



# **GALMUN 2026**

*SAINT JOSEPH SEMINARY AND HIGH SCHOOL  
in partnership with  
RETORIKA FOR MULTICULTURALISM*



## **Security Council** *RESEARCH REPORT*

Instability in Venezuela: Addressing the Venezuelan Crisis and Rising  
Tensions in Latin America and the Caribbean.

## **Definitions:**

**“Bolivarian Revolution”:** This term was used by President Hugo Chavez in 1998 to describe his vision for the country to become a socialist state that is not dependent on international powers such as the USA.<sup>1</sup>

**AD:** Acción Democrática, or in English Democratic Action, is a social-democratic, center-left political party in Venezuela, founded in the 1940s. It was strongly supported by workers, unions, and lower-income groups; however, during the 1900s, it was involved in corruption, political patronage, and mismanagement.<sup>2</sup>

**COPEI:** COPEI (Comité de Organización Política Electoral Independiente) and in English “Independent Electoral Political Organization Committee” is a Christian-democratic, center-right political party founded in 1946. COPEI was the main rival of AD and shared power with it for decades.

**Petrostate:** is a country whose economy is mostly reliant on the import and extraction of oil or natural gas. Usually, this country is corrupt, or a small number of people have a lot of influence.<sup>3</sup>

**Referendum:** It is a form of direct democracy where the citizens are asked about a decision, and they vote whether to implement it or not.<sup>4</sup>

**Caribbean:** it is a region that includes the islands and countries around the Caribbean Sea, such as Cuba, Puerto Rico, Jamaica, and the coastal areas of northern South America. Such as Colombia, Venezuela, and Guyana.

**PDVSA:** It is a Venezuela government-owned oil company. It runs almost all the country’s oil production and exports.

**Inflation:** when the prices for food, supplies, etc. rise, which means you need to spend more money on goods and services.

**Hyperinflation:** this is when the inflation rises exceptionally fast, at least 50% each month.<sup>5</sup>

**Temporary Protected Status (TPS):** Temporary Protected Status is a status given by the US to people who fled the country because of a war or a crisis that makes it unsafe for them to go back. It gives the permit to work and protection from deportation for a set period.<sup>6</sup>

**E.O.:** Executive Order is a decision made by the President of the United States that has the force of law.<sup>7</sup>

**Electoral Power:** In 1999, the Venezuelan constitution was made up of five branches, and one of those branches is Electoral Power, which is implemented by the National Electoral Council (CNE). Its job is to make sure elections run fairly and are executed democratically and smoothly.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <https://fiveable.me/key-terms/latin-america-1791-present/bolivarian-revolution>  
<https://www.oxfordreference.com/display/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803095516491>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Democratic-Action>

<sup>3</sup> <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/petrostate>

<sup>4</sup> <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/referendum>

<sup>5</sup> <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/hyperinflation>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/temporary-protected-status>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.cio.gov/handbook/other-it-authorities/executive-orders/>

<sup>8</sup> [https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Venezuela\\_2009?lang=en](https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Venezuela_2009?lang=en)

## **Background:**

Before 1998, Venezuela was a close ally of the US and exported large quantities of crude oil to the US and was considered one of the richest countries in Latin America. Venezuela is a classic case of a petrostate, even though the oil industry was increasing Venezuela's economy, most of the profits went to political and economic elites, leaving many of the citizens living in poverty, inflation, and corruption.<sup>9</sup>

This led a lot of Venezuelans to have a lot of resentment towards the US and the AD and COPEI, which ultimately brought about the 1998 election selecting Hugo Chávez for the presidency. The candidate promised real change and a "Bolivarian Revolution," to end corruption and use the PDVSA (Venezuela's leading oil company) revenues for the benefit of all citizens.<sup>10</sup>

He implemented those promises in 1999 when he called for a referendum to change the constitution, that change included a longer presidential term. It also introduced two new powers, Citizen Power and Electoral Power. However, Hugo Chávez filled those positions with loyalists, sowing the seeds of resentment among the opposition. The new constitution also introduced new social rights, access to health care, education, and housing. Although the new constitution on paper seemed democratic, it was often used by Chávez to secure his place and continue his political vision, all while weakening traditional parties like AD and COPEI.<sup>11</sup>

