



SECURITY COUNCIL - RESEARCH REPORT

Addressing the rising Conflicts between the United States and Venezuela

Introduction to the Topic:

Over the past twenty years, relations between the United States of America and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela have deteriorated. What began as ideological friction has developed into one of the longest-running geopolitical stand-offs in the Western Hemisphere. Today, the dispute involves not only competing political doctrines but also economic **sanctions**, questions of human rights, and growing regional security concerns.

At the centre of this conflict lies a clash of political worldviews. Under Hugo Chávez and later Nicolás Maduro, Venezuela embraced a populist, socialist, and overtly anti-imperialist stance designed to counter U.S. influence in Latin America. In turn, Washington framed the Venezuelan government as a threat to democracy and human rights — and used this narrative to justify a sweeping regime of economic and diplomatic **sanctions**.

Those **sanctions**, particularly those targeting Venezuela's energy and financial sectors, have become the most visible hallmark of U.S. policy. While intended to pressure Caracas (the Venezuelan capital) into democratic reforms, they have deepened the humanitarian crisis, aggravating shortages of food, medicine, and other essentials. The result has been one of the worst migration waves in modern Latin American history.

The U.S.-Venezuela conflict has also become entangled in broader global dynamics. Russia, China, and Iran have stepped in to support Venezuela politically and economically, transforming what began as a bilateral feud into a case study in twenty-first-century power politics. Addressing this crisis therefore demands more than improved bilateral relations; it requires sustained multilateral engagement and renewed attention to human security.

Background information

Tensions rose after the election of Hugo Chávez and the start of his "Bolivian Revolution", which sought to redistribute wealth, nationalize key industries and lessen US influence in Venezuela. Additionally Chávez' alignment with Cuba coupled with his hostility towards the United States drew much criticism from the media and the administration at the time.



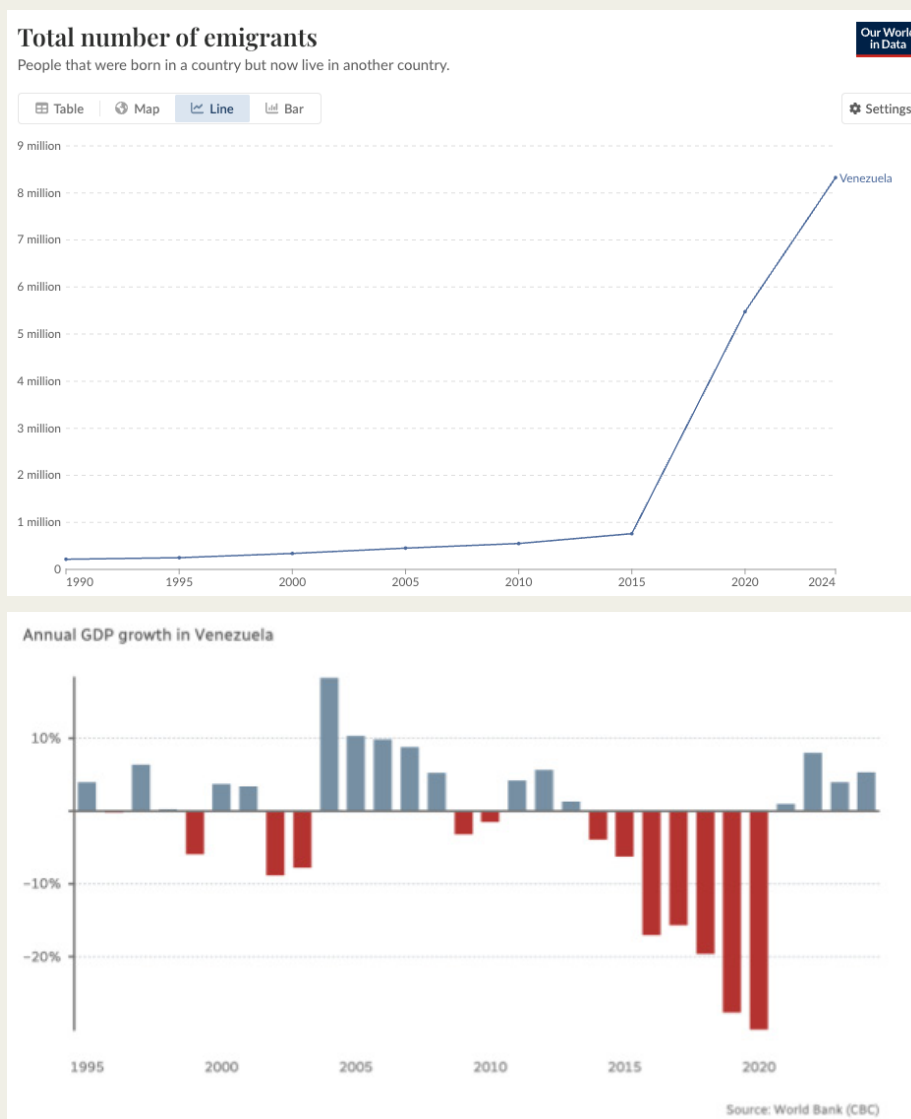
After Nicolas Maduro succeeded Chávez in 2013, the nation was facing many economic hardships, with global oil prices collapsing, hyperinflation and mass emigration. In that period, the United States accused Maduro of fraudulent elections and corruption, which further deepened the conflict between the two nations.

A major turning point in this conflict was in 2019, when the US and several other allied states recognized Juan Guaidó, the opposition leader, as the Venezuelan President. This further divided the international community, with China, Russia, Cuba & Turkey siding with Maduro, and with most of the west backing Guaidó.

