aid to Venezuela.³⁰⁴ A 2019 agreement to support US interests still has not come into effect, though Switzerland seems neutral overall.³⁰⁵ Other countries' relations are not very definite. The Foreign Minister of Venezuela has visited Mozambique to deepen regional cooperation, but little is known about their relations.³⁰⁶ Finally, Malta supports Guaidó simply through E.U. membership but is not very involved in the issue otherwise.³⁰⁷ Ultimately, it is up to the delegates in this bloc to decide their position and which side they choose to align with.

Committee Mission

Under the UN Charter, the Security Council is responsible for maintaining international peace and security.³⁰⁸ This can be accomplished by establishing operations to achieve peacebuilding between conflicting parties, deploying humanitarian aid, imposing sanctions, or even using force when necessary to oust a threat to peace.³⁰⁹ The Security Council is undoubtedly the most powerful body of the

UN, and delegates must use this power wisely. As the only organ with the ability to impose sanctions or authorize military interventions, the committee should look toward taking action to quell military uprisings and abuses or taking punitive measures against those responsible for violations of human rights. Furthermore, the Security Council can direct other UN bodies to carry out specific missions or activities, whether providing humanitarian aid or calling for a deeper investigation of an issue. There are a few limitations to the types of solutions that delegates can formulate regarding the situation in Venezuela.

Venezuela's crises are some of the worst in the world. The country has set records for hyperinflation and poverty levels and a refugee outflow nearly as large as those in conflict-torn countries like Syria and Yemen. The situation requires urgent attention from the Security Council to alleviate economic hardship, failing healthcare, the infrastructural strain on other countries accepting migrants, and a host of other dilemmas. Taking note of actions taken previously, it is of utmost importance that delegates in this committee take the initiative to develop unique and effective solutions to address the complex Venezuelan emergency.

All of the problems collectively cause a massive ripple effect throughout Venezuela and the entire Latin American region. Especially with the global reach of the oil industry, leaving these issues unresolved threatens stability in other countries and parts of the world as well. Delegates to the Security Council must end economic collapse, humanitarian crisis, lack of survival needs, and ultimately, political instability and corruption within Venezuela.

³⁰⁰ "Gabon, Venezuela strengthen cooperation in oil sector," *North Africa Post*, last modified August 14, 2020, <https://northafricapost.com/43093-gabon-venezuela-strengthen-cooperation-in-oil-sector.html>.

³⁰¹ Republic of Ghana, "Ghana And The Bolivarian Republic Of Venezuela Sign Cooperation Agreement, on Monday July 9, 2018," *Ministry Of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration*, last modified July 11, 2018, <https://mfa.gov.gh/index.php/ghana-and-the-bolivarian-republic-of-venezuela-sign-cooperation-agreement-on-monday-july-9-2018/>.

³⁰² "Venezuela sent gold to Mali, UAE for cash, opposition claims," *Al Jazeera*, last modified March 3, 2021, <https://www.aljazeera.com/economy/2021/3/3/venezuela-sent-gold-to-mali-uae-for-cash-opposition-claims>.

³⁰³ Reuters Staff, "Swiss slap sanctions on Venezuela, ban ministers and freeze assets," *Reuters*, last modified March 28, 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/swiss-venezuela/swiss-slap-sanctions-on-venezuela-ban-ministers-and-freeze-assets-idINZ8N1QN010>.

³⁰⁴ Swiss Confederation, "Bilateral relations Switzerland–Venezuela," Federal Department of Foreign Affairs FDFA, accessed August 17, 2022, <https://www.dfae.admin.ch/eda/en/fdfa/representations-and-travel-advice/venezuela/switzerland-venezuela.html>.

³⁰⁵ "Switzerland's US-Venezuela 'good offices' accord remains blocked," *SWI swissinfo.ch*, last modified August 15, 2022, <https://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/switzerland-s-us-venezuela--good-offices--accord-remains-blocked/47827212>.

³⁰⁶ "Venezuela's Arreaza Meets With Mozambique's President Nyusi for Regional Cooperation," *TeleSUR*, last modified July 4, 2018, <https://www.telesurenglish.net/news/Venezuelas-Arreaza-Meets-With-Mozambiques-Macamo-for-Regional-Cooperation--20180704-0022.html>.

³⁰⁷ Government of Malta, "Statement by the Government of Malta," press release, March 2, 2019, <https://www.gov.mt/en/Government/DOI/Press%20Releases/Pages/2019/February/05/pr190220.aspx>.

³⁰⁸ United Nations, "United Nations Charter (full text)."

³⁰⁹ United Nations, "United Nations Security Council," United Nations, accessed August 17, 2022, <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/>.



UNSC B

NHSMUN 2023



TOPIC B: THE SITUATION IN THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Photo Credit: Freeman Sipila (VOA)

Introduction

The Central African Republic (CAR) gained independence in 1960. The country has experienced decades of violence and instability since.¹ The more modern era of the conflict started in 2012/2013 when an insurgency led by the first rebel group, Seleka, destroyed much of the nation's security. They seized the capital and staged a coup on the government.² Later on, this led to the development of Anti-Balaka forces, which also carried out violence and added some religious tensions. Due to the increasing violence between the two groups and the government, many civilians were displaced internally and externally. Although the Seleka has since disbanded, the group has had parts of itself re-emerge in new Ex-Seleka rebel groups. Among the most prominent of these groups is the Unité pour la paix en Centrafrique (UPC), which controls sizeable communities in the southeast part of the country. This situation demands the attention of the Security Council as thousands of people have been killed, and nearly 575,000 refugees have been displaced.

The previously mentioned civil war and violence have brought about several crises in the CAR. The rise of militant groups and rebel forces has taken over most parts of the nation.³ Russian mercenaries have been working on behalf of the regional government, and the rebel groups have continued their siege. Additionally, the economic situation in the CAR is highly unstable. With the introduction of foreign intervention from almost all major world powers to their crumbling economy, the situation is a high risk. With violence and economic despair covering the region, there are also poverty and refugee crises. People have been forced out of their homes, and many have lost their major sources of income due to destroyed agricultural fields.⁴

The UN has had a long-standing history of action within the region, but the current situation has proven that more action is still demanded. With 50 percent of the population still not eating enough, current efforts like the peacekeeping mission MINUSCA have struggled to fulfill their mandates.⁵ Life-saving assistance and emergency responses are needed in the CAR, with transportation of aid becoming harder each day. The rebel and militant groups have captured many roads and

paths, and civilians only fall further into poverty.⁶ Floods and other environmental crises have also caused a lack of resources and access, and many Non-Governmental Organizations have struggled to reach those in need.⁷ COVID-19 has rocked the entirety of the world, including the CAR. Most of the pandemic's impacts have been long-lasting and continue within the nation.⁸

Members of the Security Council must look at solutions that build, innovate, and fix the several previously established bodies working to help the CAR. Mitigation methods, preventative efforts, and action to fix previous damages are warranted, given the situation in the CAR. As one of the most actionable committees in the United Nations, the Security Council has the power to restore structure and balance, focusing on achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.⁹

History and Description of the Issue

Civil War and In-Fighting

Civil War has disrupted the region of the Central African

1 "Global Conflict Tracker" Council on Foreign Relations, accessed August 20, 2022, <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/>.

2 Council on Foreign Relations, "Global Conflict Tracker."

3 Council on Foreign Relations, "Global Conflict Tracker."

4 Tim Lister, "The Central African Republic Faces a Syria-Sized Crisis," *CNN*, September 11, 2019, <https://www.cnn.com/2019/09/11/africa/car-aid-crisis-peace-truces-intl/index.html>.

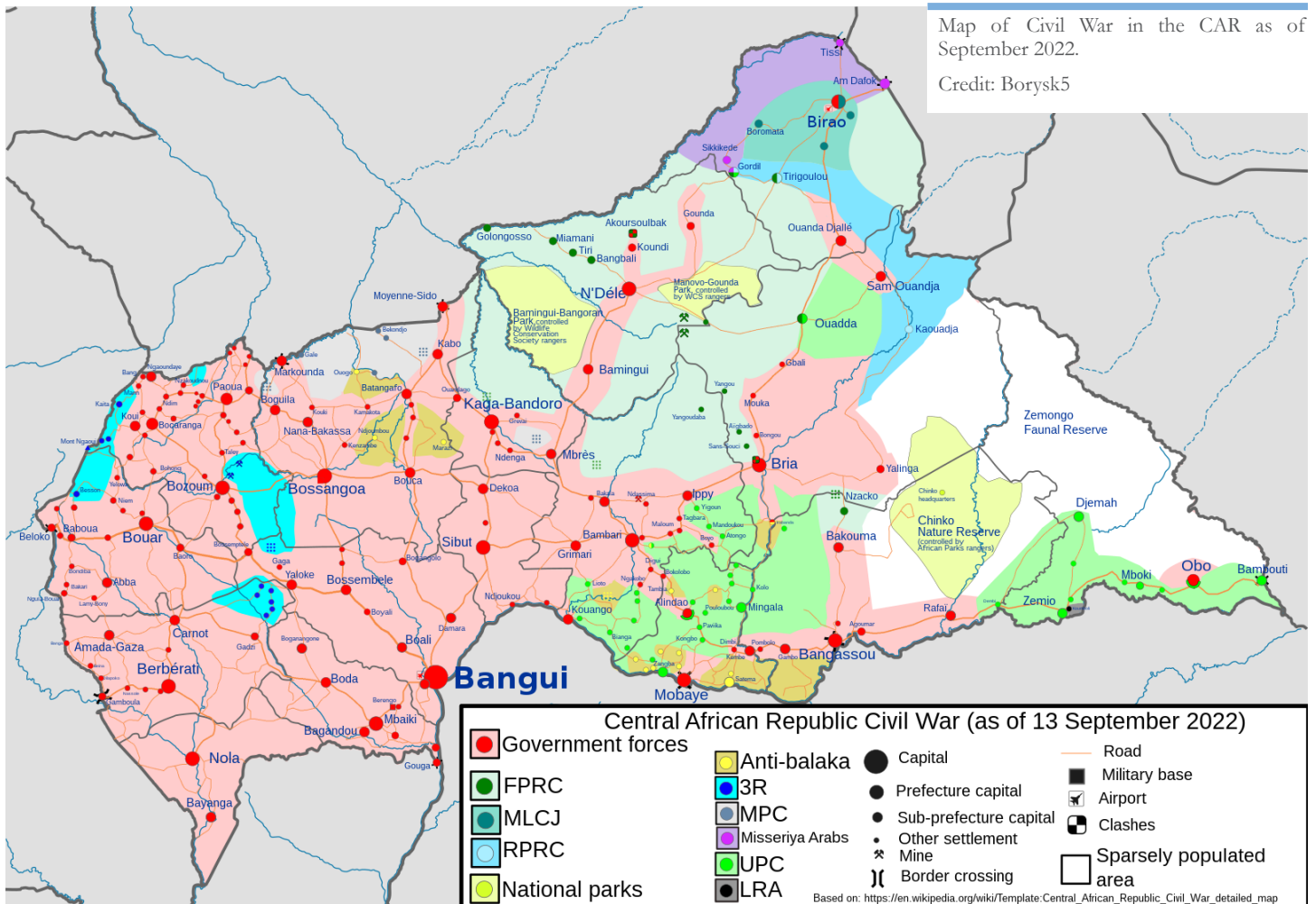
5 "Central African Republic: Situation Report," United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, accessed August 15, 2022, <https://reports.unocha.org/en/country/car/>.

