



Suriname Position Paper

Serap Tuba Kudaloğlu



I. Background Information on Country

Suriname's colonial past began with "Spanish exploration in the 16th century," followed by "an English settlement in the 17th century," before the Dutch established it as a colony in 1667 (CIA, n.d.). Located "on the northeast coast of South America between Venezuela and Brazil," Suriname's economy remains small, relying largely on "public sector activities, mining, and services," while agriculture and fisheries contribute a "relatively small share of gross domestic product" at 5-7% annually (European Union, n.d.; AFD, n.d.). With nearly "93% covered by the Amazon rainforest," Suriname faces economic, health, and social challenges despite its rich natural resources (AFD, n.d.). Following independence in 1975, a "military coup in 1980" led to a socialist republic. Democratic processes resumed in 1987 due to international pressure, although a brief military coup occurred in 1990 (CIA, n.d.). A coalition government held power until 2010, when Desire Bouterse, a former military leader, was elected. In 2020, a multi-party coalition led by Chandrikapersad Santokhi replaced his administration (CIA, n.d.). Currently, AFD assists Suriname in "more sustainable and environmentally friendly economic and social growth" and in promoting "regional cooperation, especially...with French Guiana" (AFD, n.d.).

Suriname is in an organization called "The Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO), which dates back to 1978 when eight countries signed the Amazon Cooperation Treaty, "to promote the harmonious development of the region and the well-being of its people and to strengthen the sovereignty of countries over their respective Amazon territories." Members include Brazil, Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, Suriname, and Venezuela" (MacDonald).



Suriname, like Bolivia, has experienced challenges regarding judicial independence, particularly during periods of military rule and political upheaval. After gaining independence in 1975, Suriname's judiciary faced pressures from the government, especially during the 1980 military coup, which established a socialist republic that limited judicial autonomy (CIA, n.d.). The return to democracy in 1987 led to a re-establishment of judicial processes, though intermittent political influence continued to affect the judiciary's ability to operate independently. This history resonates with Bolivia's own struggles for a judiciary free from executive influence.



At the moment, Guyana is actively involved in border disputes with Suriname to the east and Venezuela on the west. Two-thirds of Guyana, or more than 50,000 square miles, are at issue in the first dispute. More than five thousand square miles make up the Surinamese claim to Guyanese territory. One point of contention is that borders The boundaries that were established when Guyana and Suriname were British and Dutch colonies, respectively, are one point of contention. “Vast proven untapped resources including minerals (oil, gold, diamonds, bauxite and manganese), tropical hardwood forests and fishing grounds are present in the disputed regions”(Ramraj). Despite the frequent use of diplomacy and negotiations, Suriname used military force in 2000 to drive oil exploration rigs out of Guyanese territory in the Corentyne region. Following a cyanide spill in the Essequibo River in the mid-1990s, tensions with Venezuela have escalated. Guyana's decision to allow a North American company to set up a space vehicle launching station in Essequibo was also criticized by Venezuela.

Suriname, though geographically distant from Colombia, faces indirect impacts from the ELN insurgency due to regional security concerns. The ELN's cross-border activities in arms, drugs, and illegal mining create risks for Suriname, especially given its proximity to trafficking routes. As noted, “The reality for Colombians, Venezuelans, with incursions by the ELN into Brazil, Ecuador, Suriname, and Guyana, is both intense and distinctly overdue for examination”(Wetherholt). Collaboration with regional partners on intelligence sharing and joint security measures is crucial for Suriname to prevent potential spillover of insurgent activities.

II. Past Achievements and Attempts of Country/Organization on the Issues

A. Maintaining judicial independence and accountability in Bolivia:

- Suriname does not have direct involvement or achievements related to maintaining judicial independence and accountability in Bolivia.
- Suriname supports the broader principles of judicial independence and accountability as essential elements of democracy.
- While not directly engaged in Bolivia, Suriname aligns with regional efforts through organizations like the UN and OAS to promote the rule of law.
- Suriname has implemented legal reforms to improve transparency and accountability within its own judicial system, reflecting its commitment to these principles.

B. Eliminating the possibility of armed conflict between Venezuela and Guyana:

- Status and Role: Suriname, as a neighbor, supports regional stability and advocates for a peaceful resolution of the Venezuela-Guyana dispute.
- Diplomatic Actions:
 - Suriname encourages dialogue through frameworks like “UNASUR” and “CARICOM”.
 - Supports the role of the “International Court of Justice (ICJ)” in resolving the dispute legally.



- Accomplishments:
- Contributed to regional peacekeeping efforts and dialogue.
- Advocated for legal, peaceful resolutions rather than military conflict.

C. Tackling the ELN insurgency in Colombia:

- Status: Suriname does not have direct military engagement with the ELN insurgency in Colombia but is affected by regional instability and trafficking linked to the ELN's activities.
- Accomplishments:
 - Collaborated with neighboring countries in strengthening border security to mitigate drug trafficking and illegal activities.
 - Participates in regional forums, such as CARICOM, to address cross-border security challenges.
- Actions Taken:
 - Strengthened intelligence sharing and security cooperation with neighboring countries, including Brazil and Guyana.
 - Monitoring and securing vulnerable borders to prevent the spillover of insurgent activities and trafficking networks.

