

STUDY GUIDE



PELOTAS

MUN

TOPIC A THE SITUATION IN VENEZUELA

Letter from the Chairs

Fellow Delegates,

With great pleasure, we welcome you all to the V edition of Pelotas Model United Nations, as representatives for the United Nations Security Council. In this committee, you will be able to discuss urgent topics pervading the international community with the attempt to solve these situations like real delegates from countries across the globe. The topics up to discussion were selected as a way to foster fruitful debates about the current international scenario, inasmuch as these topics are real problems to be dealt with.

Furthermore, we hope that the study guides here available help you all to understand the situations at the same time it incites you to join the debates during the simulation. However, considering that our guides are not universal tools with all information from the events here mentioned, do not hesitate to seek for further information in other sources. Insofar as you seek for additional information from other origins, the debates will become more interesting and will provide new outcomes, both for the discussions and for yourselves.

That being said, we are looking forward to this year's simulation, and we hope you all enjoy it as much as possible. In addition, do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or if you need clarifications about the topics or even about the event itself.

Best regards,

Alysson Araldi Boschi, Lucas Otávio Morás & Monique Aguiar
United Nations Security Council Directors.



About the United Nations Security Council

Created in 1945, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) holds the primary responsibility for the maintenance of International Peace and Security, following the aftermath of the Second World War. To properly achieve such goals, the Council was designed as the most important organ of the United Nations (UN), being the only whose resolutions had effective binding power upon all Member States of the UN. In this sense, the UNSC has its attributions and powers specified in Chapter V of the UN Charter.

Originally composed by eleven members, the UNSC had the number of seats expanded to fifteen on August 31st, 1965, with the entry into force of an amendment to article 23 of the UN Charter, approved by the UN General Assembly on December 17th, 1963. Moreover, it is also in the Council's mandate the right to authorize the use of force through peacekeeping operations or military coalitions and also to impose economic and military sanctions, but always as a last resort, when all negotiations have failed. Therefore, the UNSC's first actions when a complaint is brought before it are to recommend to the parties to try and reach a peaceful solution. At last, the UNSC may recommend the suspension or expulsion, by the General Assembly, of a Member State that recurrently violates the principles of the UN Charter (UN Charter, 1973).

The UNSC contains fifteen members, of which five are permanent and ten are selected by the General Assembly for two year terms, starting on January 1st, with five replaced each year. The five permanent members of the Security Council are the People's Republic of China, the French Republic, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America.

They hold the rule of "great power unanimity" what is commonly known as veto power, that is, for any resolution to be approved it needs the concurring vote of these five States, meaning that if one of them is against, it will automatically fail. Procedural matters are not subject to a veto, so the veto cannot be used to avoid discussion of an issue.

The ten non-permanent members elected for a two-year mandate by the General Assembly are: Bolivia, Egypt, Ethiopia, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Senegal, Sweden, Ukraine and Uruguay.



TOPIC A: THE SITUATION IN VENEZUELA**Introduction**

The political turmoil, which has prevailed in Venezuela, became worse in the last years with the arrival of Nicolas Maduro in the presidency. The country suffers with the world's worst negative growth rate and the worst inflation rate. The unemployment rate is 17% but is expected to climb to near 30% in the coming few years. The government has declared a state of emergency, food is now being transported under armed guard, basic necessities are being rationed and water is arriving in capital city Caracas once a week.

This crisis has generated discontentment towards the current government and a series of protests made by the opposition, causing the death of civilians and leaving hundreds wounded. More than 100 people have died until now.

International organizations such as the Organization of American States (OAS), the Union of South American Nations (USAN) and the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) have already discussed Venezuela's current situation, since President Nicolas Maduro himself reported that the country is in a state of emergency. The UNSC must discuss and analyze the situation of Venezuela because of Maduro's violent responses against protests made in opposition to his government and the population warning of its dissatisfaction with the violation of human rights.



Figure one¹

Historical Background

The 20th century started as a period of coups and political instability that led to the formation of national culture of Venezuela. The country acquired its stability in 1958 with the Punto Fijo Pact proposing a democratic order in the country - the situation lasted until the decade of 1970.