New hydrocarbon laws were passed, increasing taxes on political parties and foreign companies with interests and shares in oil, in contrast to previous policies that worked in favor of those parties. The profits made from the oil industry were invested in social programs. These actions decreased the poverty in the country and truly helped many citizens; however, those changes alongside Chavez's close relationship with Cuba made the US concerned. Yet, at that stage, no hostile actions were taken, with business between the two countries continuing as normal. However, the Bolivarian Revolution has caused many disgruntled groups both within Venezuela and abroad, affecting many middle-class persons, opposition groups, business elites, and sections of PDVSA who resisted Chávez's reforms.<sup>12</sup>

In April 2002, the tension between Chavez and his opponents increased when a coup briefly ousted him from office; however, after two days of high support and protests from the military and loyal groups, they were able to reinstate him, later that year Chávez's opponents started a strike that included the closure of shops and factories which affected the economy negatively. However, the biggest hit on the economy came because of a strike in the oil sector. Chávez reacted by removing most of the technical staff and replacing them with political loyalists. A consequence of this, while regaining control of the company, was the transformation of the PDVSA into a significant financial contributor to the government and the reduction of PDVSA's professionalism.<sup>13</sup> In February 2003, the strike organizers decided to reopen businesses. During 2004, the opposition groups collected approximately 2.4 million signatures more than the required number to force a referendum on Chávez's current position.

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/topic/history-of-Venezuela>  
<https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/instability-venezuela>  
<sup>10</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/topic/history-of-Venezuela>  
<https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/instability-venezuela>  
<sup>11</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/topic/history-of-Venezuela>  
<https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/instability-venezuela>  
<sup>12</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/topic/history-of-Venezuela>  
<https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/instability-venezuela>  
<sup>13</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/topic/history-of-Venezuela>  
<https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/instability-venezuela>

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Nevertheless, he was able to survive the recall effort.<sup>14</sup>

Following these events, Chávez continued implementing his political vision and funding social programs from the revenue made from the oil industry and kept pushing for his Bolivarian missions. Additionally, his support for Cuba kept on increasing by supplying petroleum to Cuba and other developing nations at low prices. Over time, he also increased his control of the media to influence citizens to support him and kept the courts and electoral bodies increasingly aligned with the government; and by 2009, he removed the presidential term limits.<sup>15</sup>

In 2013, Hugo Chávez died after a long battle with Cancer, which led to his chosen successor, Nicolás Maduro, becoming the next president of Venezuela. When Nicolas came to power, oil prices dropped significantly, which was a huge hit for a country that takes most of its income from oil revenue. This caused a harsh shortage in food, medicine, and hyperinflation. The country reacted by tightening the currency and price control, alongside printing money. This forced Venezuela to face one of the biggest inflationary crises in the world.<sup>16</sup> Consequently, many citizens and opposition groups started protesting crime, shortages, inflation, and the lack of democracy in the country. “The Venezuelan state used unnecessary, excessive, and illegal force to repress protests.”<sup>17</sup> There was also no evidence of investigations or consequences against the violators.<sup>18</sup>

The human rights violations and excessive force against the citizens of Venezuela in 2014 led the USA to issue its first big sanctions against Venezuela. “President Obama issued E.O. 13692 to implement P.L. 113-278 in March 2015, and Treasury issued regulations in July 2015 (31 C.F.R. Part 591).”<sup>19</sup> This E.O. targeted individuals who are or were involved in undermining democracy, human rights violations, violations of freedom of expression or peaceful assembly, and public corruption. It gave the USA the ability to freeze assets and deny visas to those involved. Yet this decision didn’t cut the human rights violations and torture; in fact, it kept on growing, and in 2017 it reached a new level alongside allegations of undemocratic elections, which caused the USA to issue four executive orders: E.O. 13808, E.O. 13827, E.O. 13835, E.O. 13850. They were mostly focused on financial sanctions that included “prohibited access to U.S. financial markets by the Venezuelan government, including state energy company Petróleos de Venezuela, S.A. (PdVSA), with certain exceptions intended to minimize the impact on the Venezuelan people and US interests.”<sup>20</sup>

Let us consider two of these executive orders. E.O. 13827’s main aim was to ban transactions with the Venezuelan government’s issuance of digital currency, coin, or token. E.O. 13835 banned any transaction involved in purchasing Venezuelan debt or any debt owed to Venezuela, provided as collateral. E.O. 13850 made it possible for the US to freeze the

