

The Venezuelan Crisis JCC:
Colombia
Hawai'i Pacific Model United Nations
2019

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Aloha and welcome to PacMUN 2019!

Our names are Jackie Osaki and Matt Linker and we are excited to return as Secretary General for PacMUN 2019. Throughout our involvement with PacMUN over the past three years, we have seen this conference grow and flourish. We are happy to say that trend continues this year as we host the largest and most dynamic PacMUN so far, with a variety of General Assembly, Specialized, Crisis, and Joint Crisis committees that tackle some of the most complex and urgent issues that have faced our world.

My name is Jackie and I'm a recent graduate of Stanford University with a BS with Honors in Biology and a BA in Comparative Literature. I currently work for a management and technology consulting firm that specializes in media and entertainment. Throughout my Stanford career, I participated in Model UN as a delegate, vice-captain, and eventually team captain in my last two years. I love being able to bring realism and current issues to Model UN for students to begin thinking about how we can solve the most pressing issues facing society today.

My name is Matt and I'm a 2019 Stanford graduate in Computer Science, and now work in equity derivatives trading and structuring at a major financial services firm. I first participated in MUN early in my own high school career, before rediscovering it my sophomore year at Stanford, eventually serving as vice-captain, captain, and on the board of our MUN team's parent organization, the Society for International Affairs at Stanford. To me, MUN represents a window into the true complexity of world affairs, and an excellent learning opportunity to understand why some challenges are more difficult to resolve than others.

While we are excited to bring what we believe to be the best PacMUN yet into fruition, we are most excited to see relationships continue to build this year. We strive to embody all of our core values, but it is truly special to see *laulima*, or collaboration, in action. We urge all delegates to keep *laulima* in mind to work together to innovate solutions and make new friends in the process. We hope this guide helps you jump start your research for this year's PacMUN and we look forward to seeing you in November!

Sincerely,

Jackie Osaki and Matt Linker

Dear Delegate,

My name is Sylvie Ashford and it is an honor to introduce myself as your PacMUN 2019 chair. Originally from Washington D.C., I am currently a Junior at Stanford University studying International Relations, Arabic, and Religious Studies. I am entering my eighth year of involvement with Model U.N. and very excited to work through these highly relevant topics with all of you.

As you begin to research the tragedy and chaos of the Venezuelan crisis, you may find it difficult to keep up with the complex ramifications of political deterioration. The actors that color the crisis every day are multifaceted and diversely motivated. Nothing is fixed or certain, and similarly, the trajectory of our JCC remains undetermined. In committee, you will have to build your arguments and proposals not only on fabricated and fast-moving crisis updates, but also on real-world information that will likely look vastly different between the time I write this and the time of our conference.

Although you may already be opinionated on the subject, your task will be to represent your character and their realistic interests, and in doing so, seek to achieve the best outcome to the situation in Venezuela with respect to the interests and policies of Colombia. Make allies in committee, but always prioritize your characters' interests, Colombian interests, and when appropriate, the interests of the greater international community—in that order.

Hopefully this background guide will serve as a useful resource in your preparation. It will also be helpful to familiarize yourself with the rules of procedure so that you can take advantage of crisis resources including crisis notes, committee directives, and unmoderated caucuses. First time delegates: I am here for you! Please feel free to reach out to me by email at any time with questions or concerns at sylviash@stanford.edu. I hope to serve as a resource to help you participate and enjoy yourself as much as possible throughout the conference.

I look forward to reading your position papers, and I hope you are as excited as I am to debate some of the most pressing issues of our time.

Yours in Diplomacy,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sylvie Ashford".

Dear Delegate,

Welcome to PacMUN 2019! My name is William Heyler, and I will be serving as your crisis director in the Joint Crisis Committee: Colombia. I am currently a freshman at the University of Portland (Oregon), where I am studying Political Science with a hopeful double major in Economics. I am originally from Honolulu, HI, and graduated from 'Iolani School. I have competed in Model UN for six years and have received several awards in the process. I also served as the president of 'Iolani's Model UN team during my senior year.

To me, Model UN is a link to what goes on in the real world with issues that currently face our generation. One such problem is the Venezuela crisis where more and more people are adversely affected by it daily. Colombia is a significant player in this conflict as it shares an extensive land border to the east. As such, this committee has a substantial say in what happens. I hope to see a constructive debate with all options on the table as this situation will change rapidly. To make the most of this conference, I recommend researching the specific role of Colombia and your character.

Best of luck as you conduct your research and I look forward to seeing you in Hawai'i this November for an exciting weekend filled with positive debate and successful long term solutions.

If you have any questions on this or anything, free to reach out! My email is heyler23@up.edu.

Best Regards,

William Heyler

Executive Summary

Nearly a decade of political and economic deterioration in Venezuela has culminated in a humanitarian crisis of historic proportions. In the early 2010s, fifteen years of rampant government spending under President Hugo Chavez combined with a global recession triggered one of the most extreme periods of hyperinflation in modern history. Even with the largest oil reserves in the world, widespread poverty coupled with starvation, infectious disease, political unrest, and rampant violence have come to characterize the current state of the country. After the highly contested election of President Nicolas Maduro in January 2019 and politician Juan Guaido's claim to the presidency, Venezuela and the international community have been divided in their support for a Venezuelan regime and vision of a path towards peace and prosperity. Countries such as the U.S., Canada, Brazil, Colombia, and many Western European nations have expressed support for Guaido, while Russia, China, Cuba, Iran, and others continue to back Maduro and condemn proposals of foreign intervention.