6 United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "Central African Republic: Situation Report."

7 United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "Central African Republic: Situation Report."

8 "Crisis in Central African Republic," UNICEF, accessed August 20, 2022, <https://www.unicef.org/emergencies/crisis-central-african-republic>.

9 UNICEF, "Crisis in Central African Republic."



Republic (CAR) since 2012.¹⁰ A coalition of rebel groups named the Seleka accused the government of failing to follow the guidelines set by peace agreements. The rebellion grew and easily took over the Central African Army. Historically, the CAR’s military, the Forces armées centrafricaines (FACA), has been weak and has shown little interest in defending the current autocratic government.¹¹ A mere 8,000 soldiers (including a 150-person Air Service) and 1,500 Gendarmerie (military police) make it one of the world’s smallest and weakest armed forces.¹² Before the initial 2013 crisis, the CAR had gained independence from French colonial rule in

1960.¹³ Although newly independent, the country did not see any long-standing governments. Throughout the next few decades into the 1990s, there were several revolutions, each tearing through the previous establishment every few years.¹⁴

In 2013, the rebel Seleka forces ousted President Francois Bozize and forcibly took power. The FACA also dissolved after this rebellion. Since then, any attempts to reassemble the forces have been deemed unable to provide adequate internal security for the country.¹⁵ Afterward, a transitional government was then established and entrusted with restoring peace, and

10 “Central African Republic,” International Crisis Group, accessed August 9, 2022, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/central-africa/central-african-republic>.
 11 Tim Glawion, “What It Will Take to End Civil War in the Central African Republic,” *The Conversation*, September 6, 2021, <https://theconversation.com/what-it-will-take-to-end-civil-war-in-the-central-african-republic-166041>.
 12 L. Bortoluzzi Garcia, “Central African Republic Country Profile – Military / Security,” PKSOI, September 11, 2020, <https://pksoi.armywarcollege.edu/index.php/central-african-republic-country-profile-military-security/>.
 13 “36. Central African Republic (1960-present),” University of Central Arkansas, accessed August 9, 2022, <https://uca.edu/politicalscience/dadm-project/sub-saharan-africa-region/central-african-republic-1960-present/>.
 14 University of Central Arkansas, “Central African Republic (1960-present).”
 15 University of Central Arkansas, “Central African Republic (1960-present).”

the Seleka formally disbanded.¹⁶ However, restoring peace was no easy task, and new rebel groups continued committing violent acts. Most of these new rebel groups included ex-Seleka members with similar motivations. Then, the rise of the mostly Christian anti-Balaka movements took up arms against Muslims to strike back.¹⁷ The labels “mostly Christian” and “mostly Muslim” to refer to the two rebel groups will not be used much throughout the committee or in this background guide because both groups have greater divisions and alliances outside their religions. To condense their labels down to simple terms would be inaccurate.

The Seleka, including past and present, had a strong presence of members who were not from within the CAR. This caused many people to reject them as foreign actors with no local ties. However, the group did have more justified-local-oriented reasons to take over power from the standing government. Most politicians lived in and never left the capital city, Bangui, knowing nothing of the struggles of those in the north and east.¹⁸ With little being provided outside of Bangui, resentment towards the government grew from various places. Although the Seleka are typically labeled as a Muslim group, there has been a combination of factors, including regional and political.¹⁹ The Anti-Balaka group’s origins and motivations similarly lack a sense of clarity. Although labeled as a Christian group to serve as a counter-label to the Muslim Seleka, they are not strictly defined by religion.²⁰

With the region’s long-standing history as a meeting point in the heart of Africa, many colonizers from Europe have passed through, typically ending in violence. The years of conflict have had many consequences on the stability of the African state. Infrastructure and other institutions have been

destroyed, resulting in a lack of clean water, health care, and food.²¹ Although ceasefire agreements were made in 2014 and 2015, the CAR has struggled to end the conflict, causing many to question if peace is possible.²² Some consider peace to be an option with intervention from larger organizations, such as the UN Security Council. This may especially ring true seeing the more recent attempts at a peace agreement in 2019 under the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS).²³ Although this agreement was successful, 2020 was a year for important elections worldwide—the CAR being one of them.

Many water access points have been destroyed by the violence raging over this past decade. Some have been contaminated by dead bodies. Because of these factors, only three percent of Central Africans have access to running water.²⁴ With these contaminations and the lack of proper latrines, cholera and other waterborne diseases remain.²⁵ Health care is also lacking since there are few skilled health workers and supplies in the region due to the civil war. There have been attacks against medical facilities, patients, and ambulances.²⁶ This puts an already fragile system at risk. Treatment is even harder, with the excess of victims from these violent attacks, including gunshots, stab wounds, burns, and injuries from sexual assault. With a lack of vaccines and sanitation, many diseases deemed “easily preventable” continue to rampage the population, putting them in life-threatening situations.²⁷ Outside of the medical and sanitation issues that come with civil war, there are also many economic battles. Many markets have been deserted or destroyed after being the targets of violent attacks. More than 80 percent of Central Africans rely on agriculture, but the ongoing conflict has forced most farmers to abandon their fields. These attacks have also managed to disrupt

16 Tanya Baleta, “Central African Republic Conflict: Fast Facts and How to Help,” World Vision Canada, June 21, 2021, <https://www.worldvision.ca/stories/disaster-relief/central-african-republic-conflict-fast-facts>.

17 Baleta, “Central African Republic Conflict: Fast Facts and How to Help.”

18 Emily Mellgard, “What Is the Seleka?” Institute for Global Change, accessed August 20, 2022, <https://institute.global/policy/what-seleka>.

19 Mellgard, “What Is the Seleka?”

20 “Briefing: Who Are the Anti-Balaka of CAR?” ReliefWeb, February 12, 2014, <https://reliefweb.int/report/central-african-republic/briefing-who-are-anti-balaka-car>.

21 Glawion, “What It Will Take to End Civil War in the Central African Republic.”

22 Elizabeth Murray and Rachel Sullivan, “Central African Republic Struggles to Implement Peace Deal,” United States Institute of Peace, October 17, 2019, <https://www.usip.org/publications/2019/10/central-african-republic-struggles-implement-peace-deal>.

23 Murray and Sullivan, “Central African Republic Struggles to Implement Peace Deal.”

24 Glawion, “What It Will Take to End Civil War in the Central African Republic.”

25 “Ebola Outbreaks in Africa,” Mercy Corps, March 5, 2019, <https://www.mercycorps.org/blog/ebola-outbreaks-africa-guide>.

26 Mercy Corps, “Ebola Outbreaks in Africa.”

27 “Central African Republic: MSF Medical and Humanitarian Aid,” Médecins Sans Frontières, accessed September 23, 2022, <https://www.msf.org/central-african-republic>.

projects run by non-governmental organizations trying to restore and supply resources for the people to survive.²⁸

Violence from these ongoing fights pervades throughout the CAR. In 2018, armed groups controlled more than two-thirds of the nation.²⁹ Regions once believed to be stable have also fallen to these groups over the years. Thousands of Central Africans are believed to have been killed during the conflict. More than half of the population is in dire need of humanitarian aid. This conflict has also extended to the youth. 14,000 child soldiers have been recruited by various armed forces.³⁰ All sides of the conflict are guilty of this. Some of these children have been kidnapped, while others have volunteered to try and achieve protection. Some children join to participate in revenge killings for loved ones. Some of these children have tried to escape their positions and spend months in hiding.³¹ Girls and women have suffered sexual slavery and rape under both rebel groups: Ex-Seleka and Anti-Balaka. This is not only a consequence of war but also a tactic in the conflict. Most survivors of sexual violence suffer from serious illness and injury, unwanted pregnancy, stigma, and loss of jobs and access to education. Because of the lack of healthcare facilities, many people do not get medical care.³²

Militant and Terrorist Groups

The origins of this crisis in the CAR can be traced back to the overthrow of the President by the Muslim Seleka rebel group. After this group's violent takeover, their abuses led to the formation of the anti-Balaka militias.³³ Both forces are likely to have committed war crimes during the 2013–2015 period. Regardless of the 2019 peace deal formally ending the armed conflict, their violence persists.³⁴ The Seleka rebel group

installed Michel Djotodia as president, making him the first Muslim leader the country has ever had. However, with the rise of the Christian anti-Balaka group, many Muslims were forced to leave or were murdered by local militias. This then caused attacks against various Christian civilians, creating a never-ending cycle of violence between the two rebel groups. President Djotodia stepped down in 2014 in an attempt to achieve peace and allow Catherine Samba-Panza, a Christian, to take power. However, these efforts led to continuous violence between the rebel groups.³⁵ As of 2020, President Faustin Archange Touadéra oversees the government. Because the CAR's military was in serious need of aid, Touadéra moved to accept help from Russia, increasing their involvement in the nation's mining and defense. In addition to serving as military advisors, Russian nationals also serve as a part of the President's security detail.³⁶ Attempts to probe into the action of these Russian troops have been largely unsuccessful. These investigations have also typically resulted in the witness' deaths, making it more difficult for investigative parties.³⁷ The Human Rights Watch came out with a recent report on the matter, providing a greater swath of information for other international bodies to gain an understanding. Forces have come together to provide evidence of the Russian Wagner Group. Questions about the violence caused by this new military combination have also risen over time.³⁸

The people of the CAR have faced increasing violence and terror from many different rebel groups. Many of these armed groups have formed an alliance known as the Coalition of Patriots for Change (CPC). This group first appeared to form an offensive attack against the CAR's government in December 2020. The FACA tried to counter them alongside Russian security partners and mercenary fighters from the

28 Bruno Djoyo, "A Bad New Year for Thousands Struck by Violence in Car," Medium, January 25, 2018, <https://medium.com/world-food-programme-insight/a-bad-new-year-for-thousands-struck-by-violence-in-car-d3001c46929e>.