Corruption, bank failures and loan defaults were the main problem to the government through the mid-1990s. In 1995, Venezuela was forced to devalue the currency by more than 70%. By the end of 1998, two-thirds of Venezuela's 23 million inhabitants were living below the poverty line. Drug traffic and crime had increased and Colombian guerrillas had dramatically expanded their operations into Venezuela's frontier areas.

In the elections of 1998, Hugo Chávez became the president. When he first took office as in 1999, the country was not an economic model. Chávez started a populist campaign: comparing himself to Bolívar, promising to end with the corruption in the country, help the poor people and fight against the power of elites. He wanted to promote a "peaceful and democratic social revolution".

His "social revolution" was anything but peaceful. After he took office, he started a project about rewriting the constitution and the document was approved in a referendum in

¹ Protests in Merida. Extracted from: http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/photography/2014/02/venezuela_protest_photos_police_and_protesters_clash_during_demonstrations.html. Last access: August 30, 2017.

1999. The changes in the law, which granting him new and sweeping powers, provoked angry protests in 2001 and was followed by a massive and violent strike in 2002.

Chávez became more socialist during his second term, the number of public works and the social programs increased, aiming to benefit the poor. He also nationalized the country's largest telecommunication, cement and steel companies, the majority of its electricity industry and many hotels, recreational and transport facilities.

Venezuela has the largest oil reserves in the world which, in 2014, had 298 billion barrels of proved oil reserves. Oil revenue has sustained the country's economy for years. During the presidency of Hugo Chavez, the price of oil reached a historic high of \$100 a barrel. The billions of dollars in revenue were used to finance social programs and food subsidies. However, when the price of oil fell, those programs and subsidies became unsustainable.

During the rule of Hugo Chavez, the price of key items, food and medicines were reduced. Products became more affordable but they were below the cost of production. When it became unprofitable for Venezuelan companies to continue producing their own products, the government decided to import them from abroad, using oil money.

Despite to contributing to the increase in the economy of Venezuela with the oil export and all the benefits he brought to the poor, Chávez' popularity started to decline. The decade ended with Venezuela struggling to combat a very serious energy and water shortage, a crisis that has reached the middle and upper classes. Widespread blackouts were commonplace throughout the country.

With oil prices have been falling since 2014, which has left the economic system unable to maintain the system of subsidies and price controls that functioned during the oil boom years.

The inability to pay for imports with bolivars coupled with the decline in oil revenues has led to a shortage of goods. The state has tried to ration food and set their prices, but the consequence is that products have disappeared from shops and ended up in the black market, overpriced.

After this analysis of the context, we can see that the problems within Venezuela extend from the government of Hugo Chávez. In 2011, Chavez announced he had cancer, but still ran and won the 2012 elections. He selected Nicolas Maduro as vice-president.

When Chávez died on March 5, 2013, the vice-president Nicolás Maduro was elevated to the presidency. A special election was held on April 2014 between Maduro, who Chávez had



indicated was his preferred successor, and Capriles. Maduro won a very narrow victory. Capriles demanded a full recount, alleging voting irregularities and election fraud.

Since 2014, the population is protesting in the streets, divided between opponents and supporters to the government of Nicolas Maduro. By assuming the command of a country in crisis, with scarce of basic necessities products such as toilet paper, milk, and flour, high violence and dissatisfaction of the society, Nicolas faces difficulties of governance and in giving continuity to the regime of his predecessor.

As a result of the clashes and implications that this crisis has generated, in the last two months the protests caused 39 deaths - 31 civilians; 650 wounded; 1322 detainees. This factor requires attention not only from society but also from the Security Council.

The Situation in the Present

It has been part of Venezuela's history to range between extremes of oppression and freedom. The multiple interconnected crises that are shaking the country are leading people to protest in the streets against the loss of their freedom and their constitutional rights by a tyrannical government. The population suffers with food and medicines scarcity, malnutrition and outright hunger. Diseases long curbed, such as diphtheria and malaria, are killing even more.

