

NHSMUN

National High School Model United Nations

2023

UPDATE PAPER: UNSC B

Topic A: The Situation in Venezuela

Topic B: The Situation in the Central African Republic

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Dear Delegates,

My name is Caroline Kiely. I am so excited to be your Assistant Director for Security Council B in Session I! Oriana and I have been working hard to prepare this update paper for you. We hope it will be helpful as you begin your research.

I am looking forward to getting to know you all during debate. For now, here is a little bit about me. I am from Manhattan Beach, California. I'm currently a freshman at Georgetown University, where I'm majoring in science, technology, and international affairs. On campus, I work as a barista at a coffee shop in the library, and I'm involved in a few political and environmental clubs. Aside from that, I love hiking, skiing, traveling, reading, art museums, trying new foods, and the beach.

I have been participating in Model UN since my freshman year of high school. I am so grateful for everything I learned and all the wonderful memories I made along the way. I debated at NHSMUN twice and had such a great time! In my junior year, I debated online in this exact committee, and last year I debated in-person in the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. Both were very fun experiences, so I'm excited to continue being a part of this conference. I hope each of you will have a wonderful time at NHSMUN 2023!

I am very excited about both of our topics. The situations in Venezuela and the Central African Republic (CAR) have important humanitarian and political impacts. I participated in a debate about the situation in CAR during my freshman year of high school, and it still stands out to me as a memorable and worthwhile experience. The complexity of the situation and its relation to broader trends and world events make it a fascinating and thought-provoking topic. I hope that you all will enjoy learning about it as I did. Although the conflict in both Venezuela and CAR has been ongoing for some time now, there are always opportunities to make progress and improve conditions. I look forward to hearing your ideas and innovative solutions during debate.

I hope that this update paper will be a useful resource for guiding your research on the recent events in Venezuela and in the Central African Republic. However, there are sure to be many more developments before the conference, so I encourage you to continue following these situations. If you have any questions about anything related to the conference or the topics, please do not hesitate to reach out. I cannot wait to meet all of you in March. Good luck with your preparation!

Best wishes,

Caroline Kiely
United Nations Security Council B, Session I



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Dear Delegates,

Hi, my name is Oriana Aslan Abdou, and I am so happy to be your Assistant Director for the United Nations Security Council B in Session III! My co, Caroline Kiely, and I have been hard at work putting together this update paper to give you all the new developments of these topics. We hope all this information will help guide the direction you want to take at this conference.

I started Model UN during my freshman year of high school largely because of peer pressure from all my sophomore friends who already did MUN and thought that I would love it. I have to say, they were right! I participated in NHSMUN during my senior year (last year) in the Historical Crisis Committee, and it might have been my favorite conference ever. Besides MUN, I spend my time reading, listening to music, and doing ceramics. I am currently a freshman at Florida International University majoring in political science, minoring in art, and getting certificates in pre-law and African languages. After college, I plan on attending law school and becoming an attorney!

I was born in Venezuela and lived there until I was 10. I was very lucky to have the opportunity to move during the time that Venezuela was at its most dangerous and unstable. I always loved my country, but since I moved when I was so young, I was not very aware of the things that were happening. Most people are not really aware of the extent of the human rights abuses and of the refugee crisis. With the war in Ukraine, much of the focus has been shifting away from the situation towards what many countries consider to be more pressing issues. However, with the importance of Venezuelan oil in the international economy rising and the Venezuelan government becoming more secure in its position, the crisis in Venezuela is as pressing as ever. I am looking forward to seeing how you guys address this issue. I want to see all types of discussion and collaborative solutions during committee!

Please remember that this topic is always developing! I am sure that by the time this paper gets to you, there will be many new updates. Use this guide as a starting point for the topic, but do not forget to do your own research, especially on the developments of the Chevron deal and Venezuela's relationship with other countries. If you have any questions about the Conference, committee, or topic, please feel free to reach out to me, Caroline, or your directors! We are so excited to meet you. Good luck!

Best,

Oriana Aslan Abdou

United Nations Security Council B, Session II





UNSC B

NHSMUN 2023

TOPIC A:

THE SITUATION IN VENEZUELA

Photo Credit: Wilfredor

Introduction

In some ways, 2022 has been an unusual year of prosperity in Venezuela.¹² With the economic upturn that Venezuela has seen in recent years, it is easy to assume that the country is truly on the mend.³ However, despite this unexpected success, Venezuela remains rife with economic, political, and humanitarian insecurity. The oil industry continues to support Venezuela's economy. However, oil alone cannot sustain the economy forever. Additionally, Venezuelans are still enduring widespread violence despite UN resolutions. Although branches of the UN have addressed the situation in various ways, most recently the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) with Resolution 51/29, the situation will continue to deteriorate without the intervention of the Security Council.

The Oil Industry

The United States government gave Chevron the green light to restart its operations with Venezuelan oil giant Petróleos de Venezuela, S.A. (PDVSA), to recoup its debt to Chevron.⁴ The license, which lasted six months and was granted in late November 2022, allows PDVSA to sell crude oil to Chevron but does not allow for royalties or taxes on the product to ensure that the money does not end up in the hands of the government.⁵ The license also does not allow PDVSA to gain profit from the deal, only to pay their debts.⁶ Chevron and PDVSA signed a contract on December 2, 2022, to revamp oil output and expand operations and are now working on four joint-venture operations together.⁷⁸ Joint-venture operations are a “combination of two or more parties that seek the development of a single enterprise or project for profit, sharing the risks associated with its development.”⁹ Ultimately, this deal seeks to restore lost production, pay the debt owed to Chevron, and generate more jobs for the people in Venezuela.