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/topic/history-of-Venezuela>  
<https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/instability-venezuela>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/topic/history-of-Venezuela>  
<https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/instability-venezuela>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/topic/history-of-Venezuela>  
<https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/instability-venezuela>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.amnesty.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/AMR5371952023ENGLISH.pdf>  
<https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/americas/south-america/venezuela/report-venezuela/>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.amnesty.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/AMR5371952023ENGLISH.pdf>  
<https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/americas/south-america/venezuela/report-venezuela/>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/IF10715>  
<https://www.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/senate-bill/2142/text>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/IF10715>  
<https://www.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/senate-bill/2142/text>

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money, property, or financial accounts of any person or company connected to certain sectors of Venezuela's economy or involved in corrupt deals with Maduro. This executive order made it so that PDVSA was officially placed under sanctions.<sup>21</sup> These sanctions worsened the import of aid and therefore worsened its shortage. It has also worsened the already weak economy.<sup>22</sup>

In 2018, Maduro was reelected to the presidency; however, this election was followed up with protests and boycotts because of accusations of fraud. "Two weeks after Maduro was sworn in, the National Assembly declared his election illegitimate, and opposition leader Juan Guaidó announced that he would assume the office of interim president until free and fair elections could be held, in accordance with the succession rules outlined in the 1999 constitution."<sup>23</sup> He was recognized immediately by the United States, Canada, most of the European Union, and the Organization of American States. On the other hand, Maduro was supported by major countries like China, Cuba, Russia, and Turkey.

In 2019, the USA continued its sanctions against the Maduro government, this time targeting the oil industry. "The E.O. froze all property and interests in property of PDVSA subject to U.S. jurisdiction and prohibited U.S. persons (companies or individuals) from engaging in transactions with the company."<sup>24</sup> This sanction also affected the oil shipments to Cuba. Maduro and Cuba had a very strong relationship that helped him stay in office, alongside support from Russia to try and evade the sanctions on the oil sector. China has continued to back Maduro.

Regardless of these countries' support, Venezuela's crisis kept worsening. Years of mismanagement and a terrible economic state led to nationwide blackouts in March 2019, leaving millions without power. Moreover, because the government has been unable to provide social services, Venezuelans face severe food and medicine shortages and the continuing spread of infectious diseases."<sup>25</sup>

During this time, after years of denying the humanitarian crisis that was happening in Venezuela, Maduro allowed aid from the Red Cross. At the same time, Maduro was being investigated by the ICC for crimes against humanity and the employment of armed gangs, known as colectivos, to suppress opposition. "Since the crisis escalated in 2015, an estimated eight million Venezuelans have fled the country, with 85 percent resettling in other Latin American countries, including at least three million in Colombia alone."<sup>26</sup> The fleeing of Venezuelans was mostly towards neighboring countries such as "Colombia, Peru, and Brazil, with Colombia hosting the largest number of Venezuelan refugees and migrants."<sup>27</sup> The refugee crisis has worsened the security conditions for migrants, not to mention put neighboring countries in a crisis from the struggle to absorb refugees and asylum seekers in large numbers.

During COVID-19, the humanitarian crisis kept deteriorating since nutrition and health care were provided in extremely limited amounts. Therefore, more citizens started to flee the

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/IF10715>  
<https://www.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/senate-bill/2142/text>

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/topic/history-of-Venezuela>  
<https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/instability-venezuela>

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/instability-venezuela>

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/IF10715>  
<https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/instability-venezuela>  
<https://www.britannica.com/topic/history-of-Venezuela>

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/instability-venezuela>

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/instability-venezuela>

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.unrefugees.org/news/venezuela-crisis-explained/>

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country, and people started reaching the US southern border, applying for asylum. Affecting not only the Caribbean but also the US migration policy. The US gave Venezuelans “Temporary Protected Status (TPS)” in 2021, allowing significant numbers of Venezuelans already in the United States to receive work authorization and protection from deportation.<sup>28</sup> There was also a special humanitarian parole program (CHNV) that allowed Venezuelans to legally enter the country.

