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Venezuela, Conflict

The Conflict in Venezuela and How it Can be Solved

Disease, revolts, and anguish have all been common themes in Venezuela for the past few years. Political instability has left Venezuela in shambles with millions of people fleeing the country in search of refuge. This conflict has led to a rampant decline of the quality of life for its citizens, including sanitation, dwindling food supplies, low minimum wage, and an increase in poverty. With this current political state, major reform is necessary in order to restore Venezuela to a peaceful state. To help overcome such crises, Venezuela should put in preventative measures to help deter the spread of disease ravaging the population, reform their current legislation regarding price-fixing, and establish one president. Only after these issues are fixed, Venezuela can start to recover.

“Venezuela lies on the northeastern coast of South America. The country stays relatively warm, with temperatures varying between 79°F to 82°F throughout the year. With the Andes Mountains, Orinoco River, the Atlantic Ocean, and many other geographical beauties, Venezuela is a great tourist destination” (“Discover”). Venezuela is a decently sized country with “the current population being just over 28.4 million. The population of Venezuela is currently experiencing a decline” because of the millions who have fled due to the country’s current political instability (“Venezuela Population”). “The average household in Venezuela holds roughly 3-4 individuals. Housing in Venezuela varies greatly, depending on the region it is in” (Arcgis.com). In Caracas, the capital of Venezuela, most housing consists of a series of shacks built nearly on top of each other in order to fill the housing demand. Meanwhile, near Lake Maracaibo, almost all of the housing is up on stilts in order to prevent flooding. “Education in Venezuela is very affordable, with primary and secondary education being free to all citizens of Venezuela. Primary education (from age 6 to age 15) is compulsory, while secondary education is not required” (Lieuwen and Martz). Political instability aside, Venezuela has some positive aspects. The geographic wonders, affordable education, among other things, makes Venezuela a desirable country. But with the current political situation, Venezuela has been used as a poor example of socialism, and why it cannot work.

Venezuela is in a critical state. The political instability has spiraled extraordinarily out of control and will take a lot of reform in order to restore it to functioning status. “Some of Venezuela’s problems started before its most recent presidents, but most stem from the presidencies of Hugo Chávez and Nicolás Maduro. During Chávez’s presidency, he introduced legislation that was supposed to help Venezuela. An example of this is his price-fixing legislation he introduced in order to help Venezuelans afford common necessities” (“Venezuela Crisis”). A great quantity of Chávez’s legislation eventually backfired, causing some of the current disputes. “The issue that is preventing Venezuela from digging itself out of this massive slum is hyperinflation. The prices of goods have swelled an immense 9,900 percent from January 2019 to January of the current year” (“Venezuela Crisis”). The conflict in Venezuela affects the vast majority of the population. Women, children, the elderly, and men are all affected to some degree. “Women are suffering more than men due to the hovering inequality and sexism” (Nikolau). “Due to the spreading of water-borne diseases, infant deaths have gone up substantially to 31 deaths per 1000 live births” (Rendon et al). “Malnutrition is also highly prevalent amongst youth” (Taladrid). “The elderly

have taken to the streets in protest because of the worsening economic crisis” (Venezuela Protest”). The conflict in Venezuela is simply astounding. Measures need to be taken to help ease these problems. Most of these issues intertwine with one another, making it difficult to focus and solve one issue. Solving this conflict will take a lot of time, resources, money, and effort to help Venezuela recover. While there are many issues in need of solving, a few of the main issues that Venezuela needs to deal with before it can be improving include: eliminating the spread of disease, reforming past legislation, and establishing a president of the nation.

The conflict in Venezuela has gotten extremely out of hand. This is a very serious conflict and needs to be worked on. With a conflict this severe, a panacea cannot be obtained and be expected to work. Each issue affects another, and each issue needs to be addressed separately to work together towards a common goal. One issue that needs to be dealt with in order to continue, is the prevention and elimination of the various diseases that are spreading uncontrollably due to poor sanitation. “Diseases such as Hepatitis A, measles, tuberculosis, and malaria are infecting more people than in past years, and this only hinders the progress towards relief. The main reason diseases are being contracted is because of contaminated water supplies. Venezuelans are drinking contaminated water because only 18% of the country has access to clean water. Water is being contaminated due to power outages” (Rendon et al). This is an example of how issues affect one another. By tackling the power situation, the spread of disease can be minimalized. But without tackling the power issue, there are still ways to prevent the spread. Preventative measures such as portable water filters, education, and emergency generators, can be used as immediate solutions to help people now. “Another process that can be used to help eliminate pathogens in the waterways is chlorination. By adding certain consumable chemicals, many illness-causing bacteria and viruses can be killed. Chlorination would be a quick solution that could eradicate a good quantity of the pathogens that are killing and infecting Venezuelans” (Kumar). These, however, are not long term solutions. “To put in an immediate plan of action for the first year will cost an astonishing 400 million dollars. This money would be fundraised through donors and possible foreign aid. This money would be put towards fixing the problem at hand and by creating new breakthroughs. To further prevent future water contamination, new cost-effective solutions need to be put in place. Technology can also play a major role in future development. There is technology available to help locate and diagnose issues in water mains which could help prevent further problems. Countries such as Japan and China have already used technologies similar to this, and have had good results” (Rendon et al). There are answers to solving Venezuela’s water and disease concerns. The spread of disease can be limited by first fixing the existing water crisis. By eliminating the prevalence of disease and fixing poor sanitation, the overall health of Venezuela can improve, leading to better overall conditions.

