



## Venezuela Position Paper

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### I. Background Information on Country

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela is a country located at the northern end of South America. It 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. The national capital, Caracas, is Venezuela's primary center of industry, commerce, education, and tourism. Venezuela is one of the most highly-urbanized countries in Latin America. It has some of the world's largest proven oil deposits as well as huge quantities of coal, iron ore, bauxite and gold. Under the dictatorship of Juan Vicente Gomez, Venezuela rose to the top of the global oil export rankings. Following a democratic transition, Hugo Chávez became president in 1999 and nationalized important industries while enacting socialist policies. The populist and anti-American policies of his administration fundamentally changed Venezuela's internal and foreign policy. Chávez's policies, however, eventually led to political polarization, social unrest, and economic decline. Nicolás Maduro's administration after that has made the nation's challenges greater. Due to the country's extreme poverty, shortages of basic needs, and hyperinflation, more than seven million of Venezuelans have been forced to leave. International isolation of the Maduro regime has increased as a result of accusations of authoritarianism and violations of human rights. The country is involved in a long-running border dispute with neighboring Guyana over Essequibo, a disputed oil-rich territory that Guyana, and British Guiana before it, have administered since 1899.

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

#### A. Maintaining judicial independence and accountability in Bolivia:

- Even though Venezuela does not have a direct connection to the judicial independence and accountability in Bolivia, it is good to bear in mind that its own judicial issues may raise concerns about potential spillover effects. Venezuela's judiciary has faced criticism for its lack of independence and involvement in human rights abuses, including the persecution of political opponents and suppression of dissent. Venezuela's regional influence and common ideological alignments with Bolivia raise concerns regarding the potential for its judicial control model to be exported. Nevertheless, Bolivia has implemented constitutional reforms and international collaboration to



preserve judicial independence. Although there are concerns, there is no tangible evidence of Venezuela's direct interference or attempts to threaten Bolivia's judicial independence.

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

- Venezuela's claim to the Essequibo region, which is under Guyana's jurisdiction, is the reason it is involved in the boundary dispute between Guyana and Venezuela. Tension between the two nations has been caused by this issue, which began in the 19th century.
- The Paris Arbitral Award of 1899, which determined the border between Venezuela and British Guiana (now Guyana), is where the conflict began. Venezuela, however, has continuously disputed the legitimacy of this award, arguing that the arbitral tribunal erred in its ruling and that British pressure had an impact on it.
- The Geneva Agreement, which set a framework for peacefully resolving the border dispute, was signed by Guyana and Venezuela in 1966.
- This agreement listed three ways to settle the conflict: court resolution, arbitration, or negotiation. However, no meaningful progress has been made in spite of multiple diplomatic and negotiation endeavors.
- The issue has become more intense in recent years due to the discovery of large oil deposits off the coast of the Essequibo region. Venezuela has taken action to support its claim that these reserves are part of its territory, including issuing decrees and holding military drills in the disputed region.
- In an attempt to settle the border issue through the legal system, Guyana sent the case to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in 2018. Venezuela participated in the proceedings after first rejecting the ICJ's jurisdiction. Tensions between the two nations, however, increased after the ICJ's 2020 ruling supported Guyana's claim to the Essequibo region.

### **C. Tackling the ELN insurgency in Colombia**

- Venezuela has been essential to the ELN's operations through its provision of safe havens, logistical help, and financial support. This has enabled the ELN to continue its insurgency in Colombia with a degree of freedom.
- The border regions of Venezuela serve as sanctuaries for ELN militants to recuperate, strategize assaults, and recruit new recruits. The ELN has successfully traversed the border with rifles, ammunition, and other supplies due to Venezuela's porous borders and insufficient official oversight. This logistical support has been crucial for the group's activities. According to several accounts, the ELN may have benefited directly or indirectly from financial support or protection offered by Venezuelan authorities. Engagement in unlawful activities, such as mining or drug trafficking, may be included inside this category.
- Venezuela and Colombia have engaged in diplomatic discussions over cross-border security issues, including the activities of the ELN. However, political conflicts between the two states have rendered



these efforts challenging. To exert pressure on Venezuela to take action against the ELN, Colombia has sought external support. Collaboration with regional entities, like the United Nations and the Organization of American States (OAS), is crucial to this effort. Colombian security forces have conducted operations, particularly in border areas, to target and disrupt the activities of ELN militants. The effectiveness of these activities is constrained by the ELN's presence in Venezuela.

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

In this section, panelists will emphasize how they hope to find solutions on the agenda. They will also outline their national or organizational interests on the issues. If the assigned country/organization has proposed formal UN documents on the issues in the past, the expert will also mention them under this section. If necessary, experts may use visual aids to address the issues.

#### A. Maintaining judicial independence and accountability in Bolivia:

- Venezuela is an avid supporter of independent courts that respond to the people who use them. Both of these are vital parts of democratic governance. The courts must be impartial and fair in order to preserve human rights and the rule of law. Venezuela is deeply concerned by the loss of judicial freedom in Bolivia, particularly in light of the judiciary's growing political nature and the removal of justices without cause. Venezuela urges the Bolivian administration to take immediate action to restore the judiciary's independence and compliance with international standards.

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

- Venezuela remains dedicated to a peaceful resolution of the border conflict with Guyana. Venezuela believes that the most effective approach to resolving this issue is to remain respectful and engage in dialogue. The Venezuelan government is committed to exploring all potential solutions, including international arbitration or mediation, in order to support the United Nations' efforts to determine a peaceful resolution.

#### C. Tackling the ELN insurgency in Colombia:

- Venezuela favors the Colombian government's attempts to establish lasting peace and believes that the social and economic imbalances that precipitated the conflict must be resolved in a variety of ways. The Venezuelan government is prepared to collaborate with the Colombian government and the international community to peacefully conclude the ELN rebellion. Venezuela encourages all parties involved to engage in a constructive dialogue and prioritize the safety of civilians.



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