Neighboring Andean nation Colombia has received more migrants and refugees from the Venezuelan crisis than any other country, and has maintained relatively open borders for the sake of humanitarian relief. As Maduro refuses incoming aid and readies troops on the Colombian border, however, Colombia must weigh its political, economic, and humanitarian duties and responsibilities at home and in the region.¹ Over the past year, guerilla groups have increased activity in Southern Colombia; simultaneously, certain humanitarian efforts have been bolstered and diplomatic conversations proposed with allies. The coming year could determine the fates of millions of Venezuelans in peril and affect the country's political trajectory for decades to come.

¹Anatoly Kurmanaev, "Venezuela's Collapse Is the Worst Outside War in Decades, Economists Say," *The New York Times*, May 17, 2019.

Background I: The Venezuelan Crisis

Between 1998 and 2013, President Hugo Chavez and the United Socialist Party presided over Venezuelan politics.² A series of economic policies, including price controls, social programs, and expanded public services, centralized Chavez' political power and increased the role of the government in the economy.³ Although poverty rates decreased, while public health, literacy rates, and quality of life all improved, these achievements changed course in the wake of the 2008 global financial crisis.⁴ Through the early 2010s, poverty rates increased and past public spending would prove unsustainable.⁵

The Economic Crisis

In late 2014, a year after the death of President Chavez, oil prices collapsed and set Venezuela's oil-dependent economy on a downward spiral. Over the course of twelve months, GDP shrunk by nearly 6% and inflation rose dramatically.⁶ Without oil revenue, and with little saved from an oil boom in the early 2000s, President Maduro closed off import markets and used national reserves to cover foreign debt payments.⁷ Without imports, food and medicine shortages began to set in.⁸ Local producers struggled to meet demand due to decades of underdevelopment

² "Venezuela Crisis in 300 Words," BBC News, May 1, 2019. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-48121148>

³ Charlie Devereux and Raymond Colitt, "Venezuelans' Quality of Life Improved in UN Index Under Chavez," Bloomberg L.P. March 9, 2013. <https://web.archive.org/web/20141107050220/http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2013-03-07/venezuelans-quality-of-life-improved-in-un-index-under-chavez.html>

⁴ Juan Cristóbal Nagel, "Poverty Shoots Up in Venezuela," *Foreign Policy*. June 4, 2014.

⁵ "Venezuela Crisis in 300 Words," BBC News, May 1, 2019. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-48121148>

⁶ Dominic Bailey et al., "Venezuela: All you need to know about the crisis in nine charts," BBC News, February 4, 2019. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-46999668>

⁷ Mercy Benzaquen, "How food in Venezuela went from subsidized to scarce," *The New York Times*, July 16, 2017. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/07/16/world/americas/venezuela-shortages.html>

⁸ *Ibid.*

and new government policies that slashed farmers' profit margins, prevented imports of farming materials and equipment, and mismanaged property distribution.⁹ Government currency controls, intended to prevent an outward flow of capital, resulted in an inflationary conflict with the currency black market. Even though Venezuela possesses the largest known oil reserves in the world, oil production continued to decrease in response to weak revenues, decreased investment and weakened trade ties.¹⁰ Inflation soon turned to hyperinflation; by the end of 2018, prices of common goods were doubling every 19 days.¹¹ The International Monetary Fund (IMF) estimates that by the end of 2019, at current rates, Venezuela's inflation rate will hit an incomparable 10 million percent.¹²

The Political Crisis

As economic conditions worsened, the opposition party to President Maduro garnered popular support around the country and won a two-thirds supermajority in the 2015 National Assembly elections.¹³ In what critics called a defensive response, Maduro appointed a number of his associates to the Supreme Court. These justices blocked a handful of opposition lawmakers from assuming assembly positions and banned an opposition leader from running in 2017.¹⁴ Mass demonstrations broke out against the court's decision that lasted for months and left 66 protestors dead.¹⁵ A new, rival branch of government endorsed by Maduro, the "Constituent Assembly," was elected that Spring and granted powers superseding those of the National

⁹ Benzaquen, "How food in Venezuela went from subsidized to scarce."

¹⁰ Kathryn Reid, "Venezuela Crisis: Facts, FAQs, and How to Help," World Vision, April 30, 2019. <https://www.worldvision.org/disaster-relief-news-stories/venezuela-crisis-facts>

¹¹ Bailey et al., "Venezuela."

¹² Reid, "Venezuela Crisis: Facts, FAQs, and How to Help."