29 "Central African Republic Crisis 'Breaks My Heart' Says Senior UN Aid Official" *UN News*, May 28, 2018, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2018/05/1010801>.

30 UN News, "Central African Republic Crisis 'Breaks My Heart' Says Senior UN Aid Official."

31 Sandra Olsson, "How We Can Help Child Soldiers in Central African Republic," *Time*, May 25, 2018, <https://time.com/5290083/child-soldiers-central-african-republic/>.

32 Baleta, "Central African Republic Conflict: Fast Facts and How to Help."

33 "Central African Republic," Stop Genocide Now, accessed August 24, 2022, <https://stopgenocidenow.org/conflicts/central-african-republic/>.

34 Stop Genocide Now, "Central African Republic."

35 Stop Genocide Now, "Central African Republic."

36 *Crisis in the Central African Republic* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, July, 2021), <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IF/IF11171>.

37 "Central African Republic: Abuses by Russia-Linked Forces," Human Rights Watch, May 5, 2022, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/05/03/central-african-republic-abuses-russia-linked-forces>.

38 Congressional Research Service, *Crisis in the Central African Republic*.



UPC fighters in the CAR

Credit: Vice News

private security company Wagner Group. Although a ceasefire was announced on October 15, 2021, the violence from the CPC continues to rain down on the people of the CAR.³⁹ The CPC and its affiliated armed groups have perpetrated large-scale violations of international humanitarian law (IHL). This list of violations includes: killing and abducting civilians; the forcible recruitment of child soldiers; and attacks on schools, hospitals, humanitarian workers, and MINUSCA (The UN Peacekeeping Mission in the CAR). Since the CPC started its attacks, conflict-related sexual violence has also increased. The number of cases doubled in 2021 compared to the year prior.⁴⁰

These incidents, however, are not restricted to the CPC. During military operations, FACA troops and Russian militia have also violated IHL. These groups have taken part in killings, summary executions, torture, rape, and forced disappearances while also occupying schools and looting humanitarian organizations and UN offices. These forces have targeted and attacked different ethnic and religious minority communities,

namely Fulanis and Muslims.⁴¹ The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, has now warned that this pattern of violations may start a new cycle of violence against religious and ethnic groups.⁴² There is also a chance for greater communal violence because clashes between farmers and armed groups keep increasing.⁴³

However, recent news has shown that a major armed group, the Union pour la Paix en Centrafrique (UPC), will be quitting the partnership of rebel groups with the CPC. The UPC's leader, Ali Darassa Mahamat, states that the presidential electoral crisis has created a major humanitarian crisis for the CAR. Additionally, he also restated the group's value to the Khartoum peace accords of 2019.⁴⁴ In May 2022, Darassa, formerly the chief of staff for the CPC, even criticized a massacre in which 30 civilians of Muslim faith, 27 being Fulani, were killed by Russian mercenaries from the Wagner company, the FACA, and the anti-Balaka militia of Touadéra's party. Although the CPC had previously attacked and killed 10 people in the region, there seems to be a positive shift in

39 "Central African Republic," Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, September 1, 2022, <https://www.globalr2p.org/countries/central-african-republic/>.

40 Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, "Central African Republic."

41 Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, "Central African Republic."

42 "Statement by Michelle Bachelet, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights," OHCHR, June 15, 2022, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements/2022/06/statement-michelle-bachelet-united-nations-high-commissioner-human-rights>.

43 Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, "Statement by Michelle Bachelet."

44 Peter Kum, "Major Group Quits Central African Republic Rebel Bloc," *Anadolu Ajans*, June 4, 2021, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/major-group-quits-central-african-republic-rebel-bloc/2199821>.

sentiment when other parts of the conflict do the same.⁴⁵ The CPC carried on without the UPC, capturing two FACA soldiers. In the recording, the FACA soldiers stated they would start fighting on the side of the CPC rebellion. Although the CAR military authorities had debunked previous claims of soldiers being captured, this video may prove otherwise. The government still claims that there have been no captured soldiers, while the CPC claims these two soldiers were caught during a fight in Nzako.⁴⁶ Many trials have been brought to the Special Criminal Court (SCC) in CAR against these groups since 2015, but successfully detaining most of the accused members of the armed rebel groups has proven difficult.⁴⁷

Foreign Economic Intervention in the CAR

Several forms of intervention have taken place in the CAR. However, one of the most common and impactful has been economic intervention. Although the pandemic and more economics issues are still present, the GDP growth of the CAR has stabilized at 0.3 percent.⁴⁸ GDP stabilization is

45 “Rebels Kill 10 Civilians in Central African Republic, UN Says,” Voice of America News, May 14, 2022, <https://www.voanews.com/a/rebels-kill-10-civilians-in-central-african-republic-un-says-/6574009.html>.

46 Chief Bisong Etahoben, “CPC Releases Video of Captured Central African Republic Soldiers,” HumAngle Media, June 14, 2022, <https://humanglemedia.com/cpc-releases-video-of-captured-central-african-republic-soldiers/>.

47 Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, “Central African Republic.”

48 “Central African Republic Economic Outlook,” African Development Bank, accessed July 9, 2022, <https://www.afdb.org/en/countries/central-africa/central-african-republic/central-african-republic-economic-outlook>.

49 African Development Bank, “Central African Republic Economic Outlook.”

50 Joseph Kiprop, “What Are the Major Natural Resources of the Central African Republic?” WorldAtlas, May 15, 2019, <https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/what-are-the-major-natural-resources-of-the-central-african-republic.html>.

51 Kiprop, “What Are the Major Natural Resources of the Central African Republic?”

essential for economic growth and stability, especially with the CAR. The CAR is one of the world’s poorest and most economically fragile countries.⁴⁹ However, it has an excess of natural resources that other countries have also tapped into. Most of those resources are mineral ones, including diamonds, which account for nearly half of the country’s total export earnings. Gold, uranium, iron ore, copper, and manganese are mined as well, but in smaller quantities.⁵⁰ COVID-19 and other restrictions have disrupted international trade, including necessary food supply lines. This led to an overall slowdown in economic activity and growth, including increased hardships for CAR civilians suffering from famines. In 2020 the solid performance of the agricultural sector of the CAR helped boost economic activity.

But now, with the CPC and other forces taking over farmlands, this economic stability has nearly disappeared.⁵¹ Post-electoral disputes also added to the slowing of the economy in 2021.

This additional pressure can be attributed to the blockade



Bangui City Centre
Credit: Alllexxis

of the Bangui-Douala corridor slowing economic activity and tax revenues. Grappling with numerous human capital challenges, the CAR ranked near the bottom of the UN Human Development Index at 188 out of 189 countries in 2020. With the region already experiencing extreme poverty, questions about previous UN actions have come up, and new choices may need to be made. Foreign powers have begun to vie for power in the region, and some have already managed to accumulate small pockets of control. Countries like Russia and China have made significant investments giving them greater power in the CAR's economy.⁵²

A few foreign countries have found themselves involved in the economic activities of the CAR. This includes the United States and Russia. The United States first established its diplomatic relations with the CAR in 1960 once it found independence from France.⁵³ Due to the widespread political instability since independence, its experience with insecurity and violence has caused the US to suspend embassy operations three times in the past 20 years. Historically there have been good relations between the two countries. Over the past two years, the United States has provided over USD 330 million in humanitarian, development, and security aid. The United States has also provided assistance to strengthen the UN mission in the region, MINURSA, to continue addressing the ongoing crises in the CAR. The two countries have small amounts of bilateral trade. The CAR regained eligibility for preferential trade benefits under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) in 2017 after being removed in 2004. The CAR is also active in several economic organizations, including the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, and World Trade Organizations.⁵⁴

Russia has also rapidly expanded its position in the CAR's

economy. Disappointed with the actions of the UN, President Touadéra turned to Russia in 2017. After giving military support to President Touadéra, Russia became one of his closest allies. Through trade, the CAR was able to secure weapons and military instructors to bolster the CAR's army, which had previously been in shambles. However, the population of the CAR has had growing concerns about the lack of transparency in dealings between the two nations.⁵⁵ Although less conventional in most of their investments, Russia has maintained its influence through dealing with mercenaries, arms-for-resource deals, opaque contracts, election interference, and disinformation.⁵⁶ Russia is also planning to invest 11 billion USD in the volatile region's reconstruction⁵⁷. This money is said to be directed to reconstruction projects in the mineral-rich country to help with mass displacement and resource building. However, this investment has yet to happen and is still under discussion.⁵⁸ Overall, it is incredibly important for delegates to note that sustainable economic recovery will be essential to attempt to stabilize the region at large.

Poverty Crisis

More than 71 percent of the population in the CAR is considered poor.⁵⁹ The country also currently ranks among the most troubled countries on the Global Hunger Index.⁶⁰ There are many factors in the history of the CAR that have contributed to this rising level of poverty. Most of these factors can be attributed to the history of the nation. This started once the CAR gained independence from France's colonial empire in 1960. Afterward, several religious factions started rivalries between various ethnic groups and political ideologies.⁶¹ The conflicts between these groups not only destroyed these resources but created greater competition for

52 Kiprop, "What Are the Major Natural Resources of the Central African Republic?"

53 "U.S. Relations with Central African Republic," U.S. Department of State, April 30, 2021, <https://www.state.gov/u-s-relations-with-central-african-republic/>.

54 The United States Department of State, "U.S. Relations with Central African Republic."

55 Pauline Bax, "Russia's Influence in the Central African Republic," Crisis Group, December 3, 2021, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/central-africa/central-african-republic/russias-influence-central-african-republic>.

56 Joseph Siegle, "The Future of Russia-Africa Relations," Brookings Institute, February 2, 2022, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/africa-in-focus/2022/02/02/the-future-of-russia-africa-relations/>.

57 Siegle, "The Future of Russia-Africa Relations."

58 "Russia to Invest \$11B in Volatile Central African Republic's Reconstruction – Minister," *The Moscow Times*, April 28, 2021, <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2021/04/28/russia-to-invest-11b-in-volatile-central-african-republics-reconstruction-minister-a73763>.

59 Kim Thelwell, "Poverty in the Central African Republic," The Borgen Project, Accessed September 24, 2022, <https://borgenproject.org/tag/poverty-in-the-central-african-republic/>.