Although the government expects oil production to reach anywhen between 600 and 700 thousand barrels per day (kb/d), this is still far off from their target of 1 million barrels per day (mb/d) and a far cry from the 3.3 mb/d of 2001.¹⁰

The easing of sanctions on Venezuela comes on the heels of the war with Ukraine, as the United States and other countries look for alternate sources for oil and reevaluate that value of the Venezuelan oil market.¹¹ The US granted this limited authorization after the Venezuelan government announced that alongside the opposition, they reached an agreement on humanitarian relief and are working together to mitigate the economic, political, and humanitarian crisis ongoing in the country.¹² This could prove to be incredibly beneficial to Venezuela if they manage oil production correctly.

Oil revenue is expected to make up 63 percent of the budget for 2023, 8.5 percent more than in 2022.¹³ However, the rest of the budget is made up of taxes (22 percent) and debt

1 Gustavo Ocando Alex, “¿Quién es Rafael Lacava, el gobernador chavista con más popularidad que Nicolás Maduro?”, *Voz de America*, October 20, 2022, <https://www.vozdeamerica.com/a/venezuela-rafael-lacava-gobernador-chavista-con-mas-popularidad-que-nicolas-maduro/6798649.html>.

2 Oliver Griffin and Vivian Sequera, “Venezuela Poverty Rate Falls to 50.5% in 2022 -Study,” *Reuters*, November 10, 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/venezuela-poverty-rate-falls-505-2022-study-2022-11-10/>.

3 Raul Stolk, “Venezuela's Ad Hoc Economic Recovery Is Not Yet Sustainable,” *Americas Quarterly*, August 24, 2022, <https://www.americasquarterly.org/article/venezuelas-ad-hoc-economic-recovery-is-not-yet-sustainable/>.

4 Deisy Buitrago, “Venezuela, Chevron Formally Sign Oil Contracts in Caracas,” *Reuters*, December 2, 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/venezuela-signs-contracts-with-chevron-reanimate-expand-oil-output-2022-12-02/>.

5 Buitrago, “Venezuela, Chevron Formally Sign Oil Contracts in Caracas.”

6 Buitrago, “Venezuela, Chevron Formally Sign Oil Contracts in Caracas.”

7 Buitrago, “Venezuela, Chevron Formally Sign Oil Contracts in Caracas.”

8 “Venezuela,” Chevron, accessed December 24, 2022, <https://www.chevron.com/worldwide/venezuela>.

9 “Joint Venture,” Cornell Law School, accessed January 18, 2023, https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/joint_venture.

10 “Venezuela expects rising oil production after Chevron-PDVSA deal,” *Enerdata*, December 7, 2022, <https://www.enerdata.net/publications/daily-energy-news/venezuela-expects-rising-oil-production-after-chevron-pdvsa-deal.html>.

11 Anna Massoglia, “Biden administration opens the door for Chevron to resume oil pumping in Venezuela after lobbying push against sanctions,” *Open Secrets*, November 30, 2022, <https://www.opensecrets.org/news/2022/11/biden-administration-opens-the-door-for-chevron-to-resume-oil-pumping-in-venezuela-after-lobbying-push-against-sanctions/>.

12 Kareem El Damahoury, “Venezuela and Chevron sign oil contract in Caracas,” *CNN*, December 2, 2022, <https://edition.cnn.com/2022/12/02/americas/venezuela-chevron-oil-intl-latam/index.html>.

13 Mayela Armas, “Venezuela sees oil exports financing almost two-thirds of 2023 budget,” *Reuters*, December 5, 2022, <https://www.reuters.com>.

(15 percent) and does not account for expected inflation in 2023.¹⁴ The past year's economic growth has been due to the dollarization of business, which gave business room to grow beyond the devalued bolívar, and the passing of the Anti-Blockade Law, which helped bring foreign investors into the country.¹⁵ ¹⁶ However, these two things are not enough to sustain long-term economic growth without other government action, such as decreased involvement in the oil industry or the implementation of a coherent monetary policy.¹⁷

Political Turmoil

Four years into his very disputed second term, Nicolás Maduro is making moves to gain recognition from the international community. In October 2022, he attended a conference in Egypt where he spoke with French President Emmanuel Macron as well as the US Climate Envoy John

Kerry.¹⁸ Similarly, in late August of 2022, Venezuela and Colombia restored full diplomatic relations after three years.¹⁹ This comes with the election of Gustavo Petro, Colombia's first left-leaning president. Petro has recognized Maduro as president in opposition to his predecessor, Ivan Duque, who supported Juan Guaidó as president.²⁰ Brazil is also set to restart relations as President Luis Inacio Lula da Silva comes into power.²¹ The Lula administration has already scheduled a diplomatic mission in Caracas before an ambassador is appointed and approved. Moreover, the Brazilian government has officially recognized Maduro as the legitimately elected president of Venezuela.²² Both of these countries, as well as many others throughout Latin America, had previously closed relations with Venezuela because their conservative leadership prioritized their foreign relations, such as with the United States, condemned the human rights violations carried out by the Maduro administration, and had opposing economic

[com/world/americas/venezuela-sees-oil-exports-financing-almost-two-thirds-2023-budget-2022-12-05/](https://apnews.com/world/americas/venezuela-sees-oil-exports-financing-almost-two-thirds-2023-budget-2022-12-05/).

¹⁴ Armas, "Venezuela sees oil exports financing almost two-thirds of 2023 budget."

¹⁵ Griffin and Sequera, "Venezuela Poverty Rate Falls to 50.5% in 2022 -Study."

¹⁶ Stolk, "Venezuela's Ad Hoc Economic Recovery Is Not Yet Sustainable."

¹⁷ Stolk, "Venezuela's Ad Hoc Economic Recovery Is Not Yet Sustainable."

