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Venezuela, Conflict

Venezuela: Political, economic, environmental, or social disagreements, violence or armed conflict

Venezuela has the world's largest known oil reserves and has been one of the world's leading exporters of oil, but, everyone has heard at least once the difficult crisis the presidency of Nicolas Maduro has caused, or the communism government of Hugo Chavez. Its population consists of 28,704,954 a 0.95% increase from 2020 (Worldometer, s.f.). The majority of the people live in Urban areas, being this an 88.8% (25,102,966) a 0.24 decline since 2019, while in Rural areas a 11.2% (3,332,977) a 0.61 decline since 2019 (Macrotrends, s.f.)

Located at the northern end of South America, Venezuela's territory is a triangular area, bigger than France and Germany combined, with a territorial extension of 916,445 km² (353,841 sq mi). This country is bounded by the Caribbean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean to the north, Guyana to the east, Brazil to the south, and Colombia to the southwest and west. Venezuela's location perched 8° above the equator, means it generally enjoys a balmy warm climate. Temperatures don't fluctuate wildly, hovering between 26°C (79°F) and 28°C (82°F) and making the country something of an all year round destination. On the northern coast of South Africa, between 0 degrees 5' and 12 degrees. The capital, Caracas, is situated in the magnificent Avila Mountains on the north coast, at about 2,700 feet above sea level, giving the city a permanent springtime climate (Guide, s.f.).

Venezuela is a federal presidential republic (the chief executive is the president who is both head of state and government)

Executive:

- Chief of state and head of government
- Elected by plurality vote
- 6 years

Judicial

- Responsible for administering justice in the name of the republic and by authority of the law.
- Appointed by the National Assembly.
- 12 years

Legislative

- Power to name members of the Supreme Tribunal of Justice and consider legislation pertaining to particular sectors of national activity.
- 110 members are elected by majority vote, 52 members are elected by proportional representation, and 3 members are reserved for indigenous peoples.

- 5 years

(Hakkert, s.f.)

A typical family in Venezuela consists of two or three children in urban families; meanwhile, up to five or six can be common in rural areas. (3.8% in a household.) Venezuelan families are generally tight-knit, let's say very close and supportive, providing an economic and social safety-net. Extended family “nucleus” play a particularly large role in outer-urban regions and rural areas, like with the common class status. The majority of the Venezuelan diet consists of hot foods, casseroles, meat pies, stews, and pasta dishes. But when we talk about what the most common people eat, the principal is rice, then plantains, corn, yams, beans and several meats (Elearn, s.f.). In this, I need to mention the land cultivated/major crops where 20% of land is occupied, around of 14% the labor force (increased to approximately 24.4%)

Main field crops:

- Sugarcane
- Rice
- Corn
- Sorghum
- Cotton
- Tabaco
- Sisal

Fruits:

- Bananas
- Plantains
- Oranges
- Coconuts
- Mangoes

According to economist Ángel Alayón, the availability of food throughout Venezuela is directly controlled and distributed by the government or private companies, but, some people (mostly urban/good status) go to supermarkets or find the way to have the best food supplies, but the rest (rural/media status) have their own crops or also go to places to buy at a comfortable price or what they can afford, in the majority of cases, they cook it with gas or electric stove normally.

The types of jobs they have are in the main industries are oil, food processing, construction, textiles, etc. Also tourism, and average wage or pay, is projected to trend around 10,174.48 VEF (Variable Explanation Format.) or let's say per month in 2022 according to economist models. Talking about the

basic education is free between ages of 6 and 15. Secondary education, which lasts 2 years, is also free but not required. The majority of adults have no secondary studies. Most middle-and-upper-class parents send their children to private elementary and secondary schools. In the past months, around the world the horrible news of children fainting and asking for food in their public schools was viral. A tradition in not only the Venezuelan schools, but in Central America's religious institutions, hundreds of children show up in their schoolyard to listen to a Catholic bishop, or for example in my school, to sing the national anthem. Fainting in elementary school has become a common episode, because many students go to class without having eaten breakfast or even dinner the night before. In other schools, children want to know if any food will be offered, before they decide to go (Herrera, 2019). In Venezuela, a devastating six-year economic crisis is undermining the educational system, the one that was once the pride of an oil-rich nation and that, for decades, was the engine that made the country one of the fastest growing in the world. In the past, these schools and high schools offered children, even in remote areas, a good opportunity to enter the best universities in the country, which in turn opened the doors to the best colleges in the United States or other countries, including their own, but hunger is just one of the many problems deteriorating the current situation. Millions of Venezuelans have fled the country in recent years, thinning the ranks of students and teachers alike. The economic crisis takes the hunger, and the hunger includes the water. The lack of access to water and sanitation has impacted education. Because of the lack of decent water service for drinking and sanitation, multiple educational institutions have had to shut down. Around 28% of students could not attend school because of the shortage of water. (Britannica, s.f.)