60 "Central African Republic," Global Hunger Index, accessed August 22, 2022, <https://www.globalhungerindex.org/car.html>.

61 Thelwell, "Poverty in the Central African Republic."

them as well. This led to widespread instability in the region, seeing the outbreak of violence in 2013, starting the civil war. This left more than half of the nation's population needing humanitarian aid and assistance.⁶² "Currently, organizations like the World Food Program (WFP), USAID, and the International Rescue Committee (IRC) are working to alleviate poverty."⁶³

The CAR's leading causes of death currently include tuberculosis, diarrheal diseases, HIV/AIDs, respiratory infections, and malaria.⁶⁴ Although most of these illnesses can be viewed as more easily treated in the modern day, the lack of resources and the poverty crisis in the CAR make this difficult. In 2018, the CAR reported that malaria was facing a rate of 347.3 cases per 100,000 people. Although this shows a decrease since the even higher initial rates in 2004, it is still alarming to see.⁶⁵ The life expectancy within the Central African Republic is one of the lowest in the world. In 2020, the life expectancy for the CAR was only 53.35 years, barely increasing from the year prior.⁶⁶ The life expectancy in the CAR is so low not just because of diseases but widespread violence and displacement. Additionally, more than 40 percent of the CAR's population suffers from chronic malnutrition.⁶⁷ Although on a steady increase, the nation's life expectancy, among other health problems, warrants serious attention.

The poverty crisis of the CAR has also impacted the nation's education. The literacy rate in the CAR is one of the lowest in the world. In 2018, it reportedly reached 37 percent.⁶⁸ In addition to this, many girls drop out of school due to increasing societal pressures such as marriage and children.

62 "How to Help Children in the Central African Republic," UNICEF USA, accessed August 22, 2022, <https://www.unicefusa.org/unicefusa.org/mission/emergencies/child-refugees-and-migrants/central-african-republic>.

63 UNICEF USA, "How to Help Children in the Central African Republic."

64 "Central African Republic," Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation, accessed September 18, 2022, <https://www.healthdata.org/central-african-republic>.

65 Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation, "Central African Republic."

66 "Central African Republic Life Expectancy 1950-2022," MacroTrends, accessed August 22, 2022, <https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/CAF/central-african-republic/life-expectancy>.

67 Thelwell, "Poverty in the Central African Republic."

68 "Countries Ranked by Literacy Rate, Adult Total (% of People Ages 15 and above)," Indexmundi, accessed August 22, 2022, <https://www.indexmundi.com/facts/indicators/SE.ADT.LITR.ZS/rankings>.

69 The United States Department of State, *Central African Republic 2013 Human Rights Report* (Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, 2013), <https://2009-2017.state.gov/documents/organization/220305.pdf>.

70 "Central African Republic," Global Partnership for Education, accessed August 22, 2022, <https://www.globalpartnership.org/where-we-work/central-african-republic>.

71 "Central African Republic: International NGOs Express Deep Concerns about Humanitarian Crisis," *HI News*, August 31, 2021, https://www.hi-us.org/news_central_african_republic_international_ngos_express_deep_concerns_about_humanitarian_crisis.

72 "Central African Republic," U.S. Agency for International Development, last modified August 4, 2022, <https://www.usaid.gov/central-africa-republic>.

73 Patrick Randall, "How Diamond Smuggling Drives Central African Religious War," *Worldcrunch*, August 28, 2014, <https://worldcrunch.com/world-affairs/how-diamond-smuggling-drives-central-african-religious-war>.

74 Randall, "How Diamond Smuggling Drives Central African Religious War."

Approximately 65 percent of girls enter their first year of primary school, and only 23 percent ever manage to finish the total six years of primary school.⁶⁹ The education system has also been increasingly impacted by long-lasting periods of conflict. Since the land has been fractured so many times and several locations are controlled by rebel groups, it is nearly impossible for the government to send in services.⁷⁰ About 24 out of 71 districts in the CAR face security situations so alarming that many schools are closed within them. There is also a lack of human and material resources to operate schools and other education services. The education system and many other government services were already in a precarious situation following the years of disruption from COVID-19. However, the conflict disrupts these functions even more. This can be seen in the absence in the number of students at schools, and the occupation of schools by displaced populations or armed actors.⁷¹

The country does have some important natural resources, such as timber and diamonds, which are among the top goods exported.⁷² However, the vast majority of the population lives in poverty, and these industries can worsen their situation. These diamonds often fuel the country's civil war, earning the moniker "blood diamonds."⁷³ The Seleka and anti-Balaka armed forces have fought relentlessly for the previous resource and industry. Although supposedly a profitable industry, most of the funds go to these two groups of militiamen.⁷⁴ In May 2013, the Central African Republic suspended the Kimberley Process. The Kimberley Process is how rough diamonds are certified to ensure they do not come from conflict areas. The

other states participating in the Kimberly Process proceeded to ban diamond exports from the CAR. Officially, the CAR exported no diamonds for the next three years until the diamond export embargo was lifted in 2016.⁷⁵ Since 2016, the CAR has rejoined the group and has been allowed to resume exports.⁷⁶ However, a UN panel of experts said that the illicit diamond trade was still funding the major armed groups in the Central African Republic. This trade also became involved with neighboring countries like Cameroon and Chad.⁷⁷ This leaves the country suffering from poverty, reaping little to no benefits from such a massive industry.

Not only has the diamond industry been linked to extreme violence, but also extreme worker exploitation. Diamond miners who work in small-scale mining, such as panning or digging, produce about 15 percent of the world's diamonds. But their wages are very low.⁷⁸ In Africa, an estimated one million diamond diggers earn less than a dollar a day. This falls below the extreme poverty line.⁷⁹ These industries have non-existent or rarely enforced labor standards and minimum wage laws. This results in most small-scale mining being unregulated and poorly treated workers.⁸⁰

Children in the CAR are forced into some of the worst forms of child labor. They serve as combatants, cooks, porters, informants, domestic workers, farm work, and guards. Children are also used for sexual exploitation and diamond mining. 1.3 million children lack access to education. A large part of this is, of course, due to the ongoing instability. Overall, the Central African Republic does not meet international standards for minimum age protections. The country fails to include children working in the informal sector in its legal doctrines.⁸¹

Due to economic instability, many countries have tried different ways of bettering their financial future. The Central African Republic moved to digital currency. The country was the first to adopt Bitcoin in April of 2022.⁸² President Faustin-Archange Touadera announced the nation's own digital currency to be Sango Coin, calling it "the currency for the next generation."⁸³ However, the government's plans will be hard to implement without any large improvements in the current economic standing and infrastructure. Although designed to improve the process of money transfers for its citizens, the CAR may not succeed. Too many members of the country lack the basic resources to participate in such a currency. Only 557,000 of the 4.8 million people in the CAR have internet access and consistent electricity coverage. President Touadera said, "the Central African Republic sits on a mountain of resources — gold, diamonds, rare minerals, unexploited resources. Sango Coin will enable direct access to our resources for the whole world."⁸⁴ Currently, the country plans to have the CAR's treasury hold 20 percent of the digital currency. This will then be used to market the nation's resources, government services, residency, and land ownership. The treasury will also have a dedicated Bitcoin reserve, as that is what the currency will be backed on.⁸⁵ There will be several questions on maintaining such a currency, and delegates may have to find innovative ways to work with or around such projects. The committee must analyze how the infrastructure and current poverty levels within the country may impact such plans.

Refugee Crisis

Currently, 1.9 million Central Africans are displaced, over

75 "Central African Republic to Resume Diamond Exports after 3-Year Ban," *Reuters*, June 6, 2016, <https://www.reuters.com/article/centralafrica-diamonds/central-african-republic-to-resume-diamond-exports-after-3-year-ban-idUSL8N18Y2EX>.

76 Reuters, "Central African Republic to Resume Diamond Exports after 3-Year Ban."

77 Reuters, "Central African Republic to Resume Diamond Exports after 3-Year Ban."

78 Lydia Polgreen, "In Sierra Leone, Still a Tough Dig for Diamonds," *New York Times*, March 25, 2007, <https://www.nytimes.com/2007/03/25/world/africa/25iht-diamond.4.5017895.html>.

79 Polgreen, "In Sierra Leone, Still a Tough Dig for Diamonds."

80 "Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor - Central African Republic," United States Department of Labor, accessed August 23, 2022, <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/ilab/resources/reports/child-labor/central-african-republic>.

81 The United States Department of Labor, "Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor - Central African Republic."

82 Jasmine Browley, "Central African Republic to Become One of the First African Countries to Have Their Own Digital Currency," *Essence*, July 7, 2022, <https://www.essence.com/news/money-career/central-african-republic-digital-currency/>.

83 Katarina Hojje, "Sango Coin: Central African Republic Plans Its Own Digital Currency," *Bloomberg*, July 5, 2022, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-07-05/bitcoin-s-first-african-adopter-plans-its-own-digital-currency>.

84 Hojje, "Sango Coin: Central African Republic Plans Its Own Digital Currency."

85 "Sango," The Sango Initiative, accessed August 23, 2022, <https://sango.org/>.

a third of the country's total population.⁸⁶ After the initial violence in 2013, more than 640,000 people were forced to flee the country in search of safety. The majority of those who fled the country sought refuge in neighboring countries. The CAR is landlocked, so the population fled to all borders, leading to Cameroon, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and the Republic of the Congo. A few additionally fled to Sudan and South Sudan.⁸⁷ Due to the sudden increase in violence over the years, these numbers have accelerated. The recent outbreak of violence after the CAR's elections in December 2020 caused an additional 200,000 people to be displaced in under two months. Due to these factors, it has been estimated that 3.1 million people will need humanitarian aid—63 percent of the population.⁸⁸ Cameroon has taken in 346,961 refugees, the DRC has 207,118, Chad has 123,359, the Republic of the Congo has 29,185, Sudan has 28,035, and South Sudan has 2,414 refugees as of June 2022.⁸⁹ USD 151.5 million is needed in aid this year, but only two percent has been received to meet humanitarian needs thus far.⁹⁰

Many Central Africans have arrived in countries such as the DRC by crossing the Ubangi, Mbomou, and Uele rivers. Although these refugees have settled into nearly 30 localities in the provinces of the surrounding regions, most still live in dire conditions.⁹¹ Several of these places are in remote, hard-to-reach areas and lack basic shelter and food supplies. Due to these shortages, the refugees depend on catching fish and whatever locals can spare them, although many of the current residents already have limited resources. Diseases have also increased among refugee populations since most use the river solely for drinking water, washing, and cooking. Malaria, respiratory infection, and stomach illnesses are spreading throughout the population. Although many agencies, including the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC), are working to treat the patients and distribute the medication they

need, distance and poor infrastructure create large setbacks in delivering aid.⁹² International actors must come together to provide essential services and funding and enable groups to manage the consequences of the worsening refugee crisis.