¹⁸ Regina Garcia Cano, "Venezuela's Maduro Enters 2023 Seeking Global Recognition," *The Associated Press*, December 15, 2022, <https://apnews.com/article/venezuela-caribbean-macron-john-kerry-1af97d52a6d041f0e5bbbf45b28d1b26>.

¹⁹ Agence France-Presse, "Venezuela, Colombia Restore Diplomatic Ties After Three-Year Break," *Voix de America*, August 28, 2022, <https://www.voanews.com/a/venezuela-colombia-restore-diplomatic-ties-after-three-year-break/6720626.html>.

²⁰ Agence France-Presse, "Venezuela, Colombia Restore Diplomatic Ties After Three-Year Break."

²¹ Lisandra Paraguassu and Steven Grattan, "Brazil President-elect Lula to restart diplomatic relations with Venezuela," *Reuters*, December 14, 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/brazil-president-elect-lula-restart-diplomatic-relations-with-venezuela-2022-12-14/>.

²² Paraguassu and Grattan, "Brazil President-elect Lula to restart diplomatic relations with Venezuela."



Venezuelan President Maduro meets with President Gustavo Petro of Colombia in January 2023

Credit: Luigino Bracci Roa

policies.²³ Nevertheless, Latin America is now seeing an increase in support of more left-leaning leaders, as the economic policies of conservative governments have failed to deliver on their promise of economic growth in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic.²⁴ As more leftist leaders with economic plans that are more compatible with the Chavista ideology are elected, more countries are likely to restore their relations with the Maduro administration.

Maduro's newfound recognition is a huge blow to the opposition, especially Juan Guaidó, who was previously backed by close to 60 countries.²⁵ As of October 2022, Guaidó has lost the support of the EU and 19 member countries of the Organization of American States (OAS), leaving his only significant support as the United States.²⁶ Support for Guaidó in most of the international community came from pressure from the Trump administration as they hoped this, along with crippling sanctions, would put enough pressure on Maduro to oust him.²⁷ However, this strategy failed to consider that since Hugo Chávez came into power, his regime had been undermining the military's command, control, and communications to avoid this exact situation.²⁸ Maduro's support comes from the intelligence sector of the country that controls and suppresses any form of opposition. Without the support of the military, the opposition relied on international aid rather than domestic support. Despite guidance by the United States, a country that also handed over access to Venezuelan assets, allegations of impropriety and lack of accountability undermined Guaidó's claim.²⁹ Even with his claim to power having a constitutional base when it

was conceived in 2018 when his term ended in 2020, Guaidó's lack of progress and decline of national support meant that there was little sense in maintaining the strategy.³⁰

Venezuela's opposition parties have recognized the failure of the "parallel governments" strategy and are aiming to move away from it. The four main opposition parties (Primero Justicia, Accion Democratica, un Nuevo Tiempo, and Voluntad Popular) voted in late December to remove Guaidó as interim president, hoping to present a united front for the upcoming 2024 elections.³¹ A lot is at stake as billions of USD worth of overseas assets were controlled by his interim government, including US oil refiner Citgo and gold held in England.³² When the motion was officially approved, the opposition dissolved Guaidó's government and moved to appoint five representatives for a board of directors to manage Venezuelan foreign assets.³³ It is important to note that Venezuela owes USD 60 billion to creditors.³⁴ This is significant because one of Venezuela's major foreign assets is the company based in the US, Citgo, a subsidiary of the Venezuelan state-controlled PDVSA.³⁵ Thus, Citgo could be seized by creditors without the temporary freezing of that debt or other government protection.

On January 5, 2023, opposition lawmakers from 2015 democratically elected National Assembly voted for Dinorah Figuera, Mairanela Fernandez, and Auristela Vasquez to replace Guaidó.³⁶ They are to lead the opposition and garner democratic support for the Venezuelan 2024 election. However, this could prove challenging because all three former lawmakers live outside of Venezuela escaping Maduro's rule.³⁷ Additionally,

23 Laura van der Hauw, "Why is it now that the Left has momentum in Latin America (and how long it will last)," *Leiden University*, September 5, 2022, <https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/en/news/2022/09/why-is-it-now-that-the-left-has-momentum-in-latin-america-and-how-long-it-will-last>.

24 Hauw, "Why is it now that the Left has momentum in Latin America (and how long it will last)."

25 Abraham Lowenthal et al., "Why Is International Support Falling for Venezuela's Guaidó?" *The Dialogue*, October 21, 2022, <https://www.thedialogue.org/analysis/why-is-international-support-falling-for-venezuelas-Guaido/>.

26 Lowenthal et al., "Why Is International Support Falling for Venezuela's Guaidó?"

27 Lowenthal et al., "Why Is International Support Falling for Venezuela's Guaidó?"

28 Lowenthal et al., "Why Is International Support Falling for Venezuela's Guaidó?"

29 Lowenthal et al., "Why Is International Support Falling for Venezuela's Guaidó?"

30 Lowenthal et al., "Why Is International Support Falling for Venezuela's Guaidó?"

31 "Venezuela opposition vote to remove Guaidó's interim government," *Reuters*, December 22, 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/venezuela-opposition-vote-remove-Guaidos-interim-government-2022-12-22/>.

32 Christina Lu, "The World Is Done Waiting for Guaidó," *Foreign Policy*, January 17, 2023, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2023/01/17/venezuela-us-Guaido-maduro-oil-sanctions-energy/>.

33 Mayela Armas, "Venezuela opposition removes interim President Guaidó," *Reuters*, December 30, 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/venezuela-opposition-removes-interim-president-Guaido-2022-12-31/>.