¹³ Rahima Nasa, "Timeline: How the Crisis in Venezuela Unfolded," PBS News, February 22, 2019. <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/article/timeline-how-the-crisis-in-venezuela-unfolded/>

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

Assembly.¹⁶ The U.S., Canada, and a number of neighboring Latin American countries did not recognize the legislative body as legitimate due to suspicions of a rigged election.¹⁷ The U.S. labelled the Venezuelan presidential elections the following year as similarly illegitimate and undemocratic before they had even taken place; despite these accusations of foul play, Maduro was reelected on May 20, 2018.¹⁸

Protests broke out once again just days after Maduro's January 2019 inauguration. Protestors called attention to his shocking 68% victory margin as fraudulent and decried the deteriorating economic situation.¹⁹ Juan Guaido, President of the National Assembly and popular opposition leader, declared himself president according to emergency constitutional powers.²⁰ Following the United State's decision to acknowledge Guaido as the legitimate Venezuelan leader, Maduro declared an end to diplomatic relations and blocked American humanitarian aid from crossing into Venezuela on February 8.²¹ These developments incited Maduro to close the Venezuelan-Brazilian border, which in turn led to violent skirmishes and civilian deaths. On February 21, American President Donald Trump issued an ultimatum to the Venezuelan military; reject Maduro and accept Guaido as president, or "lose everything."²² On April 30, 2019, Mr. Guaido asked security forces to aid him in the "final phase" required to remove Maduro from power, which Maduro's government labelled "an attempted coup."²³ As of July 2019, however,

¹⁶ "Venezuela Crisis in 300 Words," BBC News, May 1, 2019. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-48121148>

¹⁷ Nasa, "Timeline."

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ana Vanessa Herrero and Megan Specia, "Venezuela is in Crisis. So How did Maduro Secure a Second Term?" *The New York Times*, January 10, 2019. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/10/world/americas/venezuela-maduro-inauguration.html>

²⁰ Nasa, "Timeline."

²¹ Nasa, "Timeline."

²² Ibid.

²³ "Venezuela Crisis in 300 Words," BBC News.

the Venezuelan military has not slackened its support for Maduro and the political stand-off persists.

The Humanitarian Crisis

The ramifications of political and economic instability have had major humanitarian consequences within the country. The Venezuelan health system, declining since 2012, took a dramatic turn for the worse in 2017. A comprehensive picture of the reach of health services is currently lacking due to the government's noncompliance with international requests for data over the past few years. Certain details, however, have revealed systemic failures. Compared to a rate of near zero prior to 2015, nearly 10,000 measles cases have been reported since 2017, in addition to more than a thousand instances of diphtheria.²⁴ Tuberculosis- and HIV-related deaths have also been increasing, although adequate testing is lacking.²⁵ The spread of these and other vaccine-preventable diseases imply that the vaccination rate has plunged dramatically. The tenfold increase in malaria cases, approaching 500,000 in 2017, evidenced medication shortages and decreased environmental standards of living.²⁶ Due to nationwide power outages, public hospitals have been inconsistently able to provide Venezuelans with emergency services.²⁷ According to the last Venezuelan report issued in 2016, maternal mortality rates rose 65% and infant mortality rates 30% in a single year.²⁸

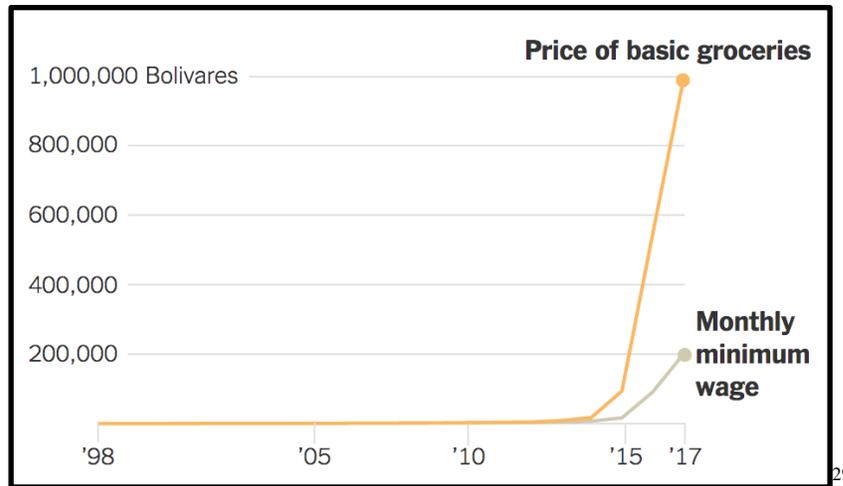
²⁴ Shannon Doocy, *Venezuela's Humanitarian Emergency*, Human Rights Watch, April 4, 2019. <https://www.hrw.org/report/2019/04/04/venezuelas-humanitarian-emergency/large-scale-un-response-needed-address-health>

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Doocy, *Venezuela's Humanitarian Emergency*.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.



Inflation and decreased food production have triggered widespread food shortages and malnutrition. Venezuelans lost an average of 19 pounds during 2016 due to cuts in public food subsidies.³⁰ By 2017, the cost of basic food was five times that of the minimum wage.³¹ Nine out of ten Venezuelans reported being unable to comfortably afford their daily food.³² A nationwide survey concluded that 80% of Venezuelan households were food insecure, while the UN Food and Agriculture Organization reported over 11% of Venezuelans to be undernourished.³³ Between 2014 and 2018, nearly half a million Venezuelan children have needed immediate humanitarian assistance relating to hunger and medical needs upon their arrival in neighboring countries.³⁴

Food and medicine shortages, compounded by political persecution, widespread violence, and rampant hyperinflation, have driven around four million people from Venezuela since

²⁹ Benzaquen, “How food in Venezuela went from subsidized to scarce.”

³⁰ Nasa, “Timeline.”

³¹ Benzaquen, “How food in Venezuela went from subsidized to scarce.”

³² Bailey et al., “Venezuela.”

³³ Doocy, *Venezuela’s Humanitarian Emergency*.