However, this humanitarian aid is desperately needed. The UNHRC has worked to reinstate emergency supplies in Yakima in the North Ubangi province since the rainy season will cause most areas to become inaccessible by road. Eventually, only costly airlifts will be the sole means of delivering aid and assistance to the area. Even prior to the more recent waves of violence after the 2020 CAR elections, 2.8 million people in the CAR required humanitarian assistance. This number now only increases.⁹³ Wherever roads exist, so do armed groups and poor weather conditions. If the rainy season does not make the roads impassable, the armed forces using these roads often will. This makes it incredibly difficult to deliver aid to those who need it. Refugees International reported that the Wagner Group of mercenaries was preventing organizations from delivering aid to communities.⁹⁴ Waterways like the Ubangi river have also been used to transport aid to refugees in the DRC and the Republic of the Congo. Although sometimes successful, cargo has been lost to high water levels making this a method only used in desperate times. Humanitarian groups may seek to turn to organizations like the World Food Program's Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS), to deliver aid, although expensive. This is the method that most aid groups have become increasingly reliant on.⁹⁵ Delegates should consider ways to reroute incoming aid and supplies as well as find alternative ways to reach refugees in need. As more and more armed groups advance across cities in the CAR, more people will flee the country and be in need of aid. Many organizations have attempted to help with the refugee crisis, including the UNHRC, the International Rescue Committee (IRC), and other international bodies and non-governmental

86 "Central African Republic Refugee Crisis," UNHCR, accessed August 23, 2022, <https://www.unrefugees.org/emergencies/car/>.

87 UNHCR, "Central African Republic Refugee Crisis"

88 UNHCR, "Central African Republic Refugee Crisis"

89 "Situation Central African Republic Regional Response," United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, accessed August 23, 2022, <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/car>.

90 "Central African Republic: 200,000 Displaced in Less than Two Months," *UN News*, January 29, 2021, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/01/1083332>.

91 UN News, "Central African Republic: 200,000 Displaced."

92 UN News, "Central African Republic: 200,000 Displaced."

93 Alexandra Lamarche, "The Central African Republic in Crisis: Critical Measures to Address Humanitarian and Security Needs," Refugees International, February 4, 2021, <https://www.refugeesinternational.org/reports/2021/2/3/the-central-african-republic-in-crisis-critical-measures-to-address-humanitarian-and-security-needs>.

94 Lamarche, "The Central African Republic in Crisis: Critical Measures to Address Humanitarian and Security Needs."

95 Lamarche, "The Central African Republic in Crisis: Critical Measures to Address Humanitarian and Security Needs."



Stoneworkers in the CAR.
 Credit: Léo Torrétou

organizations (NGOs).⁹⁶

There are nearly 700,000 internally displaced people (IDPs) in the Central African Republic. Most of this occurred immediately after the start of the violence in 2013 when 630,000 people were internally displaced. The refugee crisis has also expanded upon the worsening gender-based violence (GBV) in the CAR. In the first half of 2021, over 6,330 cases of GBV were reported throughout the nation. Sexual violence accounted for a fourth of all of these cases. Sexual violence poses the greatest safety and security risk to both women and girls, especially those who are IDPs.⁹⁷ The majority of these displaced persons have temporarily resettled in areas that do not have the capacity to accommodate such large groups. This causes sites for internally displaced persons to become overcrowded and lack the proper water and sanitation facilities.⁹⁸ Most workers helping these camps have announced a dire need for food, sleeping mats, and blankets.⁹⁹ Although these NGOs have attempted to stockpile resources and

replenish warehouses beforehand, many of these places have been ransacked by armed groups. These groups block key trade routes across the CAR, making the delivery of goods increasingly difficult.¹⁰⁰

Human rights violations, including sexual violence, child abuse, arbitrary detention, and execution, have occurred with greater frequency in the CAR. The increase in the intensity of violence will only continue to undermine the current services and protections being offered to refugees. However, the violence has not just spurred mass evacuation and a refugee crisis. Those who choose to flee the violence lose their jobs, access to agricultural fields, and many other necessities they once had greater access or proximity to.¹⁰¹ The number of IDPs peaked in February of 2021. This was caused by the coordinated armed attacks by the CPC. Not only violence has contributed to the growing population of IDPs.¹⁰² The CAR also recorded 15,000 disaster displacements in 2020, followed by 24,000 disaster displacements in 2021. Most of these

⁹⁶ “Central African Republic,” International Rescue Committee, accessed August 23, 2022, <https://www.rescue.org/country/central-african-republic>.

⁹⁷ UNHCR, “Central African Republic Refugee Crisis”

⁹⁸ Lamarche, “The Central African Republic in Crisis: Critical Measures to Address Humanitarian and Security Needs.”

⁹⁹ “Central African Republic: ICRC Condemns Attack on Its Bouar Office and Calls for Humanitarian Workers to Be Respected,” ReliefWeb, December 29, 2020, <https://reliefweb.int/report/central-african-republic/central-african-republic-icrc-condemns-attack-its-bouar-office-and>.

¹⁰⁰ ReliefWeb, “Central African Republic: ICRC Condemns Attack on Its Bouar Office and Calls for Humanitarian Workers to Be Respected.”

¹⁰¹ Lamarche, “The Central African Republic in Crisis: Critical Measures to Address Humanitarian and Security Needs.”

¹⁰² “Central African Republic,” Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, accessed August 23, 2022, <https://www.internal-displacement.org/countries/central-african-republic>.

disaster-related displacements were caused by heavy rains and flooding, mainly impacting the Ombella-Mpoko prefecture and Bangui.¹⁰³ Since the CAR's agricultural sector will likely miss the time for the planting season, there have been even greater financial and resource-related consequences. These negative consequences have caused many refugees and IDPs to turn to crime or join armed groups to find a means to survive.¹⁰⁴

Although there is a clear and urgent demand to meet the needs of refugees and IDPs, international involvement has been limited, and most humanitarian responses from the UNHCR and NGOs remain underfunded.¹⁰⁵ Parents have been forced to abandon children or run the risk of them dying from disease or being unable to cover the cost of living. The people residing within the refugee camps must exercise extreme caution. Leaving the fragile safety of their refugee camps can mean death with Seleka and anti-Balaka armed forces around.¹⁰⁶ When farmers try to visit and tend to their fields or grab other resources, armed forces tend to lie in wait to ambush and kill them. Placide Yamingi, the chief medical officer of the village Ndjo, said that there are four or five deaths every week among the displaced populations, stating, "We live and die here like animals."¹⁰⁷

Previous UN Actions

The CAR has been a longstanding subject within the United Nations. Several organs have made different attempts to mitigate the conflict in the region, all with varying degrees of success. The UN in the CAR is made up of 20 agencies, programs, funds, and departments, including the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA).¹⁰⁸ These entities have worked with the Government of the Central African

Republic to try and build peace and development. These entities now also provide humanitarian aid and assistance to the people of the CAR. The UN's main goals in the CAR try to align with the goals of the regional government. The UN aims for peace and reconciliation, improved access to basic social services, and ensuring economic recovery.¹⁰⁹ Outlined in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), the UN breaks down the planned response of the entirety of the UN. This includes MINUSCA and the National Recovery and Peacebuilding plan.¹¹⁰

The UN has selected several key sustainable development goals set up to try and ensure the success of their efforts in the CAR. This includes promoting peace, security, national reconciliation and human rights, providing basic social services, delivering quality food and nutrition, strengthening communities against crises and climate change, and promoting sustainable management of natural resources.¹¹¹ The Sustainable Development Report has monitored the progress of each Sustainable Development Goal within the Central African Republic. SDGs 12, 13, and 15 have seen the greatest progress thus far, but most growth is slow.¹¹²

MINUSCA was first established on April 10, 2014, by the Security Council. The mission serves to address the Council's concerns to protect civilians and support transition processes in the country and was authorized under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. The authorization of this mission was prompted by the security, humanitarian, human rights, and political crises in the CAR. MINUSCA was created with the priority of protecting civilians. After the 2013 clash, the mission was also initially tasked with handling the transition process for the CAR. They were meant to serve as a means to facilitate humanitarian assistance, protect human rights, support justice

¹⁰³ Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, "Central African Republic."

¹⁰⁴ Lamarche, "The Central African Republic in Crisis: Critical Measures to Address Humanitarian and Security Needs."

¹⁰⁵ UNICEF, "Crisis in Central African Republic."

¹⁰⁶ "The Unravelling Journey through the Central African Republic Crisis," Human Rights Watch, accessed August 23, 2022, https://features.hrw.org/features/Unravelling_central_african_republic/index.php.

¹⁰⁷ Human Rights Watch, "The Unravelling Journey."

¹⁰⁸ "Central African Republic," United Nations Sustainable Development Group, accessed August 23, 2022, <https://unsdg.un.org/un-in-action/central-african-republic>.

¹⁰⁹ United Nations Sustainable Development Group, "Central African Republic."

¹¹⁰ "UN Publishes Guidance on Revamped UNDAF," SDG Knowledge Hub, accessed September 24, 2019, <https://sdg.iisd.org/news/un-publishes-guidance-on-revamped-undaf/>.

¹¹¹ United Nations Sustainable Development Group, "Central African Republic."