34 Armas, "Venezuela opposition removes interim President Guaidó."

35 Armas, "Venezuela opposition removes interim President Guaidó."

36 Joshua Goodman, "Exiled Venezuelan lawmakers chosen to lead anti-Maduro fight," *AP News*, January 9, 2023, <https://apnews.com/article/politics-venezuela-government-nicolas-maduro-south-america-000642741a10bef98ba407b1a4c008c9>.

37 Goodman, "Exiled Venezuelan lawmakers chosen to lead anti-Maduro fight."

as of January 9, 2023, Maduro's socialist government issued arrest warrants for those three opposition leaders to unsettle the newly elected officials.³⁸ Delegates in the UN Security Council will have to consider all these recent updates to the Venezuelan government and more when preparing research for the committee.

Humanitarian Crisis

The meeting of the 51st session of the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHCR) in Geneva saw the adoption of Resolution 51/29 concerning the situation of human rights in Venezuela. The resolution opens by reaffirming the past resolutions of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) on the issue.³⁹ Moreover, it brings up the topics of most relevance, expressing concern for the disregard for the law and the lack of transparency the government has brought to the judicial system.⁴⁰ Lastly, it calls for the implementation of free and fair elections in Venezuela.⁴¹ Nevertheless, the most important parts of the resolution are the clauses related to the report by the Fact-Finding Mission to the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (FFMV) and the extension of the mission's mandate.⁴² The FFMV report highlighted two areas of concern for human rights violations in Venezuela. First, the crimes committed by Venezuela's intelligence services to repress any government opposition. Second, the violations of

human rights in mining areas in the Bolivar state, such as the Arco Minero del Orinoco region.⁴³ It is highly recommended that delegates read Resolution 51/29 and consider the implications such a document brings to the Venezuelan situation.

The FFMV found that two intelligence services have been mainly responsible for the unlawful arrests, extrajudicial killings, and torture that the government has been carrying out as part of a plan to repress opposition to the government since 2014.⁴⁴ These intelligence services are the Directorate General of Military Counterintelligence (DGCIM) and the Bolivarian National Intelligence Service (SEBIN).⁴⁵ The report found that detainees of the DGCIM were very likely to be subjected to cruel treatment by DGCIM officials, including torture and sexual violence.⁴⁶ Moreover, SEBIN was found to play a key role in the detention of people through surveillance of the population.⁴⁷ The report also found that both agencies were responsible for using sexual and gender-based violence against detainees.⁴⁸ The FFMV found that the detentions targeted individuals based on their political affiliations, participation, views, opinions, or expression.⁴⁹ This led them to believe that the detentions were part of a larger plan for repression of government opposition.⁵⁰

The FFMV found reasonable evidence to believe that authorities at the highest level, including the president and vice

38 "Venezuela orders arrest of exiled lawmakers fighting Maduro," *AP News*, January 11, 2023, <https://apnews.com/article/politics-venezuela-government-nicolas-maduro-caribbean-fb916e9c9556bacf2baf4f6d8fcfd598>.

39 UN General Assembly, Resolution 51/29, Situation of human rights in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, A/HRC/RES/51/29, Preambulatory Clause 4, October 13, 2022, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3992228?ln=en#record-files-collapse-header>.

40 A/HRC/RES/51/29, 3.

41 A/HRC/RES/51/29, 8.

42 A/HRC/RES/51/29, 10.

43 UN Human Rights Council, *Report of the independent international fact-finding mission on the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela* (Geneva, United Nations Human Rights Council, September 20, 2022), A/HRC/51/43, <https://reliefweb.int/report/venezuela-bolivarian-republic/report-independent-international-fact-finding-mission-bolivarian-republic-venezuela-ahrc5143-advance-unedited-version>.

44 UN Human Rights Council, "Venezuela: new UN report details responsibilities for crimes against humanity to repress dissent and highlights situation in remotes mining areas," *Communiqué*, September 20, 2022, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/09/venezuela-new-un-report-details-responsibilities-crimes-against-humanity>.

45 A/HRC/51/43, 24.

46 United Nations Information Service in Geneva, "MORNING - Human Rights Council Holds Interactive Dialogue with the Fact-finding Mission on Venezuela, Hears Update on the Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar, and Starts General Debate on Human Rights Situations that Require the Council's Attention," *United Nations Office at Geneva*, September 26 2022, <https://www.ungeneva.org/en/news-media/meeting-summary/2022/09/morning-human-rights-council-holds-interactive-dialogue-fact>.

47 UN Information Service in Geneva, "MORNING - Human Rights Council Holds Interactive Dialogue with the Fact-finding Mission on Venezuela."

48 UN Information Service in Geneva, "MORNING - Human Rights Council Holds Interactive Dialogue with the Fact-finding Mission on Venezuela."

49 United Nations Human Rights Council, *Detailed findings of the independent international factfinding mission on the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela: Crimes against humanity committed through the State's intelligence services: structures and individuals involved in the implementation of the plan to repress opposition to the Government* (Geneva, United Nations Human Rights Council, September 20, 2022), A/HRC/51/CRP.3, 5, <https://reliefweb.int/report/venezuela-bolivarian-republic/detailed-findings-independent-intl-fact-finding-mission-venezuela-crimes-against-humanity-committed-through-states-intelligence-services-ahrc51crp3>.