The wave of protest includes both opposition-orchestrated demonstrations and spontaneous acts of violent rioting. The violent repression of the government has caused several deaths, more than 100 people died until now.

Even with the government-controlled press, in the social media it is possible to get shocking images of the last protests: the National Guard shoots indiscriminately at crowds, murders and tanks moving against demonstrators.

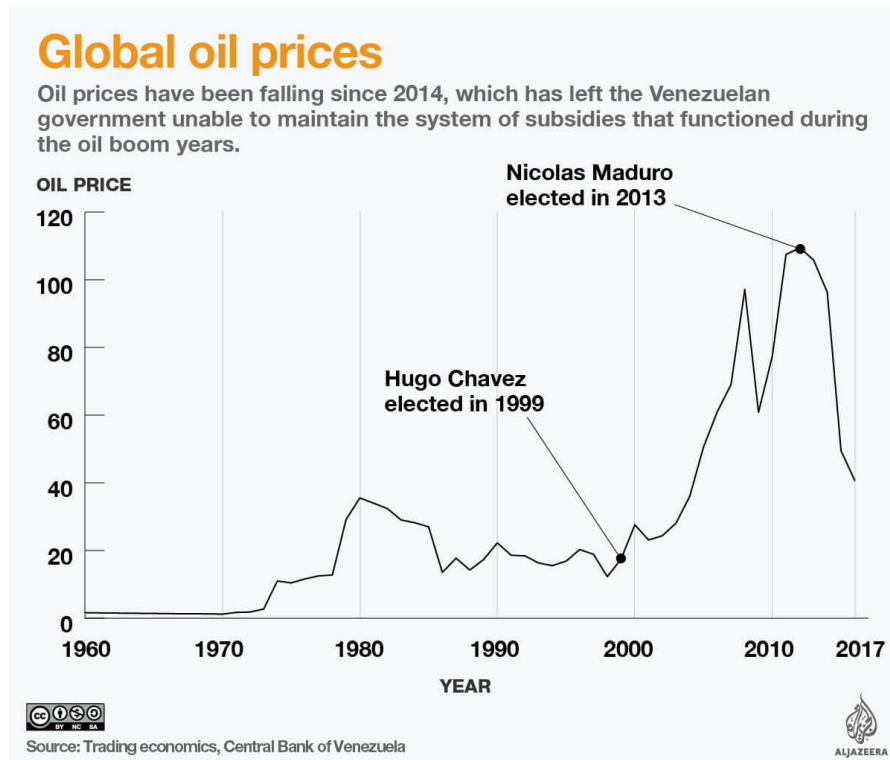
The economy has almost stopped with the low oil prices and mismanagement. The inflation can skyrocket 720% this year, according to the International Monetary Fund.

As inflation goes up, the country's currency buys less and less. The minimum wage is going up 50%, the latest increase brings Venezuela's minimum wage to 97,531 bolivars a month. That's equivalent to \$12.53.



The most recent report by CENDAS (Centre for Documentation and Social Analysis) indicates that in March 2017 a family of five needed to collect 1.06 million bolivars to pay for the basic basket of goods for one month, that includes food and hygiene items, as well as spending on housing, education, health and basic services.

Figure Two²



The economic crisis was reaching all the country since Maduro was elected in 2013, but the instability of the government became worse in December 2015, when the opposition won a majority of seats in the National Assembly. It gave them 112 out of 167 seats while the rule party and its allies got 55 seats.

It is the first time in 16 years that the United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV) is not in control in Congress - a serious blow to its socialist revolution. The Democratic Unity (MUD) victory gives the coalition an unprecedented strength in trying to rein in Maduro.

The majority means the MUD coalition can make sweeping changes, including pass laws allowing the release of political prisoners, replacing Supreme Court judges, making changes to the constitution pending approval in a referendum and even remove Maduro from

² Global oil prices. Extracted from: < <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2017/05/venezuela-worst-economic-crisis-wrong-170501063130120.html>>. Last access: August 30, 2017.

office by convening an assembly to rewrite Hugo Chávez's 1999 constitution. The opposition represents a serious challenge to the government's power.