³⁴ Reid, “Venezuela Crisis: Facts, FAQs, and How to Help.”

2014.³⁵ More are estimated to have fled without attempting registration in their destination country, and an additional two million are expected to leave over the course of 2019.³⁶ This exodus has produced the largest migration crisis in modern continental history.³⁷ Although the largest group resides in Colombia,

Peru, Ecuador, and other Latin American countries have received departing Venezuelans.³⁸

Due to the diverse and complex situations driving Venezuelans away from their country of origin, some recipient countries are unwilling to provide them with refugee status. Although a number of international statutes on refugee rights have established broader definitions of a refugee, none are legally binding. The

foundational 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees specified that status belonged to those fleeing targeted armed conflict, persecution of a protected group, or a massive humanitarian



³⁵ Reid, “Venezuela Crisis: Facts, FAQs, and How to Help.”

³⁶ Nasa, “Timeline.”

³⁷ Tamara Taraciuk Broner, *The Venezuelan Exodus*, Human Rights Watch, September 3, 2018.

<https://www.hrw.org/report/2018/09/03/venezuelan-exodus/need-regional-response-unprecedented-migration-crisis#>

³⁸ Ibid; also the source of the map entitled “Registered Venezuelans Who Left Their Country Since 2014.”

disaster such as a famine.³⁹ As some Venezuelans are migrating for economic or social reasons, including family reunification, those emigrating fall into different categories with vastly different international entitlements.

International Involvement

International demonstrations broke out in the wake of the January 2019 inauguration and prolonged election scandal. Hundreds of thousands of expatriate Venezuelans around the world protested in support of both Guaido and Maduro.⁴⁰ Over the next few months, states, non-state actors, and international organizations expressed political support, and in some cases, military or economic aid to one side or the other. Some groups have remained neutral, instead focused on providing emergency humanitarian relief and non-political support for human rights in the region. To this date, however, foreign military presence in Venezuela remains limited to forces loyal to the Maduro regime. With ongoing information problems inside the country, troop numbers and presence are often disputed by the allegedly responsible parties.

Some of the first governments to respond included those of the United States, Canada, and Brazil, in condemnation of Maduro as ‘an illegitimate dictator.’⁴¹ These criticisms were shortly followed by these states, Colombia, and much of Western Europe acknowledging Guaido as the country’s legitimate president.⁴² This widespread decision granted Guaido international legitimacy in certain significant ways, including conferring him the ability to meet with

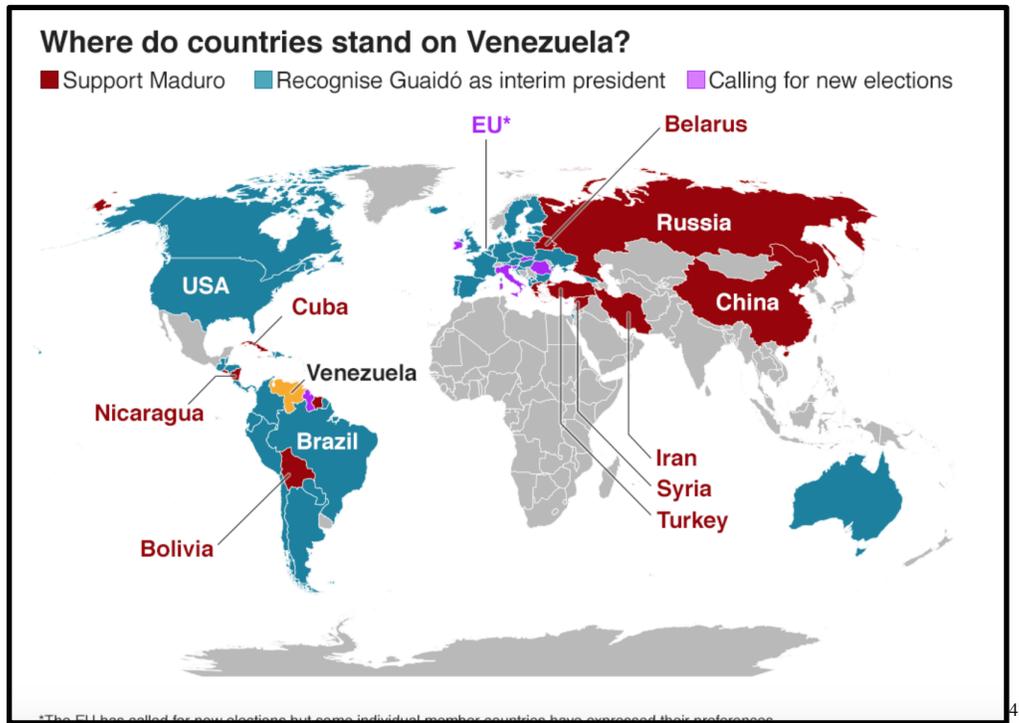
³⁹ “The Refugee Concept under International Law,” *Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration*, The United Nations Commission on Human Rights, March 15, 2018. <https://www.unhcr.org/5aa290937.pdf>

⁴⁰ Carmen Sesin, “Venezuelans Take to the Streets Worldwide Calling for an End to Maduros Presidency,” *NBCNews.com*, NBCUniversal News Group, February 3, 2019, <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/latino/venezuelans-take-streets-worldwide-calling-end-maduro-s-presidency-n966076>

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*

representatives of these states or benefit from their alliances in other ways. Simultaneously, this decision removed Maduro’s ability to interact with these states in a presidential capacity.