## **Timeline & critical events:**

**Chávez elected president 1998:** After the suppression that the Venezuelan people had faced, Chávez was like a breath of fresh air. His campaign gave hope to the people when he promised to end corruption, vanquish poverty, and scrap Venezuela’s old political system. These strong promises have encouraged people to vote for him, where he won 56% of the votes.<sup>29</sup>

**Death of Chávez:** In June 2011, Chávez announced that he was battling Cancer. He undergoes surgery in Cuba, but his condition doesn’t get better. In March 2013, it was announced that Chávez had died.<sup>30</sup>

**Nicolas Maduro taking power:** following Chávez death, another round of heated elections between Henrique Capriles and Nicolás Maduro took place, with Maduro winning with a simple majority and taking power in Venezuela.<sup>31</sup>

**International condemnation of malpractices in the 2018 Venezuelan Elections:** after the 2018 elections, Maduro announced himself as the leader again but was denied from 50 countries including the USA, stating that he had misused power and was not the elected president of Venezuela. But with the support of China and Russia and with the military backing him up, Maduro stays in his position.<sup>32</sup>

**Venezuela’s economy collapsed:** Since oil’s prices dropped in 2014, and with Venezuela relying 90 percent of its economy on oil, the economic state in Venezuela has become exacerbated. People didn’t have any access for their basic needs, such as food and medical services.<sup>33</sup>

**Immigration percentage increased:** Venezuela has witnessed a significant increase of immigration since 2018 resulting from the harsh economic conditions, people immigrated with a hope of finding better circumstances to live in. Around 4.5 million migrants have successfully managed to secure protection; there are still 2.2 million undocumented migrants.<sup>34</sup>

**Tensions are increasing between the USA and Venezuela 2025:** after the several attempts to get Maduro out of his position, the Trump administration has positioned warships in the Venezuelan waters accusing Maduro of drug smuggling in the USA, attacking “drug trafficker.”<sup>35</sup>

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/venezuelan-immigrants-united-states>

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.cfr.org/timeline/venezuelas-chavez-era>

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.cfr.org/timeline/venezuelas-chavez-era>

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.cfr.org/timeline/venezuelas-chavez-era>

<sup>32</sup> <https://www.state.gov/nicolas-maduro-moros>

<sup>33</sup> <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/venezuela-crisis>

<sup>34</sup> <https://www.iom.int/regional-response-situation-venezuelan-migrants-and-refugees>

<sup>35</sup> <https://www.tpr.org/podcast/the-source/2025-11-23/rising-u-s-venezuela-tensions-spark-fears-of-war>



## **Current situation:**

Tension in Venezuela is running high after the last round of elections (2024) where many people accused the government of influencing the results by conducting “undemocratic” and illegitimate malpractices. Many parties and international organizations didn’t recognize its results such as the European Union, the United States and several Latin American nations. They demanded Maduro’s government release detailed data about the results that will make the results fairer and more transparent. Maduro’s government was also accused of using the judiciary and security forces to suppress its opponents with reported arrests, media blackouts, and other forms of repression. These actions have raised concerns from human rights activists and organizations such as the UN and The Organization of American States about the situation in Venezuela.

The ongoing crisis has severely affected economic conditions with rising poverty, shortages of basic goods and limited access to food, medicine and healthcare, forcing many citizens to depend on international humanitarian assistance. This crisis has caused the immigration of nearly 7.9 million people, with approximately 545,200 migrants to the USA. This number of migrants have reshaped some of the immigration policies in the USA as programs were implemented to facilitate Venezuelans entering the borders in a legal way instead of crossing the borders without being documented. They have also provided Venezuelan migrants with “temporary protected status” to work in the USA legally.<sup>36</sup> But on the other hand, the USA has tightened some of its border’s rules, where migrants that have crossed illegally are most likely to be sent home and not be able to apply for asylum.<sup>37</sup>

Following the escalated tension between the USA and Venezuela, the Trump administration has deployed warships near the Venezuelan waters and stated that its aim is to attack the drug cartels trafficking drugs into the US through Venezuela. They also accuse Maduro of helping drug traffickers in his country, although many legal experts have stated that using military action for drug trafficking doesn’t have a “clear authority”, but Trump has continued with his plan and caused the death of eleven people from these warships. This action has created fear of a broader military escalation, with Maduro pointing out the threat of the situation and pointing out that the Venezuelan army is highly alerted for any military action.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> <https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/temporary-protected-status>

<sup>37</sup> <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/venezuelan-immigrants-united-states>

<sup>38</sup> <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/instability-venezuela>  
<https://theweek.com/politics/military-us-venezuela-tensions>

## **Treaties and organization:**

**Resolution 42/25:** “Situation of human rights in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela” (Human Rights Council, 27 September 2019).<sup>39</sup>

**Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela:** On 27 September 2019, this mission was established by the United Nations human rights council to address alleged human rights violations committed since 2014.<sup>40</sup>

**Resolution adopted by the Human Rights Council on 11 October 2024 57/36. Situation of human rights in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.**<sup>41</sup>