In 2015, 93% of the total population had access to "improvised" water, or let's say 95% urban and 78% rural. Let's highlight, that despite being among the top 15 countries in renewable fresh-water resources, the water supply system in Venezuela has deteriorated over the last two decades, due to lack of investment in infrastructure, corruption, and failed government policies. Around 80% of the population lives in the northern region of the country; however, not even 10% of water resources are available in that region. The lack of access to water and sanitation has impacted education. Because of the lack of decent water service for drinking and sanitation, multiple educational institutions have had to shut down. Around 28% of students could not attend school because of the shortage of water. (Dealing with a water crisis and a pandemic in Venezuela – interactions between water security and COVID-19, 2020)

Ok, now the water "crisis" affects electricity too. Blackouts and the lack of electricity pose a threat to Venezuela's access to water. The electricity generates throughout the country's water plants and sewage pipes. These outdated infrastructures have dealt with terrible maintenance. As a result, when these blackouts happen, the electricity and water from pipes or faucets stop, disrupting the flow of the water. Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro has promised to put back-up water tanks on rooftops to relieve the problem. Roads, they are roads, but some of them are in bad condition. Toilets in a good state in private buildings. The major barriers that typical families face (including earning a living and access to nutritious food) is the gender problem. 40% of Venezuelan women are single mothers, two out of three women with children do not work, do not study or seek employment

One in three Venezuelans is food insecure; The World Food Programme warns that one in three Venezuelans (32.3%) are food-insecure and need assistance. About 59% of households have insufficient income to buy food and 65% cannot buy other essential items such as hygiene products, clothes and shoes.

2021: By the end of 2020, Venezuela accounts for 6 million refugees, asylum-seekers, and migrants, remaining one of the world's largest displacement crises. In 2022 there will be a lot of conflict, especially talking about the current president Nicolás Maduro.

The president of Venezuela, Nicolás Maduro, promised in January, Saturday 15, of 2022 in the annual surrender of his administration, the eradication by 2025 of extreme poverty in the country, which, according to the Survey on Living Conditions (Encovi) of the Andrés Bello Catholic University (UCAB), stands at 76.6 percent. Adding to this, Venezuela could get attacked by war that would be in between Russia and Ukraine. Venezuela is in favor with Russia, well, Maduro is supporting it. The attack, supposedly, would be coming from the United States. Is it true? Are just theories coming together like a puzzle from the situations or actions that are happening currently in Venezuela.

Nicolás Maduro was first elected in April 2013 after the death of his socialist mentor and predecessor in office, Hugo Chávez. At the time, he won by just 1.6 percentage points. During his first term, the economy went into freefall and many Venezuelans blame him and his socialist government for the country's decline. He was reelected to a second six year term, being unfair and only winning a new title as “usurper” Some of the problems go back a long time. However, it is President Maduro and his predecessor Hugo Chávez who are the target of much of the current anger. According to figures compiled by the United Nations, more than 5.6 million Venezuelans have left the country since the crisis started to bite in 2014 (economic and environmental crisis) as a reaction to what I had mentioned, and this keeps happening nowadays. Political corruption, chronic shortages of food and medicine, closure of businesses, unemployment, deterioration of productivity, authoritarianism, human rights violations, gross economic mismanagement and high dependence on oil have also contributed to the worsening crisis.

Since 2017, the share of households living under the poverty line in Venezuela has been surpassing 90 percent. In addition, more than six out of every ten households (64 percent, interpreting 6 as urban and the 4 as rural. The majority of rural people are poor, and two out of six urbans are “poor”) lived in extreme poverty in 2020. The overall household poverty rate in Venezuela has registered a steady growth since 2014, after having remained relatively stable, below 40 percent, since 2005. Although poverty is widespread among the population as a whole, some groups are more vulnerable than others. In 2020, the national poverty rate of Venezuela was reported at 94.2 percent. In comparison, more women than men were estimated to live in poverty. Up to 94.6 percent of the female population in Venezuela lived in poverty, whereas the male poverty rate stood 0.7 percentage points lower. That is the case of younger

generations and particularly children: nearly 98 percent of Venezuelans aged 15 or younger lived in poverty in 2020. The regional humanitarian crisis is now the worst in the Western Hemisphere, with more than 4 million refugees and migrants. That's about 10 percent of the country's total population. Four out of every 10 people still in Venezuela want to leave. The UN estimates there will be 5.3 million Venezuelan refugees and migrants by the end of 2019, rivaling the scale of the Syrian refugee crisis. By 2020, there will be 8 million Venezuelan refugees, making this crisis the largest refugee crisis in the world. (Krygier, 2018)