The American decision was immediately consequential for Venezuela. Referring to and accepting the Assembly’s decision that the election had been illegitimate, U.S. President Trump was quick to officially recognize Mr. Guaidó as the interim Venezuelan President on January 23, 2019.⁴⁴ The U.S. granted Mr. Guaidó access to certain international Venezuelan reserves and sanctioned Maduro as well as many of his associates.⁴⁵ These sanctions included an end to the trade partnership between Venezuela’s state-owned oil company PDVSA and the United States,

⁴³ Carmen Sesin, “Venezuelans Take to the Streets Worldwide Calling for an End to Maduros Presidency,” *NBCNews.com*, NBCUniversal News Group, February 3, 2019, <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/latino/venezuelans-take-streets-worldwide-calling-end-maduro-s-presidency-n966076>

⁴⁴ “President Donald J. Trump Supports the Venezuelan People’s Efforts to Restore Democracy in their Country,” Briefings, *The White House*, January 29, 2019. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/president-donald-j-trump-supports-venezuelan-peoples-efforts-restore-democracy-country/>

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

the consumer of 41% of the company's exports.⁴⁶ In addition to punitive trade measures, the U.S. withdrew its diplomats from Caracas in March, ending formal diplomatic relations with the Maduro regime.⁴⁷

In the region, Colombia, Argentina, and Brazil rejected Maduro's claim to his new presidential term. Colombian President Ivan Duque, along with these peers, said that his country recognized Guaido as the legitimate Venezuelan leader.⁴⁸ Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro said the same and guaranteed that he would devote his full attention to 're-establish order, democracy, and freedom' in Venezuela, Brazil's neighbor and trading partner in the north.⁴⁹ Both the Lima Group and the Organization of American States (OAS) have recognized Guaido as legitimate to varying degrees. The former, a multilateral body established in 2017 with the goal of a peaceful exit to the Venezuelan conflict broadly advocate for human rights including release of political prisoners, free elections, and offer humanitarian aid. With the exception of Mexico and a few other parties with a non-interventionist stance, the Lima Group supports the "restoration of democracy" under the leadership of Guaido.⁵⁰ The OAS approved a resolution on January 10, 2019 "to not recognize the legitimacy of Nicolas Maduro's new term." Although member states

⁴⁶ Bailey et al., "Venezuela."

⁴⁷ Alexandra Ma, "Almost every country in Latin America sided with Trump against Venezuela's embattled President Maduro," *Business Insider*, January 24, 2019, <https://www.businessinsider.com/venezuela-almost-all-latin-america-like-trump-supports-maduro-rival-2019-1?r=US&IR=T>

⁴⁸ Holly K. Sunneland, "Timeline: Venezuela's Political Standoff," AS/COA, July 31, 2019, <https://www.as-coa.org/articles/timeline-venezuelas-political-standoff>

⁴⁹ "Brasil reconhece a Juan Guaido como presidente interino de Venezuela," *Gestion*, January 12, 2019, <https://gestion.pe/mundo/brasil-reconoce-juan-guaido-legitimo-presidente-venezuela-nndc-255542-noticia/>

⁵⁰ Mitra Taj, "Mexico urges regional bloc not to meddle in Venezuela," *Reuters*, January 4, 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-venezuela-politics/mexico-urges-regional-bloc-not-to-meddle-in-venezuela-idUSKCN1OY1R4>

remain divided between supporting Guaido and promoting neutrality, the Secretary General Luis Almagro recognized Guaido's rule just days after the resolution.⁵¹

A majority of European Union states including the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and Spain have declared their support for the Guaido government in past months. The EU has collectively issued statements supporting “the National Assembly as the democratically elected institution whose powers need to be restored and respected.”⁵² The body also released a condemnation of the Constituent Assembly for attempting to change rules to subject Guaido to prosecution, an act in violation of the constitution and institutional checks and balances.⁵³

In contrast, Russia has been outspoken against American support for Mr. Guaido and all foreign opposition to President Maduro's resumption of power.⁵⁴ President Putin has argued that interference in Venezuelan affairs is both a violation of international law and sovereignty, and a necessary precursor to violence or war.⁵⁵ Russia has flown Tu-160 nuclear capable bombers to Venezuela, advocated for Maduro in front of the U.N., and facilitated a large portion of arms trade with Venezuela. Russia also continues to invest economic aid, criticized domestically by some as an investment lost in a ‘black hole.’⁵⁶ In directly countering the U.S. position on the crisis, a confrontation between the two states seems increasingly possible. Some political observers fear that the U.S. and Russia could exploit the Venezuelan situation to battle over other competing interests.