¹¹² "SDG Dashboard," Mentone Girls' Grammar School, accessed August 23, 2022, <https://library.mentonegirls.vic.edu.au/global-sdg9-sustainable-infrastructure/dashboard>.

systems, disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration and repatriation processes.¹¹³

As of November 2021, the UN has deployed 15,663 personnel (including volunteers, civilians, and experts on the Mission), with the authorized number of uniformed personnel being 17,420, broken down into 14,400 military personnel and 3,020 police personnel. The top military and police contributor is Rwanda, with 1,696 military officers and 505 police officers. Other top contributors include Bangladesh, Senegal, Cameroon, Pakistan, Egypt, Zambia, Morocco, Nepal, Burundi, Mauritania, Congo, Egypt, Indonesia, Tunisia, Côte D'Ivoire, and Burkina Faso.¹¹⁴

In addition to preventing large-scale crimes against humanity, the mission has one of the most complex mandates. Statebuilding and election fairness are incredibly difficult, especially when keeping sovereignty and resources in mind. Countries may not be perceptive or readily able to receive this type of aid. MINUSCA attempted a “bottom-up” approach to peace, trying to start their efforts on an individual and local level. The mission helped to establish dozens of local peace and reconciliation committees. These efforts resulted in the landmark Peace Accord in February 2019, which only some armed groups choose to follow now. With armed groups controlling 75-80 percent of the nation, the political economy of the conflict tends to benefit armed groups. With little long-term success in stabilizing the nation, MINUSCA remains unpopular amongst many Central Africans. Election and COVID-19 misinformation also create doubts.¹¹⁵

The UN peacekeeping mission has documented more than 525 conflict-related civilian deaths since February 2021. The actual figure is likely higher as UN investigators have been prevented from accessing sites of various alleged crimes by armed groups from all sides.¹¹⁶ In July 2022, the UN Human

Rights Office issued two reports on extremely alarming events in the CAR. The first report was about ex-Anti-Balaka militia fighters who attacked the village of Boyo over several days, killing 20 civilians, raping 5 girls and women, burning and looting approximately 547 houses, and forcing over 1,000 villagers to flee. They held several hundred civilians for three days in the village mosque, threatening to kill them. A clear attack on the Muslim community, the attack was seen as being supported by the UPC.¹¹⁷ This attack was one of many examples of the CAR's government and private military companies training and likely guiding and locally recruited youth to reach these remote villages and find their victims.¹¹⁸

The second of these reports is based on four investigative missions in the Mbomou and Haute-Kotto prefectures. The report details conflict-driven sexual violence committed from December 2021 to March 2022. Members of the Front Populaire pour la Renaissance de la Centrafrique (FPRC) and the UPC, both affiliated with the CPC, were the noted perpetrators. Since disowning the 2019 Peace Accord, the CPC and its affiliated armed forces have grown more violent. Mbomou and Haute-Kotto are controlled by the CPC and are rich in resources, making them a popular target for extreme human rights abuses. MINUSCA reported, “The cases of sexual violence documented by MINUSCA in Mbomou and Haute-Kotto prefectures confirm that the FPRC and USP perpetrated conflict-related sexual violence in a systematic and widespread manner.” The information gathered by members of the mission shows that 245 women and girls became victims of sexual violence during that period in the region¹¹⁹

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) has taken several actions regarding the CAR. In 2013, the Security Council imposed an arms embargo on the nation. It bans all supplies of arms and related material except for those in

113 “Minusca Peacekeeping,” United Nations Peacekeeping, accessed August 23, 2022, <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/mission/minusca>.

114 United Nations Peacekeeping, “Minusca Peacekeeping.”

115 “Assessing the Effectiveness of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic / MINUSCA,” EPON, accessed August 23, 2022, <https://effectivepeaceops.net/publication/minusca/>.

116 Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, “Central African Republic.”

117 EPON, “Assessing the Effectiveness of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic / MINUSCA.”

118 OHCHR, “Central African Republic: UN Reports Detail Serious Violations, Some Possibly Amounting to War Crimes and Crimes against Humanity,” news release, July 25, 2022, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/07/central-african-republic-un-reports-detail-serious-violations-some-possibly>.

119 OHCHR, “Central African Republic: UN Reports Detail Serious Violations, Some Possibly Amounting to War Crimes and Crimes against Humanity.”

the CAR security forces if approved in advance by the UN Sanctions Committee.¹²⁰ The embargo has been consistently expanded annually, and as of July 29, 2021, it is still in place after review.¹²¹ Resolution 2588 Extends the arms embargo, travel ban, and asset freeze until 31 July 2022 and the mandate of the Panel of Experts (those supervising the embargo) until 31 August 2022. The document also notes the Security Council's concern about the illicit transnational trafficking networks which continue to fund and supply the armed groups throughout the CAR.¹²²

The committee should pay attention to illegal arms trading since it forms one of the biggest obstacles to the success of the arms embargo, which is why it needs to keep being reinstated. Although the arms embargo has lifted some restrictions on weapons and ammunition, it seems that the balance between lenience and stringency has yet to be found by the Security Council.¹²³ In addition, most Security Council resolutions regarding the CAR have heavy involvement with MINUSCA, in attempts to use the body as a means to report back to the Council, providing them with the most accurate information, especially on the state of the embargo.¹²⁴

Current Status

Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic

COVID-19 has completely changed how the international world and its organizational bodies address crises. The UN has made several efforts to respond to the pandemic, all of which are important for the delegates to keep in mind. The

120 "Arms Embargoes," Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, accessed August 23, 2022, <https://www.sipri.org/databases/embargoes>.

121 UN Security Council, Resolution 2588, Extending the CAR Sanctions Regime, S/RES/2588

(Jul. 29, 2021), https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_res_2588.pdf.

122 S/RES/2588.

123 "Resolutions," United Nations Security Council, accessed August 23, 2022, <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/sanctions/2127/resolutions>.

124 United Nations Security Council, "Resolutions."

125 "Central African Republic Overview," The World Bank, accessed August 23, 2022, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/centralafricanrepublic/overview>.

126 "How Is the United Nations Responding to the Pandemic?" United Nations, accessed August 23, 2022, <https://www.un.org/ohrlls/content/how-united-nations-responding-%C2%A0-pandemic>.

127 "Covid-19 Solidarity Response Fund for WHO," WHO, accessed August 23, 2022, <https://covid19responsefund.org/en/>.

128 WHO, "Covid-19 Solidarity Response Fund for WHO."

129 "UN Launches Major Humanitarian Appeal to Keep Covid-19 from Circling Back around the Globe," *UN News*, March 25, 2020, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/03/1060222>.

130 UN News, "UN Launches Major Humanitarian Appeal."

131 "The Secretary-General's UN Covid-19 Response and Recovery Fund," UNSDG, accessed August 23, 2022, <https://unsdg.un.org/resources/secretary-generals-un-covid-19-response-and-recovery-fund>.

132 UNSDG, "The Secretary-General's UN Covid-19 Response"

UN considers landlocked developing countries (like the CAR) to be among the countries most impacted by COVID-19.¹²⁵ One of the major areas in which the UN has helped with the pandemic response is the COVID-19 Recovery Fund. The UN created three main funds and appeals to help with these efforts.¹²⁶

The Solidarity Response Fund was made to address the immediate health needs caused by COVID-19.¹²⁷ The group supports the World Health Organization (WHO) and partners with countries to help them respond to the pandemic. The group has raised USD 150 million thus far, which is a part of the USD 800 million the WHO has raised in total.¹²⁸ The Humanitarian Appeal was founded to support the world's most vulnerable countries. This group aids vulnerable countries specifically to attempt to prevent the disease from circling back around the world.¹²⁹ The Humanitarian Appeal launched a \$2 billion coordinated global Humanitarian Response plan to further these efforts. Appeals and requirements from the WHO and other UN-related health and humanitarian organizations and NGOs work to identify new needs.¹³⁰ Coordinated by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Appeal works to complement the recovery plans made by the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. The Response and Recovery trust fund is the third part of the UN's COVID-19 Recovery Fund. This fund was built to deliver rapid recovery and support efforts in low to middle-income countries.¹³¹ This body has worked to address the socioeconomic impact of COVID-19, allocating the proper multi-agency responses needed in these nations.¹³²

The UN Secretary-General, António Guterres, released a report on the UN's plan and current response to the socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19. The report served as a call to action for immediate and long-term health responses. It is still a goal of the UN to reduce the transmission of the virus and end the pandemic. While attempting to aid in this cause, the UN also looks to focus on people, including women, youth, low-wage workers, the informal sector, and vulnerable groups already at risk. In order to try and aid these populations in Less Developed Countries (LDCs), the report also calls for debt relief and stimulus packages to help countries that are at high risk or are already in debt distress.¹³³ The Secretary-General's Global Humanitarian Response Plan for COVID-19 is a great source for delegates to figure out how policy has to be adjusted to account for COVID-19.¹³⁴

In the CAR, only 25.8 percent of the population is fully vaccinated (1.25 million people).¹³⁵ Since January 2020, there have been 14,781 confirmed cases of COVID-19, with 113 deaths reported to WHO.¹³⁶ By the standards of the US Centers for Disease Control, the CAR is still considered a country with Level 3 (high) levels of COVID-19.¹³⁷ Sourcing this data from across a war-torn country poses many challenges, so the actual number of cases could be higher. The number of confirmed cases is typically lower than the number of infections due to limited testing.¹³⁸ Instability in the region of the CAR grew with the impacts of COVID-19. Since the turmoil of the CAR's 2020 elections, the pandemic has greatly contributed to the government being unable to form a stable COVID-19 plan and civilians being unaware of the severity of the disease.¹³⁹ The International Committee of the Red Cross reports that many citizens do not believe the disease exists, jeopardizing current efforts to counter the spread.

In the CAR, enforcing good hygiene and social distancing is a challenge. This is worsened by the fact that many people live in displaced person camps or overcrowded prisons. In these camps and prisons, soap and water are not readily available resources. While working with the Central African Red Cross Society, the ICRC has been working to raise people's awareness of COVID-19 and acquaint people with prevention methods, also known as barrier gestures. The organization has also made efforts to accommodate health facilities and prisons and introduce methods to prevent and curb infection in such environments. It is clear to the ICRC that COVID-19 has added to the consequences of the already lengthy and violent crisis, putting thousands of lives in an even more dangerous position.¹⁴⁰ Delegates should note that assistance and services that were already vital to the situation are even more crucial now with the pandemic.

Now that some programs have taken precautions with masks, sanitation, and distancing, there has been a return of programs to organize the distribution of seed, food, and agricultural implements to around 50,000 people. These programs are able to give resources to those who have been able to return to their homes, as many people have lost their villages from the siege of rebel attacks. Many are hopeful however that farmers will receive needed aid in the distribution of resources and manage to have a successful harvest. Not only are agricultural resources being given out, but also health resources have been allocated. Plastic kettles and one kilo of soap were also given to all of these households (around 10,000 from the previous program), which will hopefully keep the region healthier.¹⁴¹

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has three areas of COVID-19 support and intervention that are

133 United Nations, "How Is the United Nations Responding to the Pandemic?"

134 *Global Humanitarian Response Plan COVID-19* (Geneva: UNOCHA, December, 2020), <https://www.unocha.org/sites/unocha/files/Global-Humanitarian-Response-Plan-COVID-19.pdf>.

135 Hannah Ritchie et al., "Coronavirus (COVID-19) Vaccinations," Our World in Data, accessed August 5, 2022, <https://ourworldindata.org/covid-vaccinations>.