The opposition maintains that the socialist leader is primarily responsible for the economic imbalance, but the president, who lacks the charisma of his predecessor, claims he is victim of a US-backed economic war aimed at removing socialist control over the world's biggest oil resources by trying to get him out of power before the end of his term in early 2019.

Maduro has seen his approval ratings plunge. He stands accused of authoritarianism over his crackdowns on protests and attempts to shut off opposition paths to power.

At the beginning of 2017, the Maduro government was in an upbeat mood. It no longer faced the threat of early presidential elections, having used its institutional dominion to block a presidential recall referendum in 2016. The MUD was in disarray, internally divided and seemingly unsure where to go next.

Then in late March, the Supreme Court (TSJ) issued two resolutions that would trigger new conflict, uniting and reinvigorating the opposition. Most controversially, Resolution 156 transferred legislative powers of the National Assembly to the court, a move the MUD condemned as a coup d'état.

The Maduro government soon made clear that it was ready to pour more fuel on the fire. On 7 April, the comptroller general announced that it was banning Henrique Capriles, a key opposition leader, from holding elected office for fifteen years. The MUD announced that street demonstrations would continue until the government backed down. On average, one person – a demonstrator, a passer-by or a member of the security forces – was killed every day.

On May 1, Maduro announced his plans for a constituent assembly, saying this was the only way to restore “peace”. The opposition dismissed the proposal as a fraud to provide quasi-legal justification for dictatorship.

On Tuesday June 27th, police officer Oscar Perez stole a government helicopter with a team of accomplices, flew over the Supreme Court, dropped grenades, fired shots and then flew around the country's capital, Caracas, for about two hours.

The pilot made sure that the message he was trying to send came through loud and clear: The copter was festooned with a banner reading "Liberty 350," for the constitutional article empowering Venezuelans to rebel against tyranny.



On July 30, Venezuelans were called on to choose the members of a new National Constituent Assembly that will be tasked with drafting a new constitution.

Four days before the national vote to elect a Constituent Assembly, Venezuela's opposition called on citizens to join a civic strike for 48 hours. The strikes and march are intended to voice disapproval with President Nicolas Maduro's plan to rewrite the constitution.

President Nicolas Maduro claimed victory in the election. Colombia, Mexico, Peru and other nations joined the US in saying they did not recognize the results of this election. However, old allies Bolivia, Cuba, Nicaragua and Russia stood by Maduro.

The 545 members, including Maduro's wife and son, of the Constituent Assembly have seized power from the opposition-led legislature.

The Maduro government has shown that it is willing to use state-sponsored violence to remain in power rather than give in to opposition demands for free and fair elections. Opposition protests have for the most part been non-violent, but its current leaders may not be able to retain control of the anti-Maduro movement, which includes sectors of the population that have little affinity with them. And while a split in the armed forces might bring about a swift conclusion to the conflict, it is also possible that it could lead to protracted violent clashes on the streets, with rival factions, both civilian and military, fighting for control.

Experts worry that Venezuela could drift into outright civil war without outside diplomatic intervention.

"Maduro and the top officials who surround him appear determined to remain in power at any cost, despite increasing regional isolation and growing signs of division within the government and the military," said Nick Miroff, correspondent for The Post.

Past International Actions

The United Nations Security Council turned its attention to the growing crisis in Venezuela for the first time in May 2017. The United States warned of the consequences of "serious instability" in the country.

They held a close-door meeting to discuss the situation in the South American nation and to make sure everyone is aware of the situation, but they were not looking for Security Council action.



The Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) also promoted short-lived talks between government and opposition at the height of the 2014 street clashes. The meeting was facilitated by the foreign ministers of Brazil, Colombia and Ecuador. Though the talks were fruitless, they established UNASUR and its secretary-general, Ernesto Samper, as potential facilitator in future Venezuelan conflicts, despite the misgivings of the MUD, which saw the organization as a government ally.

The meeting of the Organization of American States (OAS) to discuss the crisis in Venezuela ended without agreement in Washington.