⁵¹ “OAS Permanent Council Agrees ‘to not recognize the legitimacy of Nicolas Maduro’s new term.’” OAS Press Release, January 10, 2019, http://www.oas.org/en/media_center/press_release.asp?sCodigo=E-001/19

⁵² Robin Emmot, “EU condemns Venezuelan efforts to prosecute Guaido: statement,” *Reuters*, April 4, 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-venezuela-politics-eu/eu-condemns-venezuelan-efforts-to-prosecute-guaido-statement-idUSKCN1RG0WG>

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ Sarah Rainsford, “Venezuela Crisis: Why Russia has so much to lose,” *BBCNews.com*, February 1, 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-47087875>

Other countries in the region and abroad share Russia's sentiment and continue to recognize Maduro as the true leader of Venezuela, including Cuba, Bolivia, Nicaragua, and China.⁵⁷ President Xi, however, has softened his stance in response to the stances of its other South American allies and Chinese frustration surrounding Venezuela's current inability to repay its \$67B USD debt owed to China. Currently, President Xi and the Chinese government have issued statements opposing foreign interference, unilateral sanctions, and other uses of force, instead advocating inclusive political dialogue between Maduro and Guaido's factions.⁵⁸

The United Nations does not promote either side, as a consensus among Security Council members (the U.S., U.K., France, Russia, and China) has not been reached. Although the U.S. drafted a resolution for new elections in Venezuela, humanitarian aid, and recognition of Guaido, it was vetoed by Russia and China.⁵⁹ Russia proposed a resolution calling for dialogue between Maduro and Guaido in line with the Montevideo Initiative from Mexico and Uruguay (at the International Conference on the Situation in Venezuela), but it failed to pass.⁶⁰ In February 2019, a group of U.N. delegates from Russia, China, and Venezuela declared the American-led effort to acknowledge Guaido as legitimate "illicit."⁶¹

Background II: Colombia and the Venezuelan Crisis

After President Duque's acknowledgment of Guaido's rule over Maduro's, Colombian and Venezuelan tensions escalated. Between January and February 2019, Colombia was

⁵⁷ Bailey et al., "Venezuela."

⁵⁸ Christian Shepherd, "China opposes outside interference in Venezuela's affairs," *Reuters.com*, January 24, 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-venezuela-politics-china/china-opposes-outside-interference-in-venezuelas-affairs-idUSKCN1PI180>

⁵⁹ "Venezuela: Competing US, Russia resolutions fail to pass in Security Council," *UN News*, February 28, 2019, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2019/02/1033832>

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

involved in efforts to raise awareness and aid to the Venezuelan crisis; President Duque attended a notable benefit along with the Presidents of Paraguay and Chile.⁶² In February, however, forces associated with the Maduro regime began efforts to block humanitarian aid transport over the Colombian border into Venezuela.⁶³ Maduro argued that international aid, regardless of purpose, was a violation of national sovereignty and challenge to his authority. Venezuelan security forces fired tear gas, rubber and real bullets across the border in response to pro-aid protests, while images of burning aid transports dominated the news cycle.⁶⁴ Near the border, two Guaido affiliates were assassinated at a cafe in Cucato, Colombia, most likely on behalf of Maduro.⁶⁵

Even amidst this encroaching violence, however, President Duque along with the leaders of Chile and Brazil ruled out the possibility of intervening personally in the conflict on February 25.⁶⁶ President Duque instead took part in talks with the U.S. and allies over new methods to deliver aid to Venezuelans, and staunchly denied Russian insinuations surrounding Colombian intent to take military action.⁶⁷ By April 30, however, President Duque decided to deploy an unspecified number of troops to the Colombia-Venezuela border for reasons of “prevention and security.”⁶⁸ Border conditions shifted in June when Maduro reopened the shared border to allow thousands more Venezuelans to stream into Colombian territory for emergency relief, while continuing to prevent incoming aid.⁶⁹ In late July, the media caught wind of early talks between

⁶² Holly K. Sunneland, “Timeline: Venezuela’s Political Standoff,” AS/COA, July 31, 2019, <https://www.as-coa.org/articles/timeline-venezuelas-political-standoff>

⁶³ Holly K. Sunneland, “Timeline: Venezuela’s Political Standoff,” AS/COA, July 31, 2019, <https://www.as-coa.org/articles/timeline-venezuelas-political-standoff>

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

the U.S. and Colombia relating to a weapons deal in which Colombia might purchase 15 F-16 fighter jets.⁷⁰

Continued peace-keeping and conflict avoidance would prove more challenging by the end of August as Colombia's internal security situation faltered. On August 29, the former commander of The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia People's Army (FARC), a guerilla terrorist organization that entered a peace agreement with the Colombian government in 2016, announced plans to take up arms once again in opposition to the regime.⁷¹ Simultaneously, President Duque has accused the Maduro regime of harboring FARC members and other dangerous militants contributing to this escalation.⁷² Guaido echoed Duque's claims and called on Maduro to cease implicit support for such dangerous actors.⁷³ In response, Maduro accused Colombia of seeking to initiate a war with Venezuela and warned that Colombia could be planning an attack at any moment. He has since placed his troops on high alert and began conducting military exercises near the Colombian border.⁷⁴

Although the political and economic implications of the Venezuelan crisis threaten the stability of the region as a whole, and military tensions between Venezuela and Colombia may continue to escalate, the largest single impact on Colombia to date has been the migration crisis. Colombia currently hosts more displaced Venezuelans than any other country. Out of the 4 million Venezuelans who have departed since the beginning of the conflict, 1.1 million (over one

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ "Venezuela on alert as Maduro alleges Colombian plan to attack," Al Jazeera, September 4, 2019, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/09/venezuela-alert-maduro-alleges-colombia-plot-attack-190904041627386.html>

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

in four) have relocated to Colombia.⁷⁵ Of this number, about one third entered with permits, one third are returning dual or Colombian citizens, and the remaining have entered without any legal status. Colombian authorities have sought to secure legal permits for those with expired visas in order to continue providing them with public services since 2017.⁷⁶ Even so, the number of unregistered Venezuelans likely remains high.⁷⁷ Hundreds are believed to pass into Colombia each day through over 270 unofficial border crossings.⁷⁸ The Colombian Red Cross reports providing food, water, and phone service to around 80 Venezuelans a day walking into Colombia on foot.⁷⁹ Although some move through Colombia to other countries, the numbers are imprecise and legal documents remain inconsistent.