136 "Central African Republic: WHO Coronavirus Disease (Covid-19) Dashboard with Vaccination Data," WHO, accessed August 23, 2022, <https://covid19.who.int/region/afro/country/cf/>.

137 "Travel Health Notices," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, accessed August 23, 2022, <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices/covid-3/coronavirus-central-african-republic>.

138 Ritchie et al., "Coronavirus (COVID-19) Vaccinations."

139 International Committee of the Red Cross, "Central African Republic: Contending with Covid-19 in the Midst of a Serious Humanitarian Crisis," news release, July 31, 2020, <https://www.icrc.org/en/document/central-african-republic-contending-covid-19-midst-serious-humanitarian-crisis>.

140 WHO, "Central African Republic: Contending with Covid-19."

141 WHO, "Central African Republic: Contending with Covid-19."

suggested the UN focus on in the CAR.¹⁴² First, there is the strengthening of health systems within the nation. There are currently efforts to expand the capacity of the CAR's Minister of Health to help coordinate, plan, and manage the response and recovery of the country to COVID-19.¹⁴³ Next, there is the need for inclusive and integrated crisis management and multi-sectoral response. To break this down, it means that work should be done to redeploy local public services, support the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation, and income generating activities for the community. The third area is in regards to socio-economic Impact and Recovery. This includes rapid assessment of the impacts of COVID-19, long-term macroeconomic system analysis to progress on the SDGs, and technical and advisory support to aid the Government. All of these plans for each three areas have a budget of \$5.08 million.¹⁴⁴

Current Peacekeeping Efforts

Military intervention and peacekeeping efforts have been ongoing in the Central African Republic for over a decade.¹⁴⁵ UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic (BINUCA) has been operating since 2010. The purpose of BINUCA was to help consolidate peace and strengthen democratic institutions. Although BINUCA faced looting of its offices and staff residences, they continued throughout the crisis. The group did, however, face a reduction in its operations due to security, diminishing its effectiveness.¹⁴⁶ However, in Resolution 2127, the Security Council authorized the African Union (AU) to lead the International Support Mission to the CAR (MISCA).¹⁴⁷ There were also French peacekeeping forces present, known as Operation Sangaris.¹⁴⁸ BINUCAs range of tasks was also expanded to help accommodate the AU's new mission.¹⁴⁹ The rapid action of

MISCA and Operation Sangaris proved successful and greatly needed to save the lives of many civilians. However, given the size and scale of the crisis, the situation proved to be too difficult for the two forces to control. With the ongoing failure to control the situation, the Secretary-General recommended a mandate for a peacekeeping operation in the region, bringing forward MINUSCA in 2014. Although created with several missions and tasks to keep in mind, the UN had prioritized the promotion of stability, protecting human rights, and facilitating fair and free elections.

Today, 17 percent Of the UN's peacekeeping budget is allocated to MINUSCA, making it the third largest. As is true in most UN peacekeeping missions, the United States is the single largest financial contributor to the mission, totaling USD 289,440,046. Although other UN member states still pay the vast majority of the costs overall and contribute 99 percent of the nearly 90,000 troops dedicated to UN peacekeeping.¹⁵⁰ Insecurity in the CAR has become even more critical. However, MINUSCA's forces are stretched very thin. US and Ugandan special forces have withdrawn from southeast CAR, and there have been some calls to the Security Council to increase the troop ceiling for the mission when it comes time to be renewed.¹⁵¹ Some organizations, like the Better World Campaign, have also called on the US government to uphold its treaty obligations to fund the UN and ensure that MINUSCA has the resources necessary to be successful in its mandate.¹⁵² However, accumulating enough funding is a task for all member states of the UN to handle.

Poor public perception of MINUSCA has also made their efforts more difficult. Without the trust of the Central African population, they are undermining the mission's ability to protect those civilians and restore stability in the

142 "United Nations Development Programme Strategic Plan 2022-2025," UNDP, 2021, https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2021-09/UNDP-Strategic-Plan-2022-2025_1.pdf.

143 UNDP, "United Nations Development Programme Strategic Plan."

144 UNDP, "United Nations Development Programme Strategic Plan."

145 "About MINUSCA," MINUSCA United Nations, accessed August 29, 2022, <https://minusca.unmissions.org/en/about>.

146 MINUSCA, "About MINUSCA."

147 United Nations, "Security Council 2127 Committee concerning Central African Republic Adds One Entry to Its Sanctions List," news release, December 21, 2021, <https://press.un.org/en/2021/sc14749.doc.htm>.

148 United Nations, "Security Council 2127 Committee Concerning Central African Republic Adds One Entry to Its Sanctions List."

149 MINUSCA, "About MINUSCA."

150 "Central African Republic (MINUSCA)," Better World Campaign, accessed August 2, 2022, <https://betterworldcampaign.org/mission/central-african-republic-minusca>.

151 "An Exit Strategy for MINUSCA: Progress and Obstacles," Better World Campaign, accessed August 24, 2022, <https://betterworldcampaign.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12//An-Exit-Strategy-For-MINUSCA-Progress-and-Obstacles.pdf>.

152 Better World Campaign, "An Exit Strategy for MINUSCA."



MINUSCA Peacekeepers.
Credit: Tsidoti

CAR. To be successful in any further interventions and peacekeeping operations, it's important that MINUSCA and other groups prioritize their efforts to build trust among local communities. By doing this, the UN may see success in quelling intercommunal tensions, allowing them to extend state authority with greater ease. The FACA-centric mindset of the current government does not promote inclusivity and accountability, so in order for success to be seen in the CAR, efforts must be made to change that mindset and improve the population's perception of the police, gendarmeries, and government. In addition, another failing of MINUSCA that must be addressed is bringing to justice perpetrators of war crimes and atrocities (especially those during the 2012–2013 period).¹⁵³ Public opinion is also impacted by the lack of transparency when addressing sexual abuse and exploitation from MINUSCA peacekeepers. If greater accountability is seen and reparations are given to the individuals and units impacted by these violations, the general public may view the mission as more positive.

France was another country once heavily involved in the CAR through military intervention. However, France suspended

¹⁵³ Better World Campaign, "An Exit Strategy for MINUSCA."

¹⁵⁴ "France Suspends Aid, Military Support for Central African Republic," *Reuters*, June 9, 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/france-suspends-aid-military-support-central-african-republic-2021-06-08/>.

¹⁵⁵ *Reuters*, "France Suspends Aid."

¹⁵⁶ Jeff Seldin, "US Pulling Some Combat Troops out of Africa," *VOA*, February 12, 2020, https://www.voanews.com/a/africa_us-pulling-some-combat-troops-out-africa/6184166.html.

their aid and nearly 300 military personnel support in 2021.¹⁵⁴ These efforts ceased due to the central government's apparent failure to stop "massive disinformation campaigns" against French officials. As the historical colonial power, France has had a heavy hand in the situation. Cutting nearly USD 12.18 million of budget support for the former colony certainly served as a devastating blow for the CAR. Although their peacekeepers in international missions were unaffected by this choice, soldiers working directly for the French military will no longer help the CAR's military. The power struggle with Russia over influence in Bangui after the entrance of the Wagner group also likely caused tensions in the situation.¹⁵⁵

The United States has also grown wary of a strong military presence in the region. The presence of the Russian Wagner mercenary group did not only dissuade France's presence.¹⁵⁶ Back in 2020, The United States announced they would be bringing home part of their infantry brigade. However, this was soon followed by the replacement of specialized military trainers, serving as competition for Russian and Chinese power competing in the region. Now that the US has sent members of the Army's 1st Security Force Assistance Brigade (SFAB)

to work with several countries across Africa, including the CAR, maybe Central African forces will see greater success in combating rebel groups. The US certainly isn't looking to pull out of the region, but its efforts seem more closely aligned with a less physical presence. It seems there is hope that the training will have a positive impact on the nation's current forces.¹⁵⁷ This replacement of training officials is meant to be spread out across the entire continent, once again bringing up the question of a lack of resources and military personnel to secure and stabilize the region.

Sustainable Development Agenda

Delegates must take into account the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially with the power that the Security Council has to fulfill them. According to the Sustainable Development Report, the SDGs most relevant include SDG 1: No Poverty, SDG 2: Zero Hunger, SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions are top priorities.¹⁵⁸ SDGs 1, 2, and 16 are certainly not the only goals applicable to this topic, as almost all of them can apply to the situation in the CAR. However, these should be the goals the committee focuses on as they are a priority. The Central African Republic Data Portal has a section dedicated to the sustainable development goals within the nation, attempting to fulfill their part of the commitment. These goals come with UN data and can serve as a great resource for delegates when gauging the nation's progress.¹⁵⁹

To address SDG 1, delegates must consider the current instability, economic situation, and infrastructure problems of the CAR. There are several factors that contribute to poverty, and thus several solutions are required to address them. The UN environmental program considers the country to be one of "the world's most neglected countries," with a nearly

entirely impoverished population of 4.3 million people.¹⁶⁰ One of MINUSCA's purposes is to help "implement policies, programs, and reforms that focus on inclusive economic growth and transparent and sustainable management of natural resources."¹⁶¹ These concepts must all serve as backbone ideas to address poverty, as joblessness and a lack of financial resources are problems the Security Council has the power to cover.

In terms of SDG 2, delegates should understand the previously mentioned issues, as aid deliverance in unstable regions can become difficult. The World Food Programme has reported alarming statistics about the situation in the CAR. Since food prices have risen, 65–75 percent of disposable income is now spent on food.¹⁶² In addition, 45 percent of the population (2.1 million people) are food insecure. Of these, 85 percent are severely food insecure (1.8 million).¹⁶³ One of MINUSCA's key missions is to help the most vulnerable and at-risk use quality food and nutrition security services. There is also a great emphasis on doing this in a sustainable manner.¹⁶⁴ The Security Council has a lot to cover on the humanitarian side of the situation, and the CAR needs strong support.

SDG 16 is seemingly one of the most important issues needing to be addressed. According to the sustainable development report, The Press Freedom Index, the Corruption Perception Index, the rate of children involved in child labor, and the population who feel safe walking alone at night are all on a downward trend.¹⁶⁵ Between the damages from rebel groups and the central government itself, most institutions are unstable and lacking in authority and resources.¹⁶⁶ Delegates must keep respect and diplomacy in mind when handling this issue. Although the Security Council may be able to broker peace agreements, it is also required to respect a nation's sovereignty

¹⁵⁷ Seldin, "US Pulling Some Combat Troops out of Africa."