### **Organization of American States (OAS):**

The Organization of American States is the world’s oldest regional organization. The OAS came into being in 1948. OAS includes all 35 independent countries in the Americas (North America, Central America, South America, and the Caribbean), and it works on maintaining democracy, human rights, security, and development.<sup>42</sup>

### **The Lima Group:**

The Lima Group is a regional alliance created in 2017, formed by Latin American groups and Caribbean countries. The group was formed to address the political and economic crisis in Venezuela and to find a peaceful, diplomatic solution.<sup>43</sup>

### **IOM – International Organization for Migration:**

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) was created in 1951 and is now part of the United Nations system. Its main goal is to deal with migration and help countries manage the movement of people safely and in a humane way.<sup>44</sup>

### **CARICOM (Caribbean Community):**

“The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) is a grouping of twenty-one countries: fifteen Member States and six Associate Members. It is home to approximately sixteen million citizens, 60% of whom are under the age of 30.”<sup>45</sup> CARICOM works through four main pillars: economic integration, foreign policy coordination, human and social development, and security.<sup>46</sup>

### **Cartagena Declaration on Refugees (Latin America, 1984):**

It is a regional declaration adopted in 1948 by Colombia and was later signed by Latin American states, and it addresses refugee protection in the region.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>39</sup> <https://docs.un.org/en/A/HRC/RES/42/25>

<sup>40</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/ffmv/index>

<sup>41</sup> <https://docs.un.org/en/A/HRC/RES/57/36>

<sup>42</sup> [https://www.oas.org/en/about/who\\_we\\_are.asp](https://www.oas.org/en/about/who_we_are.asp)

<sup>43</sup> [https://www.ssoar.info/ssoar/bitstream/handle/document/72939/ssoar-kszpp-2020-4-kleszczynska-The\\_humanitarian\\_crisis\\_of\\_Venezuela.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y1](https://www.ssoar.info/ssoar/bitstream/handle/document/72939/ssoar-kszpp-2020-4-kleszczynska-The_humanitarian_crisis_of_Venezuela.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y1)

<sup>44</sup> <https://www.iom.int/who-we-are>

<sup>45</sup> <https://caricom.org/our-community/who-we-are/>

<sup>46</sup> <https://caricom.org/our-community/who-we-are/>

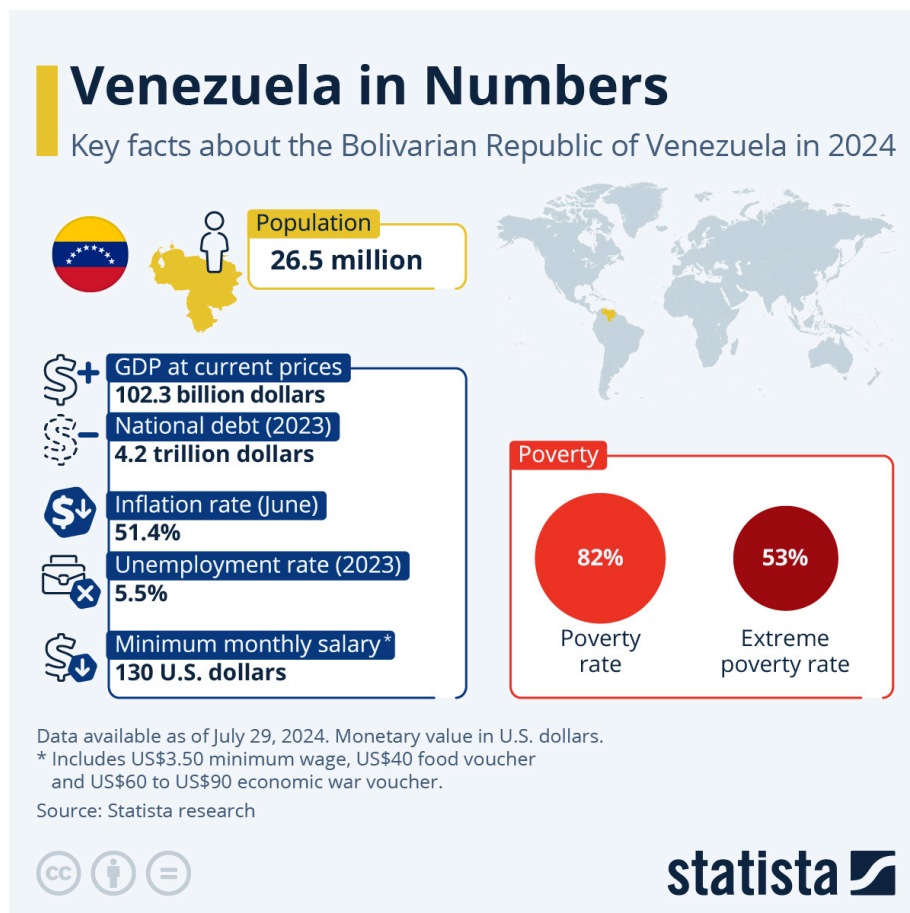
<sup>47</sup> [https://www.oas.org/dil/1984\\_cartagena\\_declaration\\_on\\_refugees.pdf](https://www.oas.org/dil/1984_cartagena_declaration_on_refugees.pdf)