The treatment of Venezuelans in Colombia has been reported relatively positively. As previously mentioned, many Venezuelans fleeing the crisis do not have recognized international refugee status due to the varied circumstances of their departure. Under the 1984 Cartagena Declaration, however, refugees broadly include “persons who have fled their country because their lives, safety or freedom have been threatened by generalized violence, foreign aggression, internal conflicts, *massive violation of human rights or other circumstances which have seriously disturbed public order.*”⁸⁰ As a signer of this declaration, Colombia has adopted a number of measures to provide newly arrived Venezuelans with access to health care and education; coordinated efforts with UN agencies and local civil society partners has resulted in successful shelter and vaccination initiatives. Since 2018, at least 580,000 Venezuelans (including legal

⁷⁵ Reid, “Venezuela Crisis: Facts, FAQs, and How to Help.”

⁷⁶ Broner, *The Venezuelan Exodus*.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Broner, *The Venezuelan Exodus*.

entrants, irregular immigrants, and forgiven visa overstayers) have received Colombian work permits.⁸¹ The system remains, however, unsustainable. The hundreds of thousands of unregistered Venezuelans in Colombia still lack access to basic services and opportunities for employment. In 2018, the Colombian government was criticized for reporting 2,700 deportations of such persons back to Venezuela as “voluntary” departures.⁸²

Due to the migrant crisis, Colombia has faced a growing number of related humanitarian problems. More than 8,000 Venezuelan women are expected to have given birth in Colombia in the past five years.⁸³ As the number of incoming Venezuelans has increased, mortality rates among Venezuelan infants in Colombia have also increased.⁸⁴ Thousands of Venezuelans crossing through the North Santander border area each year have sought out emergency medical care upon entrance, including for acute and infectious diseases.⁸⁵ In March 2019, international health officials warned that growing numbers of Venezuelan refugees are carrying malaria, yellow fever, diphtheria, dengue, and tuberculosis into neighboring states, including Colombia.⁸⁶

As a result of new FARC activity, conditions for migrants and refugees have also become more dangerous. In the border region of Catatumbo, more than 40,000 civilians including Colombians and Venezuelan migrants have been forced to flee due to guerilla activity since 2017.⁸⁷ 25,000 Venezuelans currently reside in the area, and have been widely at risk of violence

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Doocy, *Venezuela's Humanitarian Emergency*.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ryan Dube, "Red Cross announces Venezuelan aid effort," *Wall Street Journal*, March 29, 2019. <https://www.wsj.com/articles/red-cross-announces-venezuelan-aid-effort-11553899904>

⁸⁷ Tamara Broner and Juan Papier, "The War at the Colombia-Venezuela Border," *Americas Quarterly*, August 28, 2019, <https://www.americasquarterly.org/content/war-colombia-venezuela-border>

including sexual violence, child recruitment, forced disappearance, and murder.⁸⁸ In the adjacent region of Arauca, violence has not only primarily affected migrants but done so at an increasing rate; the first six months of 2019 saw more murders (98) than all of 2017 (85) for example.⁸⁹ Venezuelan boys as young as 14 work full-time in coca fields, while Venezuelan girls as young as 12 have been found in brothels run by FARC and other guerilla groups in the Colombian border region.⁹⁰

Colombian Interests, Assets, and Allies

Colombia can play a vital role in mitigating the migrant crisis and coordinating humanitarian projects in the region. Although Colombia has been praised for its open-door policy with Venezuelan migrants compared to most other states in the region, the government has also been criticized for addressing violence in the border region with only the deployment of security forces.⁹¹ Security forces have been accused of using methods that are not always respectful of migrants rights. The government also has not affirmed migrant rights in the justice system or prosecuted the vast majority of violent criminal activity affecting Colombia's poorest and most vulnerable residents.⁹² Two key problems perpetuate the continued need for disaster relief near the border: a lack of basic public services in the area combined with a lack of work permits preventing affected people from moving elsewhere in the country.⁹³ Granting permits and other documentation might allow migrants to improve their own quality of life, but may have

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Tamara Broner and Juan Papier, "The War at the Colombia-Venezuela Border," *Americas Quarterly*, August 28, 2019, <https://www.americasquarterly.org/content/war-colombia-venezuela-border>

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid.

implications for Colombia's economy, particularly its unemployment rate, as well as the country's demographics and culture, to keep in mind.