50 A/HRC/51/CRP.3, 6.

president, knew of the plans. Not only did they fail to stop them, but in many cases, they directly ordered the crimes.⁵¹ The situation is best summarized by Marta Valiñas, Chair of the FFMV: “Our investigations and analysis show that the Venezuelan State relies on the intelligence services and its agents to repress dissent in the country.”⁵² In response to the report, Resolution 51/29 calls for the release of all political prisoners and unlawfully arrested people in Venezuela and condemns the treatment of said detainees.⁵³

Resolution 51/29 also calls attention to the exploitation of labor and rampant crimes against humanity happening in the mining regions in Bolívar state.⁵⁴ The Arco Minero del Orinoco was established along with other mining areas in Bolívar in 2016 as a way to counteract the crisis in the oil industry. Nevertheless, the government has progressively militarized the region to exert control over the mining areas and towns.⁵⁵ The FFMV found that the mining areas are plagued with disease, are sites of brutal massacres, and are hotspots for sexual exploitation, abuse, forced prostitution, and trafficking of women and children.⁵⁶ The Mission found that various state and non-state actors were responsible for perpetrating crimes against the local population in the mining regions.⁵⁷ These crimes also include forced disappearances, extortion, and corporal punishment.⁵⁸ Moreover, the Mission also found that the military forces and other authorities turn a blind eye and even participate in these abuses.⁵⁹ The FFMV recorded instances of violence against area’s the Indigenous population, including instances of detention, deprivation of life, and torture.⁶⁰

51 A/HRC/51/CRP.3, 416; A/HRC/51/CRP.3, 426.

52 United Nations Human Rights Council, “Venezuela: new UN report details responsibilities for crimes against humanity to repress dissent and highlights situation in remote mining areas.”

53 A/HRC/RES/51/29, 4.

54 A/HRC/RES/51/29, 7.

55 United Nations Information Service in Geneva, “MORNING - Human Rights Council Holds Interactive Dialogue with the Fact-finding Mission on Venezuela.”

56 United Nations Human Rights Council, *Detailed findings of the independent international factfinding mission on the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela: The human rights situation in the Arco Minero del Orinoco region and other areas of the Bolívar state* (Geneva, United Nations Human Rights Council, September 20, 2022), A/HRC/51/CRP.2, 154, <https://reliefweb.int/report/venezuela-bolivarian-republic/detailed-findings-independent-international-factfinding-mission-bolivarian-republic-venezuela-human-rights-situation-arco-minero-del-orinoco-region-and-other-areas-boliva-ahrc51crp2-advance-unedited-version>.

57 United Nations Information Service in Geneva, “MORNING - Human Rights Council Holds Interactive Dialogue with the Fact-finding Mission on Venezuela.”

58 United Nations Information Service in Geneva, “MORNING - Human Rights Council Holds Interactive Dialogue with the Fact-finding Mission on Venezuela.”

59 United Nations Human Rights Council, “Venezuela.”

60 United Nations Human Rights Council, “Venezuela.”

61 United Nations Human Rights Council, “Human Rights Council Holds Interactive Dialogue with the Fact-finding Mission on Venezuela, Hears Update on the Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar, and Starts General Debate on Human Rights Situations that Require the Council’s Attention,” Communique, September 26, 2022, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/09/human-rights-council-holds-interactive-dialogue-fact-finding-mission>.

62 A/HRC/RES/51/29, 10.

When presented with the report, the Venezuelan delegation rejected the report on the basis that the FFMV was creating fiction about the country in order to please the international media.⁶¹ Despite this, Resolution 51/29 includes the extension of the mandate for the FFMV for two more years.⁶² Despite the negative response of the Maduro administration, delegates must consider the details of this report. Consequently, it is the responsibility of the UN Security Council to find ways to mitigate the political, economic, humanitarian, and social turmoil the Venezuelan population is living through.

Conclusion

The UN General Assembly has responded to the situation in Venezuela. The adoption of Resolution 51/29 and the authorization of Fact-Finding Missions have shown to be effective ways of analyzing, condemning, and addressing the Venezuelan situation. Nevertheless, there is much more work to be done, and the intervention of the Security Council is indispensable. Delegates should come prepared to use the resources of the UNSC to take affirmative action on the issue. Moreover, the committee should consider if further sanctions on Venezuela are needed or if, instead, the correct approach would be easing or lifting existing sanctions. To solve such an issue, delegates must analyze the consequences of sanctions imposed by several countries and organizations on Venezuela. Considering the upcoming 2024 presidential elections, delegates should also figure out ways to host free and fair elections. Lastly, the committee should strive to work

in a diplomatic way to address and come up with solutions to all the problems covered in the Background Guide and this Update Paper.



UNSC B

NHSMUN 2023



TOPIC B: THE SITUATION IN THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Photo Credit: Freeman Sipila (VOA)

Introduction

The situation in the Central African Republic (CAR) is ongoing and has continued to evolve in recent months. Political conflict and violence in the country persist, while external factors, including weather events and global economic developments, have exacerbated the situation. The UN Security Council recently renewed the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) as part of the long-running effort to restore peace and stability.¹ This renewed mandate includes provisions to increase peacekeeper safety and authorize MINUSCA night flights.² It also condemns armed groups who are perpetuating violence in CAR. The renewal signifies the continued need for United Nations support in CAR.³ Furthermore, it confirms that the Security Council will remain a critical force in resolving the situation.

The Central African Republic is far from isolated, so it is important to consider its situation within the context of global events. The Russian invasion of Ukraine has affected nearly every country in the world. It has greatly reduced food, fertilizer, and energy supplies. The consequences are greatest for developing countries and emerging markets, including CAR. The country is reliant on imports and vulnerable to rising food prices.⁴ Furthermore, as Russian groups remain influential in CAR, Russia's shifting interests may generate new challenges in the country.

Additionally, it is important to acknowledge the impacts of climate change. Droughts, floods, and other natural disasters are occurring more frequently, especially in tropical regions and the global south. CAR has already begun to experience the effects of the climate crisis. This likely will be a persistent factor for the country's stability and development.⁵ With these issues in mind, delegates must consider how recent events affect the urgency and feasibility of Security Council resolutions to improve the situation in CAR.