¹⁵⁸ "Country Profiles," Sustainable Development Report, accessed August 23, 2022, <https://dashboards.sdgindex.org/profiles>.

¹⁵⁹ "Sustainable Development Goals of Central African Republic," African Development Bank, accessed August 23, 2022, <https://car.opendataforafrica.org/ffqwaf/sustainable-development-goals-of-central-african-republic?lang=en>.

¹⁶⁰ "Central African Republic," UNEP, accessed August 23, 2022, <https://www.unep.org/explore-topics/disasters-conflicts/where-we-work/central-african-republic>.

¹⁶¹ Sustainable Development Report, "Country Profiles."

¹⁶² "Central African Republic," World Food Programme, accessed August 23, 2022, <https://www.wfp.org/countries/central-african-republic>.

¹⁶³ World Food Programme, "Central African Republic."

¹⁶⁴ Sustainable Development Report, "Country Profiles."

¹⁶⁵ Sustainable Development Report, "Country Profiles."

¹⁶⁶ UNEP, "Central African Republic."

like all other UN bodies.¹⁶⁷ As one of the more actionable committees in the UN, this is an important balancing act for delegates to remember.

Bloc Analysis

The points of division in this topic lie in security alliances and economic ties. Many countries favor direct involvement, while others prefer indirect involvement. Within the category of direct involvement lies different security ties, as most of these countries have significant financial contributions or involvement within the nation. The key differences in the security alliances are based on the nation's policy regarding how to improve and ensure safety within the region. Some countries look for neutrality and mediation, while others heavily back the central government and its armed forces.¹⁶⁸ Although the CAR's government desperately seeks strong support, foreign intervention has not always proved successful. France and the United States have given military and economic aid. However, in recent years, French forces removed themselves, and the United States employed economic embargoes on Russian companies in the CAR. These embargoes and military pullouts were triggered mainly due to the involvement of Russian companies that President Touadera called upon asking for help. These companies were accused of trying to further their power in the CAR. This, however, has resulted in the weakening of some of the remaining sources of aid in the CAR, creating greater tension among allies.¹⁶⁹

Russian companies, for example, have equipped the CAR with mercenaries who lead training for CAR military officials.¹⁷⁰ Russian government officials deny any direct connection between the group and the Kremlin. However, trade deals and other financial aid are given in exchange for access to the mineral-rich mines of the CAR. Since most Russian

efforts are involved in backing the central government and the FACA, Bangui has seen a strong presence of 1,200-2,000 mercenaries.¹⁷¹ This however prompted unrest with Western powers such as the United States and France who were previously giving support, as political alliances began to conflict.¹⁷² With the CAR trying to maintain their newfound military aid with the much-needed financial support of the Western powers, a careful balance must be struck between the efforts of all these nations.¹⁷³ The goal of security is potentially achieved by a variety of different methods per each nation's country policy, but collaboration between delegations will be key to keeping all operations afloat.

Countries Favoring Direct Military and Economic Intervention

This bloc will consist of countries such as Russia and China, which have strong economic ties to the region, as well as most African countries like Ghana and Gabon, which have received similar types of aid from those P5 members.¹⁷⁴ Countries that have experienced or currently experience a similar situation to the CAR will likely favor rapid, heavy-handed involvement that has been seen already in the country. These are also countries that would not look favorably upon embargoes and sanctions and will likely have abstained from votes on such resolutions in the past.¹⁷⁵

Countries Favoring Targeted Intervention

The second bloc will consist of countries that have had to pull back on the previous two types of aid and focus mainly on humanitarian assistance. This bloc will likely comprise the United States and France, among others. Delegations within this bloc will likely favor more stringent policies regarding the CAR and will have economic ties creating a sense of urgency to mitigate conflict.¹⁷⁶ These countries are highly concerned

167 John Dehn, "The UN Charter's Original Effect on State Sovereignty and the Use of Force," Just Security, August 27, 2020, <https://www.justsecurity.org/72177/the-un-charters-original-effect-on-state-sovereignty-and-the-use-of-force/>.

168 Gervais Lakosso, "Why the Central African Republic and the US Might Need Each Other," African Arguments, April 7, 2021, <https://africanarguments.org/2021/04/why-the-central-african-republic-and-the-us-might-need-each-other/>.

169 Reuters, "France Suspends Aid."

170 Bax, "Russia's Influence in the Central African Republic."

171 Bax, "Russia's Influence in the Central African Republic."

172 Reuters, "France Suspends Aid."

173 Benjamin Petrini, "The Central African Republic: Domestic Insurgency, Foreign Intervention and Peace Prospects," IISS, October 25, 2021, <https://www.iiss.org/blogs/analysis/2021/10/conflict-briefing-the-central-african-republic>.

174 "The Situation in the Central African Republic," UN Web TV, July 29, 2022, <https://media.un.org/en/asset/k1b/k1b1pjf5ba>.

175 UN Web TV, "The Situation in the Central African Republic."

176 "Central African Republic Imports," Trading Economics, accessed August 23, 2022, <https://tradingeconomics.com/central-african->

about the humanitarian crisis and discuss and deliver aid often. They also value and support the work of MINUSCA.¹⁷⁷ Some of their policies will diverge from the previous group, as these countries are likely to favor embargoes and sanctions.¹⁷⁸

Countries In Favor of Indirect Intervention

The third bloc will consist of countries who have less reason to involve themselves or the UN in the region due to economic standing, geographic placement, or alliances. Several of these countries will likely not have embassies within the CAR as well. This bloc will likely consist of Brazil, India, and the UK, among others. These countries have helped neighboring countries, such as Cameroon, support those impacted by the several crises in the CAR.¹⁷⁹ The United Kingdom has specifically contributed aid to countries helping the CAR, such as Cameroon, which is taking in refugees.¹⁸⁰ Humanitarian aid is still important to this group as it is to the other blocs. However, there are no strong direct economic or political ties to the region. This leaves the potential for new agreements and deals to be established, which could be important in bringing stability to the region.

Committee Mission

According to the UN Charter, the United Nations has four mandates to fulfill. In Article 24 of the Charter, the Security Council is labeled as having the primary responsibility to maintain “international peace and security.”¹⁸¹ This part of the mandate that specifically applies to the Security Council also overlaps well with this topic. The Central African Republic, or CAR, has long felt turmoil and instability. If the Security Council has been set up to maintain international peace and security, the CAR is in much need of greater efforts. Although

this is the foundation of the Security Council’s mission, it is essential for delegates to expand upon the ideas presented in this background guide through their research. This topic could be one that delegates are familiar with, but there is more than likely much to discover.

The CAR is one that the Security Council has been involved with for a long time. Early stages of intervention began in the 1990s, and the security council has released several resolutions based on the region ever since.¹⁸² With the Peacekeeping mission being started in 2014, it should be clear to delegates that the Security Council has never shied away when dealing with the situation.¹⁸³ But in addition, it must be noted that these efforts have still not met the goals of restoring peace, security, and stability in the region. Many of the difficulties and limitations the delegates may find will surround sovereignty, delivering aid, and brokering peace. All of these tasks have proven difficult over the years, and the Council is not lacking in any attempts to achieve them. Delegates may find themselves walking down different paths to achieve their goals. Countries have employed sanctions, while others prefer a more hands-on approach with peacekeepers on the ground. Although some countries may find heavy involvement to be the best solution, some may reason that aid given indirectly will work best. All of these options are viable. However, it is up to the delegates to research their country’s policy and how options like these line up with such ideals.

republic/imports.

¹⁷⁷ “Statement at the UNSC Briefing on Central African Republic,” An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha Department of Foreign Affairs, June 22, 2022, <https://www.dfa.ie/pmun/newyork/news-and-speeches/securitycouncilstatements/statementsarchive/statement-at-the-uns-briefing-on-central-african-republic.html>.

¹⁷⁸ Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, “UN Arms Embargo on the Central African Republic.”

¹⁷⁹ “UK Boosts Humanitarian Aid for Victims of Conflict in Central African Republic,” ReliefWeb, October 2, 2015, <https://reliefweb.int/report/central-african-republic/uk-boosts-humanitarian-aid-victims-conflict-central-african-republic>.

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¹⁸¹ “The UN Security Council Handbook: A User’s Guide to Practice and Procedure,” Security Council Report, accessed August 20, 2022, <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/the-un-security-council-handbook-by-scr-1.pdf>.

¹⁸² “Central African Republic Chronology of Events,” Security Council Report, accessed August 20, 2022, <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/chronology/central-african-republic.php>.

¹⁸³ Security Council Report, “Central African Republic Chronology of Events.”

Research and Preparation Questions

Your dais has prepared the following research and preparation questions as a means of providing guidance for your research process. These questions should be carefully considered, as they embody some of the main critical thought and learning objectives surrounding your topic.

Topic A

1. Should the Security Council address the issue of the presidency in Venezuela? If so, should they officially recognize Maduro or Guido as president, or should they remain vague on the issue?
2. How would the Security Council incorporate both military and diplomatic solutions for the crisis?
3. How does the political turmoil affect the oil trade in Venezuela? How would the oil market be impacted by the Security Council's actions?
4. Should the Security Council impose sanctions on any industries, individuals, or entities in Venezuela? How would these sanctions affect the Venezuelan people?
5. What actions should the Security Council take regarding the human rights abuses happening in Venezuela?
6. How can the Security Council protect the refugees and migrants from Venezuela? What strategies should they employ to help countries withstand the infrastructural strain of immigrants?
7. How will Venezuela's past political and economic alliances with Security Council members affect the way specific countries approach resolutions?

Topic B

1. How can MINUSCA be reformed to make it more effective in aiding civilians?
2. How can the UN ensure that peacekeepers and other foreign groups provide security and safety rather than escalating conflict?
3. How is the arms embargo working to reduce violence and armed conflict? What other measures can be taken to reduce the presence of illicit arms?
4. To what extent, if at all, should the international community involve themselves directly in CAR? What are some different ways countries can provide specific assistance for this crisis?
5. Given the shortage of resources in CAR, which humanitarian issues should be prioritized? How can we address previous difficulties to increase the supply of resources?
6. Beyond seeking to resolve immediate crises, what long-term actions can be taken to provide stability and resilience in CAR?

Important Documents

Topic A

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The National High School Model United Nations Conference (NHSMUN) is a project of IMUNA, a non-profit organization formally associated with the United Nations Department of Global Communications (UNDGC). IMUNA is dedicated to promoting global issues education through simulation.

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