Another concern that needs some attention is the price-fixing legislation put into place by former president Hugo Chávez. “When Chávez was acting president of Venezuela, he put a price cap on certain goods to make them affordable to citizens who could not easily afford these necessities. This was a spectacular idea, in theory, but it led to businesses distributing the product to stop production due to lack of profit. Goods under this policy included toiletries, flour, and cooking oil” (“Venezuela Crisis”). Rather than revoking the policy entirely, alterations could be made to make this successful. The plan was unsuccessful because businesses were being affected. To combat this problem, if the government is in charge of the production of these goods, they will be able to continue production while keeping costs reasonable. By having government-owned factories, farms, and facilities, the money-making middle man is removed making costs cheaper overall. The purpose of these facilities would be to guarantee that Venezuelans can receive necessities, regardless of their ability to pay. Privately-owned farms, factories,

and facilities can still function and sell products, but there should be an option available for families that can not purchase what they need. Government-owned facilities would be an effective solution if corruption could be prevented. The tallest hurdle to jump is the possible corruption. If corruption could be kept at bay, then this would provide families with the critical resources they desperately need. “On the topic of Chávez’s legislation needing to be altered, he also put laws into effect that traders can sell their wares in United States dollars. This is an issue, as many Venezuelan citizens cannot obtain US currency. The idea behind this was that more goods that Venezuelan businesses had stopped producing would be brought into the country. While there were goods available, they were still unaffordable due to the difference in currency” (“Venezuela Crisis”). While certain legislation under Chávez seemed to fix some of the dilemmas Venezuela had been facing, the long term effects were unsuccessful. To help Venezuela come out of its current slump, this legislation needs to be altered in a way that it can become successful.

The issues listed prior are in need of repair, but these issues are not the main issue needing to be solved. The root of all of Venezuela’s problems is derived from the uncertainty of who is the current president of its nation. The presidency is currently being disputed between Nicolás Maduro and Juan Guaidó. “This issue started in April of 2013 when Maduro was elected into his first presidential term. He won by just a slim percentage of 1.6. During Maduro’s presidency, the nation’s economy plummeted and living conditions nose dived as well. Many Venezuelans blamed the collapse of the nation on Maduro. Come next election year in May of 2018, Maduro was reelected. This is because other presidential candidates had been banned from running, some even being imprisoned. Due to this, Maduro’s presidency was not recognized by Venezuela’s National Assembly (the equivalent of the United State’s Legislative branch). The National Assembly stated that the presidency was vacant, giving Guaidó the pass to declare himself as interim president. Guaidó is perceived as president in more than fifty other countries (including the United States), most of them being capitalist nations. However, Russia and China recognize Maduro as president. In 2017, Venezuela’s National Assembly became powerless following new legislation. The National Assembly cannot determine an actual president since their power has been revoked. Since then, the National Assembly has still met, and Guaidó was announced as the actual president. Nevertheless, Maduro will not give up his position” (“Venezuela Crisis”). This debate causes confusion as to who should be dealing with international affairs. If the rest of the globe cannot decide on who is currently reigning president, no movement forward can be made. This solution is a difficult one to solve, as many solutions have already been tried. Another aspect to be considered is that the solution must allow Venezuela’s input, and cannot remove their socialist views unless they permit it. This issue should be solved by the people of Venezuela, if possible. If Maduro is willing to let a fair election happen, this issue could be solved by Venezuela. Unfortunately, this is unlikely to happen based on recent events. If Maduro is unwilling to make a compromise, effort from the United Nations may be necessary. If the United Nations could get a majority vote to take Maduro out of office, this may help Venezuela’s current situation. With Maduro out of office, a substantial amount of corruption is being eliminated from Venezuela’s government. With proof of corruption, this issue could be taken under the wing of the UN and have this problem solved that way. But, with China and Russia supporting Maduro, if this did go through the United Nations, there is a slim chance of something passing. But if they do remove Maduro from office, there is the possibility that the population of Venezuela that supports Maduro may revolt, causing further anguish. Removing Maduro from office may be the start of solving Venezuela’s current crisis, or it may cause more troubles for the nation.

The conflict in Venezuela is astonishing and is becoming worse each day. With such a beautiful country, it is a shame that it is having so many issues. Venezuela is currently having a wide variety of problems

stemming from the current political instability. Problems such as the water crisis, disease, power outages, and legislation reform, can be started on a better path as soon as there is political stability. By stabilizing the government, Venezuela can start pumping money into the programs that need help. Corruption needs to be eliminated in order to have any hopes of stabilizing the government. Venezuela's conflict is severe, and without proper measures being taken, it cannot hope to come out of its current situation any time soon.

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