¹ Richard Mills, "Explanation of Vote Following the Adoption of a UN Security Council Resolution Renewing the Mandate of MINUSCA," United States Mission to the United Nations, last modified November 14, 2022, <https://usun.usmission.gov/explanation-of-vote-following-the-adoption-of-a-un-security-council-resolution-renewing-the-mandate-of-minusca/>.

² Mills, "Explanation of Vote Following the Adoption of a UN Security Council Resolution Renewing the Mandate of MINUSCA."

³ Mills, "Explanation of Vote Following the Adoption of a UN Security Council Resolution Renewing the Mandate of MINUSCA."

⁴ Oleksandra Drik, "The Global Cost of the Russian Invasion," Visegrad Insight, last modified December 16, 2022, <https://visegradinsight.eu/the-global-cost-of-the-russian-invasion1/>.

⁵ Jeff Masters, "World Rocked by 29 Billion-Dollar Weather Disasters in 2022," Yale Climate Connections, last modified October 19, 2022, <https://yaleclimateconnections.org/2022/10/world-rocked-by-29-billion-dollar-weather-disasters-in-2022/>.

⁶ *Central African Republic Situation Report*, (UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, January 3, 2023), <https://reliefweb.int/report/central-african-republic/central-african-republic-situation-report-3-jan-2023>.

⁷ *CAR: Food insecurity reaches catastrophic proportions*, (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, August 23, 2022), <https://reports.unocha.org/en/country/car/card/RSI0ADd7Tz/>.

⁸ UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, *CAR: Food insecurity reaches catastrophic proportions*.

⁹ UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, *CAR: Food insecurity reaches catastrophic proportions*.

¹⁰ Moki Edwin Kindzeka, "Central African Farmers Say Hunger Looms as Ukraine War Disrupts Imports," *Voices of America*, last modified September 13, 2022, <https://www.voanews.com/a/central-african-farmers-say-hunger-looms-as-ukraine-war-disrupts-imports/6745648.html>.

Food Insecurity

Food insecurity is a critical issue for the Central African Republic. Although hunger has persisted in CAR for many years, this challenge has become increasingly urgent in recent months.⁶ This year, CAR became one of the world's most critically food insecure countries, comparable to Afghanistan, Yemen, and South Sudan.⁷ Approximately 2.2 million people have insufficient access to food, amounting to around 50 percent of CAR's population, and 638,000 people are close to famine.⁸ Children in CAR are especially vulnerable in this crisis. Nearly 215,000 children under the age of five face a high risk of acute malnutrition, and an estimated 395,000 children under the age of five already endure chronic malnourishment.⁹ This situation far surpasses the criteria of an emergency, making it one of the most important issues facing CAR.

The food crisis in the Central African Republic has several causes. These include ongoing conflict and natural disasters.¹⁰ However, CAR has the resources to avoid a food shortage. CAR has abundant arable land with rich soil, lots of rainfall, and a long growing season. Unfortunately, this has not yielded

abundant results. Structural factors, including rapid population growth and unemployment, contribute to food insecurity.¹¹ Also, violence and political conflict have destroyed natural resources and caused disruptions. Productivity has been greatly reduced by internal displacement. Fear of violence diminishes opportunities for people to access farmland and forests. These dangerous conditions similarly hinder relief efforts.¹² It is important to consider that while political instability contributes to food insecurity, hunger likewise increases the risk of conflict. Thus, the political and humanitarian situations are deeply intertwined. The Security Council must consider ways to address both issues concurrently.

Recent natural disasters are another contributing factor to the food crisis. The Central African Republic experienced catastrophic floods throughout the summer of 2022, which greatly impacted food supplies. The floods have destroyed 18,500 hectares of crops and displaced at least 6,000 people.¹³ Infrastructure was severely damaged in 176 towns and villages.¹⁴ CAR is very vulnerable to floods due to the geography of the country. Most settlements in CAR are built next to rivers to support agriculture. Thus, many crops are at risk when rivers overflow.¹⁵ Infrastructure and natural disaster preparedness are important for food security. As the frequency of such natural disasters increases, delegates should consider ways to improve CAR's resilience and protect its food supply.

In addition, recent supply disruptions from the war in Ukraine, along with the lingering impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, have accelerated CAR's food insecurity. Since the war began, food exports from both Russia and Ukraine have declined dramatically, reducing wheat imports to central African countries by more than 55 percent.¹⁶ Russia's blockade of Ukrainian exports has ended, but exports have yet to return to normal levels because of the ongoing conflict.

According to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the conflict will reduce Ukraine's cultivated land by 20 percent to 30 percent next year. Ukrainian grain is one of the most impacted items, which poses significant challenges to central African countries that typically rely on Ukraine for approximately half of their cereal imports. Furthermore, food production in other regions is also at risk because of reduced fertilizer supplies. Russia is banning the export of ammonium nitrate, a key component of fertilizer, and has threatened to impose additional bans. The increased costs of fertilizer and energy pose an additional obstacle to increasing food production in CAR.¹⁷ Delegates must account for these challenges when coming up with solutions to improve food security in the Central African Republic.

Numerous efforts have already been undertaken to assist CAR. This year the country has received renewed attention and funding for the food crisis, including a three-year USD 50 million grant from the World Bank to support the country's agricultural infrastructure and provide direct support to food-insecure people. More recently, CAR received USD nine million from the Humanitarian Fund to support emergency responses to hunger in critical areas.¹⁸ However, this aid is insufficient to address such a severe food crisis. CAR has only 38 percent of the funding needed to enact its response plan.¹⁹ Furthermore, the World Food Programme (WFP) has cut its monthly food distributions in half due to supply disruptions and resource shortages.²⁰ Food insecurity in CAR will deteriorate further unless additional assistance is provided.²¹ Delegates should consider the successful elements of existing projects and seek to improve and build upon them. Emergency aid is desperately needed, but it is also important to reduce CAR's dependence on such aid in the long term and to build sustainable food systems. Resolving food insecurity will be necessary to achieve long-term stability in the Central

11 "UN Needs \$68.4 Million to Help Central African Republic Where 2.2 Million are Acutely Food Insecure," *UN News*, last modified July 5, 2022, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/07/1121952>.