Graphs on Venezuelan Emigration and GDP Growth

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Current situation

Under the current administration of Donald Trump, since January 2025, military activity has grown significantly near Venezuela, with there being an increase in security agreements with Latin American countries and an increase in Marine drills and naval deployments from the United States. Furthermore, the US declared a “total and complete blockade” on Venezuelan oil tankers, and have even seized vessels carrying crude oil in international waters, which has resulted in an increase in oil prices globally.

The US views Venezuela as not only an authoritarian regime but also as one of the major players in terrorism and drug trafficking, with the US deporting Venezuelan migrants in the US.

Nicolás Maduro and his government condemn all US actions, labelling them as “Imperialist”, and as a threat to Venezuelan **sovereignty**. Furthermore, these tensions have only increased the issues present in Venezuela, leading to higher levels of poverty, inflation and emigration, due to the sharp cuts on revenue generated from Venezuelan oil.

This has created rifts in the international community for several reasons, mainly the overwhelming increase of emigration to neighboring nations such as Colombia, Brazil and Peru, and due to concerns of force and unilateral

On January 3 2026, the United States launched a military strike on Venezuela, where they captured President Nicolas Maduro and his wife, Cilia Flores. The operation, codenamed Operation Absolute Resolve, began around 2 a.m. local time, and began with explosions to suppress Venezuelan air defenses, before the special forces team infiltrated Maduro’s residence in Caracas.

After Maduro’s capture, the United states announced that both were being indicted on charges related to **narcoterrorism**, which both have pleaded not guilty to. The Venezuelan Vice president, Delcy Rodríguez, denounced the operation as a kidnapping, with Venezuelan officials saying two officers were killed, and the Cuban government stating 32 member of the Cuban military and intelligence agencies were also killed. UN officials and the **UN Charter** state the raid violated international law and Venezuelan **sovereignty**.

After these events, the US announced they would “run” Venezuela until there was a transition of power, claims which where rapidly contradicted by now acting president Delcy Rodríguez, and also retracted by US secretary of state Marco Rubio. However, the Trump administration has made clear that access to US oil was a key reason for this action.

Past UN Actions

The UN has addressed this crisis from mostly a humanitarian viewpoint.

In 2019, the UN Human Rights Council founded the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission, to address concerns of human rights violations, political oppression and arbitrary detentions. Additionally, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has published detailed reports highlighting the urgent need for full humanitarian access across the nation.

Furthermore, the UN has offered support for negotiations, with Norway-led talks , although with stagnant progress.



Overall, Venezuela and the tensions between these two states has become a recurring issue in the UN General Assembly, especially regarding issues such as humanitarian repercussions and unilateral **sanctions**, due to member states arguing that **sanctions** on Venezuela would affect state **sovereignty** and only worsen the economic state, leading to more civilian suffering.

Focus of the Debate

Delegates should focus on preventing the further escalation of the conflict between the United States and Venezuela, while focusing on maintaining international peace, security and defending human rights. Delegates should weigh the effects of unilateral **sanctions** and military action, and consider how such have contributed to escalations in the past.

Central to the debate is the question of how the Security Council can reassert its role as the primary body responsible for collective security, particularly in situations where permanent members are directly involved in the conflict. This includes evaluating the legality and effectiveness of **sanctions regimes**, the risks posed by military deployments and coercive diplomacy, and the erosion of trust in multilateral mechanisms.

The Council should also focus on the humanitarian and migration consequences of prolonged confrontation, ensuring that civilian populations are not disproportionately affected by political disputes. Equally important is the need to explore confidence-building measures, diplomatic channels, and third-party mediation efforts that could reduce tensions and encourage dialogue between the

Significant Parties

United States: Seeks to repair democratic institutions and fight corruption, but continues to face criticism for policies that have worsened humanitarian conditions, such as Venezuelan oil seizures.

Venezuela: Rejects U.S. measures as external aggression and demands recognition, **sanctions** relief, and non-interference, while labelling US actions as "Imperialist", and a threat to their **sovereignty**.

Russia: Provides military support and political backing to the Maduro regime, while opposing Western intervention.

China: Defends the principle of non-intervention, and continuously focuses on economic engagement with Venezuela.

Regional States (Colombia, Brazil, Mexico): Bear the extent of Venezuelan emigration, having their infrastructure overwhelmed, while continuously providing humanitarian aid.

United Nations: Attempts to mediate the conflict and provide humanitarian aid, but is halted by geopolitical divisions amongst major powers, such as the US, China and Russia.



Glossary and Key Terms:

Economic Sanctions- The deliberate, government- inspired withdrawal, or threat of withdrawal, of customary trade or financial relations.

Unilateral Sanctions- Economic or political penalties imposed by a single country (or a small group) on another, without UN Security Council approval, to force a policy change, influence behavior, or punish actions like human rights abuses, often via trade embargoes, asset freezes, or travel bans, acting as a foreign policy tool or “self-help” measure.

Sovereignty- The ability of a state to govern itself and handle their international affairs individually.

Unilateral Coercive Measures- Sanctions applied with UN approval

Narcoterrorism- Narcoterrorism refers to the intersection of drug trafficking and terrorism, where violent actions by drug traffickers are aimed at influencing government officials through intimidation and violence.

UN Charter- The UN Charter is the constitutive instrument of the United Nations, signed on 26 June 1945. It sets out the rights and obligations of Member States and establishes the principal organs and procedures of the United Nations

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