Canada, Mexico, Panama, Peru and United States put forward a declaration calling for an immediate end to the violence, for political prisoners to be freed and respect for human rights and the rule of law. But the resolution failed to get the support of two-thirds of the OAS countries present, as Caribbean nations which rely on cheap oil from Venezuela.

Questions to Ponder

- What would be the best way to contain the different conflicts in Venezuela?
- How can the UN Security Council be involved in the local crisis without violating the international principle of sovereignty?
- How can the democracy and economy of the country be strengthened?
- How can the protection of the population be guaranteed, ensuring civil and human rights?

Position of the Member States

Permanent Members

People's Republic of China

Since 2007, China has been funding the Venezuelan government by more than US\$45 billion, according to Bloomberg. These commitments are supported by Venezuelan oil. However, the Chinese government refuses to comment the tragic situation of the crisis. The Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that this is an internal matter that they hope Venezuela can solve by their own, preserving the stability and development of the country.



French Republic

France and Venezuela maintain regular political relations. The economic relationship with Venezuela is mainly concentrated on large contracts. The country attracts significant investment, mainly in the fields of oil, gas, transport, chemistry and pharmaceuticals. Although trade has slowed markedly over the last two years, France remains the third-largest foreign investor in Venezuela, with an estimated stock of €\$5 billion.

According to the Banque de France, French businesses invested an average of €460 million per year between 2005 and 2008, but since the start of the international crisis, their asset movements to Venezuela have been negative.

The priority for the French government is to end the violence and protect the population against the despising of human rights made by the Venezuelan government. While some countries defend sanctions against Venezuela, France craves a negotiated solution to the Venezuelan crisis.

The president Emmanuel Macron has offered his help to mediate the situation in Venezuela and help both the government and the opposition groups to restore the dialogue and stability of the country.

Russian Federation

In recent years, Russia has increased its ties with Venezuela. These ties are of importance, particularly militarily. Before the oil price drop at the end of 2014, Venezuela was set to become Russia's biggest foreign export market for arms by 2025. In return, Russia at one point had plans to invest over US\$17 billion in Venezuela in hopes of quadrupling oil output there within six years.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov has said that the crisis in Venezuela should be resolved peacefully and without external intervention.

“We are united in the need to rapidly overcome the disagreements that exist in that country exclusively in a peaceful manner, through national dialogue without any kind of pressure from the outside, without speaking of the unacceptable threats of military interference in the country's internal affairs.”



The United Kingdom

The British interest in the Venezuelan affairs is in view of the economic relations between the two countries. The British Chamber of Commerce in Venezuela is celebrating 65 years and for decades British companies remain and have been working in the country. There are more than US\$5 billion invested in Venezuela by United Kingdom.

The United Kingdom Government was concerned by reports of violence since the elections of 2013 that put Maduro in the power.

“We call on all sides to resolve their differences through dialogue in good faith and to refrain from violence. We call on the Venezuelan Government to allow peaceful demonstrations and respect the separation of powers, in line with the Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.”

United States of America

The US government is the main opponent when we refer to Maduro's government. They are supportive of the opposition's initiative to hold a referendum to remove Maduro from power and condemn the decisions of the Supreme Court of Justice of Venezuela.

According to Mark Toner, who is the messenger of the State Department, the judiciary seized the powers of the National Assembly. For him, this disruption of the democratic way of taking action is not a positive thing for Venezuela's democratic institutions, as well as denying the Venezuelan people their right to decide the future of the country through political deputies and representatives. The United States requested that the Venezuelan government allow the National Assembly, democratically elected, its constitutional functions.

In June 2017, the United States called for an international action to resolve the Venezuelan crisis. The Trump government applied sanctions for alleged human rights abuses, undermining democracy and corruption, also trying to stop the referendum called by Maduro that would allow him to rewrite the constitution and replace the National Assembly, which is controlled by the opposition, with an entirely new legislative body filled with his hand-picked nominees.