12 UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, *CAR: Food insecurity reaches catastrophic proportions*.

13 *Floods continue to affect the Central African Republic*, (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, October 20, 2022), <https://reports.unocha.org/en/country/car/card/1FnuvE1InD/>.

14 UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, *Floods continue to affect the Central African Republic*.

15 UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, *Floods continue to affect the Central African Republic*.

16 Edwin Kindzeka, "Central African Farmers Say Hunger Looms as Ukraine War Disrupts Imports."

17 Anna Caprile and Eric Pichon, *Russia's war on Ukraine: Impact on global food security and EU response*, European Parliamentary Research Service, last modified September 29, 2022, [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/EPRS_BRI\(2022\)733667](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/EPRS_BRI(2022)733667).

18 UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, *Floods continue to affect the Central African Republic*.

19 UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, *Floods continue to affect the Central African Republic*.

20 UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, *Floods continue to affect the Central African Republic*.

21 UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, *Floods continue to affect the Central African Republic*.

African Republic.

Foreign Intervention

Recently, there have been several new developments regarding foreign intervention in the Central African Republic. Over the past few years, CAR President Faustin-Archange Touadéra has increasingly turned to foreign countries for assistance as he has become unsatisfied with UN aid. The Russian Federation has become a close ally of President Touadéra.²²

For many years, Russia has supplied weapons and ammunition to the Central African Republic.²³ Recently on December 9, 2022, the US released infamous Russian arms dealer Victor Bout from custody. Prior to his capture, Bout sold weapons in violation of international regulations to many countries, including the Central African Republic.²⁴ Many fear that Bout will resume selling weapons in violation of the embargo.²⁵ Whether or not Bout himself becomes involved again, it is important for the Security Council to monitor the embargo's success and prevent violations.²⁶ Delegates should evaluate the effectiveness of the arms embargo and consider whether it might be vulnerable against actors such as Bout.

In addition, Bout may be assigned to aid the Wagner Group, which is very influential in CAR.²⁷ The Wagner Group is a private military corporation. Although it is privately operated, many believe its close ties to the government make it a de facto part of the Russian military. According to experts, if Bout joined forces with the Wagner Group, “his logistical skills, contacts and discipline, far superior to those displayed by Wagner Group, ‘could really help solidify Wagner’s footprint

in Africa and make it harder to dislodge.”²⁸

Currently, 1,200–2,000 combatants from the Wagner Group are present in CAR to suppress the rebel movement.²⁹ The rebel movement is led by the Seleka, an alliance composed of primarily Muslim groups.³⁰ It has been powerful in CAR for the past decade due to ethnic tension and declining socioeconomic conditions.³¹ Recently, the rebels have been successful in challenging the Wagner Group’s strongholds in certain towns. In the central and western areas of the country where armed conflict has been most prominent in the past few months, the Wagner Group has repeatedly been forced to retreat to their camp. President Touadéra called for a ceasefire in mid-October. Nevertheless, fighting has still ensued since then.³² Considering the Wagner Group’s frequent involvement in the conflict, even after the ceasefire, the group is not contributing to the restoration of peace and stability. It is important for delegates to follow these developments closely and to evaluate the effectiveness of foreign intervention in CAR.

Since April 2022, the Wagner Group has been taking Central Africans to fight on behalf of Russia in the war in Ukraine. At least 100 Central African men have been recruited, with most of them having been imprisoned as dissidents in CAR.³³ They were placed in the Donbas region and expected to join the force in combat against Ukraine. Recently, there has been no communication between the Wagner Group and the Central Africans, and half of them mysteriously disappeared in October.³⁴ The other half has been left “without money, food, or ammunition.”³⁵ This raises questions about Russia’s intentions and whether its war in Ukraine has shifted its role

22 “Russia’s Influence in the Central African Republic,” International Crisis Group, last modified December 3, 2021, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/central-africa/central-african-republic/russias-influence-central-african-republic>.

23 International Crisis Group, “Russia’s Influence in the Central African Republic.”

24 “Viktor Bout: Who is the Merchant of Death?” *BBC News*, December 8, 2022, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-11036569>.

25 Elaine Shannon, “The Merchant of Death Is Back in Action,” *Politico*, December 12, 2022, <https://www.politico.com/news/magazine/2022/12/12/viktor-bout-merchant-of-death-00073422>.

26 “UN arms embargo on the Central African Republic,” Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, accessed January 1, 2023, https://www.sipri.org/databases/embargoes/un_arms_embargoes/Central-African-Republic/un-arms-embargo-on-the-central-african-republic.

27 Shannon, “The Merchant of Death Is Back in Action.”

28 Shannon, “The Merchant of Death Is Back in Action.”

29 International Crisis Group, “Russia’s Influence in the Central African Republic.”

30 International Crisis Group, “Russia’s Influence in the Central African Republic.”

31 Center for Preventive Action, “Instability in the Central African Republic,” Council on Foreign Relations, last modified May 11, 2022, <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/violence-central-african-republic>.