Although Colombia has recently been meeting its GDP goals and seeing growth in certain private sectors, the government's spending deficit continues to grow.⁹⁴ Accumulating greater debt will have long term risks, including creating a less appealing landscape for future investors. A potential economic slow-down in connection to growing trade tensions between the U.S. and China is also anticipated this year, with potential impacts for all of Latin America.⁹⁵ Although guerilla activity is not expected to have an immediate impact on spending, its impact on security could also impact investors and its long term costs are difficult to estimate.⁹⁶

Colombia must address the growing strain upon the emergency medical system in providing care to Venezuelan refugees, as well as heightened rates of infectious disease. Colombia can seek support from UN agencies, local civil society partners, and/or its regional allies in order to address these problems, as long as collective political will remains favorable. Coordination with other countries could help ease these burdens on Colombia's public infrastructure. Colombia might seek, for example, to coordinate status-granting with neighboring countries and develop a mechanism to equitably distribute the financial burden of hosting migrants and refugees.⁹⁷

In order to address the root causes of the crisis, Colombia must also work with its allies to weigh the costs and benefits of political action, such as sanctions on the individuals and parties

⁹⁴ Loren Moss, "Colombia's Economy Still Faces Risks Despite 2019 Data," Finance Colombia, September 9, 2019. <https://www.financecolombia.com/colombias-economy-still-faces-risks-despite-2019-data-fitch/>

⁹⁵ Loren Moss, "Colombia's Economy Still Faces Risks Despite 2019 Data," Finance Colombia, September 9, 2019. <https://www.financecolombia.com/colombias-economy-still-faces-risks-despite-2019-data-fitch/>

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Broner, *The Venezuelan Exodus*.

contributing to the humanitarian crisis.⁹⁸ These allies might include the U.S., Canada, many EU nations including the U.K. and France, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, and Argentina. Conversely, Colombia must be prepared to respond to antagonism from Russia and its allies, including Cuba, who still support the Maduro regime and may side with Venezuela in the ongoing border conflict. Colombia must also be aware of the influence of allegedly neutral states, such as Mexico, that may or may not be willing to support Colombia going forward.

Colombia could seek to maintain peace along its border by utilizing communication channels at the OAS and UN or respond to Venezuelan troop movement uni- or multilaterally. Before taking any military steps, Colombia must consider the impact of these decisions on the already fragile economic situation in the region. While addressing the Venezuelan threat, Colombia will surely simultaneously need to meet increasing military needs at home in response to Guerilla activity. The Colombian political and security apparatus is now tasked with balancing these financial demands and challenges to find the best outcome for Colombia, the region, and the greater international community.

⁹⁸ Doocy, *Venezuela's Humanitarian Emergency*.

Questions to Consider

A. Background

What is Colombia's present relationship with Venezuela, Cuba, Russia, and the United States?

Have these relationships changed over time?

What Colombian interests are at stake in the Venezuelan crisis?

What is the role of regional neighbors and the international community in mediating the crisis?

Are there historical cases analogous to the situation in Venezuela today?

B. Potential Crises

What are the crucial elements of a Colombian response to a public health crisis?

What economic tools can Colombia wield against inflation and destabilization?

How can Colombia ascertain support from international allies against national security threats?

How would Colombia respond to a larger American presence in Venezuela?

How would Colombia respond to heightened Russian involvement in Venezuela?

In what potential scenarios might Colombian, Cuban, and Venezuelan interests overlap? Clash?

Character List

(Chair) President - Iván Duque Márquez

Vice President - Marta Lucía Ramírez

Minister of the Interior - Nancy Patricia Gutierrez

Minister of Foreign Affairs - Carlos Holmes Trujillo

Minister of National Defense - Guillermo Botero Nieto

Commander General of the Colombian Armed Forces - Ricardo Jimenez Mejia

Minister of Finance and Public Credit - Alberto Carrasquilla Barrera

Minister of Health and Social Protection - Juan Pablo Uribe

Minister of Housing, City, and Territory - Jonathan Malagón

Minister of Labour - Alicia Arango

Executive of the Policia Nacional de Colombia - Jorge Hernando Nieto

Minister of Commerce, Industry and Tourism - Jose Manuel Restrepo Abondano

Minister of Justice and Law - Margarita Cabello Bianco

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development - Andrés Valencia Pinzón

Minister of Culture - Carmen Vasquez

Minister of Mines and Energy - María Fernanda Suárez

Minister of Environment and Territorial Development - Ricardo Lozano Picón

Minister of National Education - Maria Victoria Angulo

Commander of the National Army - Major General Nicasio de Jesus Martinez Espinel

Commander of the Air Force - Major General Ramses Rueda Rueda

Governor of Arauca - Ricardo Alvarado Bestene

Committee Policies:

A. Technology

Delegates will not have access to WiFi at any point during committee. To ensure that all delegates can participate equitably and attentively listen to their peers, the committee will be technology free at the Chair's discretion. The Chair anticipates that all crisis notes and directives will be drafted by hand (a process typically encouraging of collaboration and efficiency) unless a delegate has reason to request different accommodations in advance.

B. Rules of Procedure

The Rules of Procedure for committee will be the same as at previous PacMUNs and match those typical of conferences on the North American high school Model U.N. circuit. Because crisis committees can run at a fast pace, certain rules may be relaxed at the Chair's discretion to facilitate debate appropriately. This may entail, for example, concluding caucuses early in the wake of course-altering crisis updates, selecting moderated caucus speakers in advance, or entertaining informal Q-and-A sessions on directives or inter-committee interactions.

Although all delegates are encouraged to read over the Rules of Procedure guide ahead of the conference, the Chair may review certain rules in the first committee session. If delegates have questions about the format of committee, they may ask a question at any time by raising their placard and saying: "Point of Parliamentary Procedure." Similarly, if the Chair makes a procedural error during session, delegates should feel free to raise a "Point of Order."

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