III. Objectives, Aims and Possible Solutions Proposed by Country/Organization on the Issues

A. Maintaining judicial independence and accountability in Bolivia:

1. Calls on the international community to help Bolivia strengthen its judicial independence by: :
 - a. promoting changes that guarantee the judiciary functions without political influence or interference, and upholding global norms of neutrality and fairness
 - b. offering capacity-building initiatives and technical support to reinforce the legal system and guarantee the judiciary operates properly in adherence to democratic ideals
2. Calls for accountability in Bolivia's judicial system by:
 - a. supporting the establishment of transparent and independent bodies to investigate and address corruption within the judiciary.
 - b. advocating for the strengthening of laws and mechanisms to ensure that judges and judicial authorities are held accountable for any misconduct, promoting public trust in the justice system.
3. Encourages a collaborative approach to judicial reform by:
 - a. promoting dialogue between the Bolivian government, civil society, and international organizations to create a comprehensive plan for judicial reform that upholds human rights and the rule of law by organizing:
 - i. seminars



- ii. open forums
 - iii. workshops
 - iv. regional peacebuilding conferences
- b. advocating for continued international monitoring to ensure that judicial reforms are implemented effectively and in alignment with global human rights standards.
4. Supports Bolivia's engagement with international organizations by:
- a. encouraging Bolivia to seek assistance from the United Nations and other relevant international bodies like UNOLA or UNDP to review and improve its judicial processes, ensuring they meet international best practices for independence and accountability.
 - b. urging Bolivia to engage with international human rights organizations like UNHRC to evaluate the progress of judicial reforms and to ensure the protection of fundamental freedoms.

B. Eliminating the possibility of armed conflict between Venezuela and Guyana:

1. Demands that Guyana and Venezuela engage in amicable talks and negotiations by:
 - a. encouraging direct talks between the two countries to settle territorial disputes peacefully and guarantee respect for each other's sovereignty by:
 - i. taking assistance from the UN and other regional organizations
 - ii. making these talks take place in a neutral area to ensure safety
 - b. suggesting the creation of a neutral third-party mediator to help Guyana and Venezuela have talks to stop the situation from turning into an armed conflict.
2. Promotes regional stability and cooperation by:
 - a. strengthening cooperation between Suriname, Venezuela, Guyana, and other regional countries to create a unified approach to border security and prevent any border-related tensions from escalating into conflict
 - b. to reduce the potential for disputes and promote peaceful coexistence, supporting initiatives for regional development, including:
 - i. economic cooperation
 - ii. resource-sharing
 - iii. humanitarian aid and social welfare programs
3. Urges the deployment of United Nations Peacekeepers to Venezuela, Guyana, and Suriname by acknowledging the three principles of Peacekeeping which are:
 - a. collaboration of the parties: This requires Venezuela and Guyana's commitment to a political process, ensuring the UN has the necessary freedom to carry out its mandated tasks.
 - b. impartiality: Peacekeepers must be impartial in dealing with the conflict parties but not neutral in executing their mandate.



- c. non-use of force except in self-defense and defense of the mandate: Peacekeepers may use force with Security Council authorization, only in self-defense, to protect the mandate, and to safeguard civilians under imminent threat.

C. Tackling the ELN insurgency in Colombia:

1. Demands regional cooperation to combat the ELN insurgency by:
 - a. enhancing intelligence sharing and joint security measures between Suriname, Colombia, and neighboring countries (Brazil, Guyana, French Guiana) to track and disrupt ELN activities.
 - b. strengthening border security through increased patrols and surveillance to prevent illicit activities such as drug trafficking, arms smuggling, and illegal mining by the ELN.
2. Supports Colombia's peace efforts and calls for international support by:
 - a. advocating for the provision of financial and technical assistance to Colombia to strengthen its institutions and reduce the ELN's influence.
 - b. encouraging the international community to back Colombia's peace initiatives and peacekeeping efforts to foster stability and reduce the insurgency's impact in the region.
3. Proposes humanitarian aid to address the refugee crisis caused by the ELN insurgency by:
 - a. offering aid to Venezuelan and Colombian refugees in Suriname and neighboring countries, especially those affected by violence and displacement due to the ELN insurgency.
 - b. ensuring through an oversight mechanism created by the UN that each person has access to the necessary supplies to continue living and vital to living in humanitarian conditions such as:
 - i. food
 - ii. access to clean water
 - iii. personal hygiene materials
 - iv. heating, through distributing blankets and heaters
 - c. developing sustainable shelter projects, agricultural initiatives, and transportation infrastructure in the relevant states by:
 - i. building cooperation over time among the UN nations
 - ii. working collaboratively with related UN committees such as the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee (GA3), and the Environmental Committee (GA4)
 - d. supporting the creation of safe zones and refugee centers in Suriname for displaced persons from Colombia and Venezuela.
4. Encourages dialogue and peaceful negotiations by:



- a. promoting dialogue between South American nations to ensure a coordinated approach to tackling insurgent groups like the ELN.
- b. advocating for peace negotiations between the ELN and the Colombian government, with the support of international mediators to reduce violence and foster regional stability.

IV. Bibliography

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