32 International Crisis Group, “Russia’s Influence in the Central African Republic.”

33 Shoab, “African former rebels recruited as mercenaries by the Kremlin-linked Wagner Group have been abandoned.”

34 Shoab, “African former rebels recruited as mercenaries by the Kremlin-linked Wagner Group have been abandoned.”

35 Shoab, “African former rebels recruited as mercenaries by the Kremlin-linked Wagner Group have been abandoned.”



Members of the Wagner Group in the Central African Republic

Credit: CorbeauNews

in CAR. Delegates should examine how such actions might affect the Central African Republic and consider whether foreign groups in CAR should be more regulated.

France has finished withdrawing its troops from the Central African Republic. France had been gradually withdrawing from CAR since declaring the termination of its military mission in 2017.³⁶ The process was completed on December 15, 2022, when the last remaining troops left. The withdrawal of troops has recently caused controversy with Russia, which many observers believe is filling the role France left open. In December 2022, a package bomb went off in the capital city of Bangui, injuring a Russian official. Russia believes it was an act of terror and has accused France of being responsible. A note was found at the crime scene reading, “This is from all the French. Russians will get out of Africa.”³⁷ France denied involvement in the situation and labeled Russia’s accusation as propaganda. The two countries also came into conflict in November 2022 when a Wagner-operated agricultural facility

was bombed in western CAR.³⁸ France was again accused of being behind the attack.³⁹ This pattern of conflict between foreign groups in CAR is important to consider as part of the overall impact of foreign intervention.

The UN intervention in CAR is also continuing. As previously mentioned, the MINUSCA mandate was renewed on November 15, 2022. The renewal reaffirms the mission’s preexisting responsibilities and issued additional authorizations. Most notably, it enables MINUSCA to fly aircraft at night, pending the anticipated approval from the government of CAR. This was a particularly important issue due to a fatal attack on peacekeepers in October 2022.⁴⁰ Three Bangladeshi peacekeepers were killed, and another was injured by an explosive, and many have criticized evacuation restrictions for exacerbating the situation.⁴¹ US Ambassador Robert Wood said, “If MINUSCA had been able to swiftly evacuate the peacekeepers by air, rather than by a nine-hour journey overland, they might still be with us today.”⁴²

³⁶ Ruth Maclean, Elian Peltier, and Anatoly Kurmanaev, “Russian Official in Africa Wounded by Package Bomb, Moscow Says,” *The New York Times*, last modified December 16, 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/12/16/world/africa/central-african-republic-russia-bomb.html>.

³⁷ Maclean, Peltier, and Kurmanaev, “Russian Official in Africa Wounded by Package Bomb, Moscow Says.”

³⁸ Maclean, Peltier, and Kurmanaev, “Russian Official in Africa Wounded by Package Bomb, Moscow Says.”

³⁹ Maclean, Peltier, and Kurmanaev, “Russian Official in Africa Wounded by Package Bomb, Moscow Says.”

⁴⁰ Robert Wood, “Remarks at a UN Security Council Briefing on the Situation in the Central African Republic,” United States Mission to the United Nations, last modified October 19, 2022, <https://usun.usmission.gov/remarks-at-a-un-security-council-briefing-on-the-situation-in-the-central-african-republic-6/>.

⁴¹ Wood, “Remarks at a UN Security Council Briefing on the Situation in the Central African Republic.”

⁴² Wood, “Remarks at a UN Security Council Briefing on the Situation in the Central African Republic.”

However, despite the constructive aspects of the new mandate, countries, including the United States, have criticized it for failing to call out the Wagner Group by name.⁴³ Nevertheless, it affirms the UN's important and ongoing role in the Central African Republic. The Security Council should consider what new initiatives the mandate might allow. Delegates should also examine the effects of the UN's evolving position in CAR and consider whether additional reforms would improve MINUSCA.

Conclusion

The situation in the Central African Republic is dynamic. Recent events in the country will be important for crafting feasible solutions for both the long and short term. Current humanitarian emergencies, including the severe food crisis, are central to the conflict in CAR. Unrest and violence are often driven by governments' failures to provide sufficient resources and address basic needs. The rebel groups in CAR will not be appeased with only a new political arrangement or agreement from the government. Instead, material changes will need to be made to improve the quality of life and stabilize the situation.⁴⁴ Addressing the hunger crisis and promoting food security in CAR must be a priority for the Security Council. Delegates should also try to improve other humanitarian issues, such as access to clean water and healthcare.

The volatile political situation also remains relevant. The Central African government is in the middle of a transition period. The strength of opposition groups as well as the long-lasting political violence, make the situation particularly fragile. Any change or new developments in CAR's political situation will be important for delegates to consider when crafting solutions and when debating. The actions of foreign entities, including France, Russia, the Wagner Group, and the United Nations, also contribute to the political situation. Recent conflicts between these groups worsened political instability in CAR. Therefore, the Security Council must assess the roles of these actors and their implications for the overall situation.

Many factors, such as political conflict, violence, and humanitarian need, remain constant. Yet, the specifics of these issues are always changing. Recent floods and other natural disasters throughout central Africa have brought further complications to the humanitarian situation in CAR.⁴⁵ Global supply chain disruptions and inflation have limited imports and slowed efforts to provide humanitarian aid.⁴⁶ Delegates must seek to respond to these new crises as they arise while keeping in mind the long-term issues that ultimately need to be resolved. Long-term solutions will need to account for underlying structural problems and be built to adapt to the constantly changing situation.

43 Mills, "Explanation of Vote Following the Adoption of a UN Security Council Resolution Renewing the Mandate of MINUSCA."

44 "Central African Republic: Soaring humanitarian needs in 2023," *United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs*, last modified January 3, 2023, <https://reliefweb.int/report/central-african-republic/central-african-republic-situation-report-3-jan-2023>.

45 UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "Floods continue to affect the Central African Republic."

46 UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "CAR: Food insecurity reaches catastrophic proportions."

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