In accordance with the World Health Organization's guidelines, the air quality in Venezuela is considered moderately unsafe. Venezuela's reliance on extractive practices including mining and its aging oil industry is one of the main drivers of the degradation of its environment. Given the attitude of the Maduro regime, the situation is set to worsen. Venezuela's Lake Maracaibo, located along the country's northern Caribbean coast, provides an example of the devastating impact which oil extraction has had on the country's environmental situation. Oil extraction has occurred in the region around Lake Maracaibo since the early 20th Century, as it was in this region where many of Venezuela's largest oil fields were discovered. Beyond oil, the Venezuelan government has also endangered the country's natural heritage through its mining policies. In 2016, President Nicolás Maduro approved the creation of the Orinoco Mining Arc, a wide swath of land accounting for around 12% of Venezuela's territory, along the Orinoco River. This decision has put Venezuela's share of the Amazon rainforest at risk.

Solution #1:

Pray that Venezuelans will receive food, medicine, and other necessities. Pray for families and communities that are broken, Ask God to protect people, specially the most vulnerable like kids, disabled humans, and the elderly.

Solution #2:

Setting up a system to make sure that food, medicine, and other essentials are available at affordable prices. Donations are something we can consider.

Not necessarily in person, but there are several websites where you can donate ☺

- **Caracas Mi Convive** is part of **Alimenta la Solidaridad**, that focuses on hunger issues and violence prevention. You can donate to Alimenta la Solidaridad's gofundme page (<https://www.gofundme.com/f/SolidaridadVzla>)
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- **Levántate** provides food to children in the city of Maracaibo. You can contact Angelo Parra at angelopdifeo20@gmail.com and find them on Instagram at @levantate17.
- **Cuatro Por Venezuela** (<https://cuatroporvenezuela.org/>) provides aid to Caracas hospitals.

- **Fundana** (<https://www.fundana.org/>) focuses on issues related to children.
- **Hogar Bambi** (<https://www.globalgiving.org/donate/23993/hogar-bambi-venezuela/>) cares for children who have been separated from their families for a variety of reasons.
- **Doctors without Borders** (<https://www.msf.org/venezuela>) provides aid to Venezuela's medical sector to increase care and mental health support. (Biggs, 2020)

In the topic of organization that help this country, principally UNICEF promotes and supports projects to foster education, health care, nutrition, protection, water, hygiene, and sanitation so as to allow every child and adolescent in Venezuela to enjoy their childhood. (UNICEF, s.f.)
According to USAID, "The United States is the largest humanitarian donor to the Venezuela regional crisis, having provided more than \$1.4 billion in humanitarian assistance since 2017."

Recommendations:

First of all, let's remember the most chaotic or needed conflicts in Venezuela AND that can get solved or helped in order to improve their actual status. Health, education, sanitization, politics, and economy.

The population's health is (what I consider) the most important, so medical treatments, checks, vaccines, etc, is something that we/they should work on. And let me mention the pandemic we are fighting against since 2020. The food crisis has deteriorated substantially and the provision of basic services has collapsed. The COVID-19 pandemic has a significant impact on the country, and how the people without the necessary resources react is very limited. to provide food to the population and the condition of the health sector is dreadful. Who would help? Actually, the United Nations and some humanitarian partners created a plan for helping Venezuela in this and harder problems. They launched the **2021 Venezuela Humanitarian Response Plan** that aims to assist 4.5 million vulnerable Venezuelan women, men, children and adolescents. The Plan appeals for US\$708.1 million, not only in Healthcare, but in situations in general.

Like in every country, Venezuela has good...and bad schools/institutions, but we are concentrating on what we want to improve, mostly the conditions of these. Talking about the schools, how they are in sanitization and materials required states. The colleges (the majority public or from rural areas) don't have roofs, chairs, supplies (including not only pencils, pens or that, but internet and technology) and are dirty, in the way that there is nobody taking care of that, or the territory where the school is located. "The deteriorating situation inside Venezuela has so far left an estimated one million children out of school. Over the coming 12 months, UNICEF, in tandem with national partners, plans to reach a total of 1.2 million children in public and subsidized schools across the country with educational supplies." This is an example of the headline of the UN about the topic. Getting kits with the necessary equipment for studies, and about the teenagers, testing them to get scholarships, so if the education system in universities at the local country is not so good, then in OTHER countries it could be better. In sanitization we can consider the water, like the waste and absence of it too.

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