## Questions to consider:

- What measures should be taken to improve the economic situation in Venezuela? And how is your country willing to help?
- What measures should be implemented to maintain high security in the region? What should be done to de-escalate this highly volatile situation?
- What efforts should be taken to ensure the safety of immigrants?
- What is your country's stance on this issue?
- What kind of actions could be done to ensure democratic elections in Venezuela?

## Relevant media :



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<sup>48</sup> [https://www.statista.com/chart/32978/key-facts-on-venezuela/?srsltid=AfmBOoqV6rd09A9X3YQG-Ls8kmmZwCoUZMp9maBArPzoUixtAihW\\_RGm](https://www.statista.com/chart/32978/key-facts-on-venezuela/?srsltid=AfmBOoqV6rd09A9X3YQG-Ls8kmmZwCoUZMp9maBArPzoUixtAihW_RGm)

## Main destinations for Venezuelan migrants in 2022



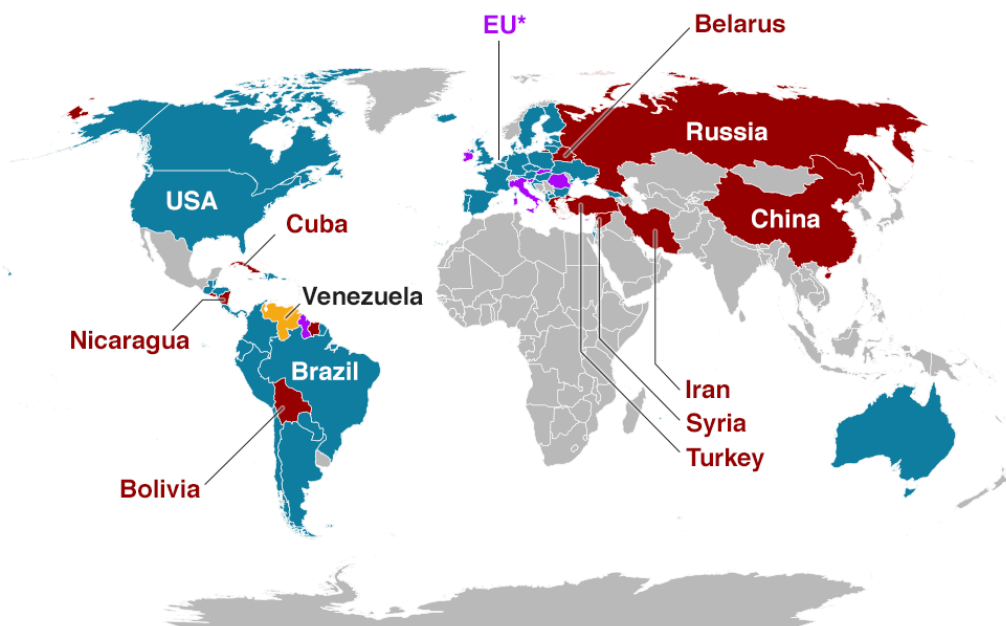
Source: United Nations, September 2022

BBC

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## Where do countries stand on Venezuela?

■ Support Maduro ■ Recognise Guaidó as interim president ■ Calling for new elections



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\*The EU has called for new elections but some individual member countries have expressed their preferences.

Data as of 12:00 GMT 5 Feb 2019

BBC

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-63279800>

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-46999668>

## Helpful resources :

- <https://www.britannica.com/topic/history-of-Venezuela>
- <https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/IF10715>
- <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/instability-venezuela>
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- <https://theweek.com/politics/military-us-venezuela-tensions>
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