Non-Permanent Members

Bolivia

Bolivia is a country that comes from a great partnership with Venezuela, where it deposits much in the government of Nicolas Maduro. The Bolivian state affirms that by disagreeing with the United States of America when they are within their margins of interests but when they are not summoned, it finances coups d'etat. Finally, Bolivia also denied a decision by Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay - founding Mercosur countries - to suspend Venezuela from the bloc because of a rupture of democratic doctrine, guaranteeing that the action violates the norms proposed in the group, precisely because it did not happen no type of query.

Arab Republic of Egypt

The relations between Egypt and Venezuela are deep and rich and have spanned over 60 years. Both countries are members in the Non Aligned Movement and share common values and common views on different regional and international issues of common concern. Venezuela is a key player in the Latin American region and an active member in many of the regional forums. One of the most important fields of bilateral cooperation is Gas.

Italian Republic

According with the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Angelino Alfano, Italy condemn the decision of the constituent assembly to take upon itself the legislative powers attributed to the Parliament legitimately elected in compliance with the Constitution of 1999. This position of Venezuela towards an autocratic regime, distancing it from founding democratic principles and the rule of law. Italy urges to the Venezuelan Government to urgently pass the measures necessary to restore democracy, the rule of law and the respect for human rights, and put an end to the persecution and intimidation of those who express their dissent, release political prisoners and initiate a dialogue with the opposition.



Republic of Kazakhstan

When Kazakhstan bid his seat on the UNSC, it was based on four central pillars: food security, water security, energy security and nuclear security. The Republic of Kazakhstan supports peace, prosperity, individual opportunity and economic development, and its government upholds these values and beliefs in its words and in its actions.

Kingdom of Sweden

The Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs is following the increasingly violent developments in Venezuela with growing concern. The situation in Venezuela has been discussed at the meeting of EU foreign ministers, and EU Member States have firmly stated that the use of force is not a solution to the political crisis and tensions in the country. According with the Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström, the country is concerned about the shortage of food and medicine that is becoming increasingly acute and hits the most vulnerable the hardest. Sweden calls on all parties to respect human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

Ukraine

Ukraine is concerned about the escalation of political tension and violence in Venezuela amid the deepening of economic and food crisis. They resolutely oppose the attempts by the Venezuelan government to usurp power, as well as to violate basic democratic rights and freedoms of its citizens, including the right to peaceful assembly and freedom of expression. Ukraine strongly supports the appeals and efforts of the global community aimed at resolution of the crisis in Venezuela, including by means of holding free and democratic elections.

Oriental Republic of Uruguay

Uruguay has been following the Venezuelan situation seeking interference from other countries with forms of dialogue between the government and an opposition to diplomatic solutions, opposing the violence presented by opponents on the streets with confirmed deaths. The objective was always capable of a gradual and continuous progress of the political, social and economic situation of the nation, remaining unchanged regarding the traditional and economic of the foreign policy of the country, always with the commitment of dialogue being put into practice with demand of regional and protection of human rights.



Japan

Japan upholds the concept of human security as one of the major pillars of its foreign policy. Strengthening the foundations of democracy promotes the participation of the people in governance and development and also leads to the protection and promotion of human rights. The Japanese Government has been actively supporting the efforts of developing countries toward democratization. Japan has appealed to the international community on every occasion its belief in the importance of a "comprehensive approach" which makes efforts bearing in mind policies and measures in such fields as politics and security.

Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

Ethiopia supports global security and peace, as well as preventing and eliminating terrorism. Ethiopia has played an important and exceptional role in ensuring peace and stability throughout the world, contributing to peacekeeping operations under the United Nations since 1950. According to Foreign Minister Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu, the international community needs to avoid conflicts by restoring trust between governments and their citizens. In the face of crises, the country calls on the international community to connect global efforts for peace and security, sustainable development and human rights. Emphasizes that preventive action is essential to prevent mass atrocities or serious human rights abuses.

Republic of Senegal

For Senegal, peace is conceived as the establishment of relations of trust between states, and perceived by each other as preserving their own security as well as that of others. This conception of peace is the basis of their bilateral relations. Senegal's action is initially preventive in that it consists in inviting, through discourse and attitude, respect for the principles and ideals enshrined in the charters of the organizations of which it is a member, emphasizing equality, mutual respect, solidarity and peace.



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