

Forum: General Assembly 1 (GA1)

Issue: The situation in Venezuela

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Introduction

Venezuela's crisis has led to one of the largest displacement movements in the world. By December 2025, nearly 7.9 million Venezuelan refugees and migrants were living outside the country, with more than 6.9 million living in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNHCR, 2025). Venezuela has some of the world's largest oil reserves, but due to years of political instability, economic problems, and international tensions, these factors have all contributed to a serious humanitarian situation. The large number of Venezuelans leaving the country has also placed pressure on neighbouring countries, particularly through increased demand for housing, healthcare, education, and employment (UNHCR, 2025). The crisis, therefore, is not just a domestic one but also an international one that involves migration, regional stability, human rights, and international law.

The situation worsened further in January 2026. On January 3, the United States carried out a military operation in Venezuela and captured the former president, Nicolas Maduro, and his wife, Cilia Flores. The US government said the operation was linked to national security concerns and accusations of drug trafficking against Maduro. Delcy Rodriguez became interim president. The capture increased international concerns about Venezuela's political future. The United Nations expressed concern about the military action and the importance of international law, the UN Charter, and human rights.

Venezuela is important because the situation involves international security, military action, human rights, and the possibility of wider regional instability.

Definition of key terms

Narco-terrorism

Connection between illegal drug trafficking and terrorist activities, where drug money funds terror or drug cartels use terrorist tactics against governments

Sanctions

Official penalties or measures put in place by countries or international groups to force or put pressure on an individual or group to change their behaviours.

Interim government

A temporary government which is set up to manage a country during a period of transition until the permanent government is elected or established.

Sovereignty

The authority that a country has to control its own government.

Forced displacement

An involuntary movement of people away from their homes due to conflicts, violence, or serious conditions.

Background Information

The current crisis developed over many years. Hugo Chavez became president in 1999 and introduced the Bolivarian Revolution, aiming to reduce inequality and give the government a larger role in the economy and society. His government increased state control over industries and social programs, and used oil revenue to fund public spending. The economy had become more dependent on government spending and oil income. After he died in 2013, Nicholas Maduro became the president and continued these policies.

Venezuela's economy was heavily dependent on oil, which gave a large share of the government's revenue and export income. When global oil prices fell after 2014, the government lost an important source of money. At the same time, they were facing problems including shortages, falling production, corruption, and economic irresponsibility. Problems such as corruption and poor economic management made the situation worse. Later, International sanctions, particularly from the United States, placed more pressure on the government and parts of the economy.

Political tensions also increased because of disputed elections. In 2018, the presidential elections were widely disputed by opposition groups and considered unfair by many. Tensions increased again after the 2024 elections when the national electoral council declared Nicolas Maduro the winner but did not publish detailed results from individual polling stations. The Carter Center, which observed the election, said it could not verify the official result and called for the detailed results to be released. During the election, they had worked with election observers and met with government officials, political parties, civil society groups, and other stakeholders during the process.

On the 3rd of January 2026, the United States carried out a military operation in Venezuela and captured Nicolás Maduro and his wife, Cilia Flores. They were reportedly

taken to the United States. The US government said the operation was connected to national security concerns, drug trafficking, and the goal to change politics in Venezuela. The operation marked a major escalation in US involvement in a crisis and created concerns about the political future of Venezuela.

The United Nations expressed serious concern about the operation. The Secretary-General stated that the action could increase instability in Venezuela and affect the neighbouring countries. Also concerned about the use of military force that did not respect the UN Charter, which generally prohibits the threat or use of force against another state's territorial integrity or political independence. The UN called for respect for international law, human rights, and Venezuela. The intervention also increased uncertainty across the region. The UN warned that further instability in Venezuela could affect the neighbours and regional peace and security. The situation has become an international issue involving not only Venezuela's internal politics but also migration, security, international law, and more.

Economic and humanitarian situation

Venezuela continues to have economic difficulties. According to IMF data, Venezuela's average inflation rate was 251.95% in 2025 and is projected to be 387.4% in 2026 (International Monetary Fund, 2025). These numbers measure the average yearly change in consumer prices. The IMF also projects real GDP growth of 1.53% in 2025 and 4.04% in 2026 (IMF,2025). However, economic growth doesn't necessarily mean that living conditions have improved in Venezuela.

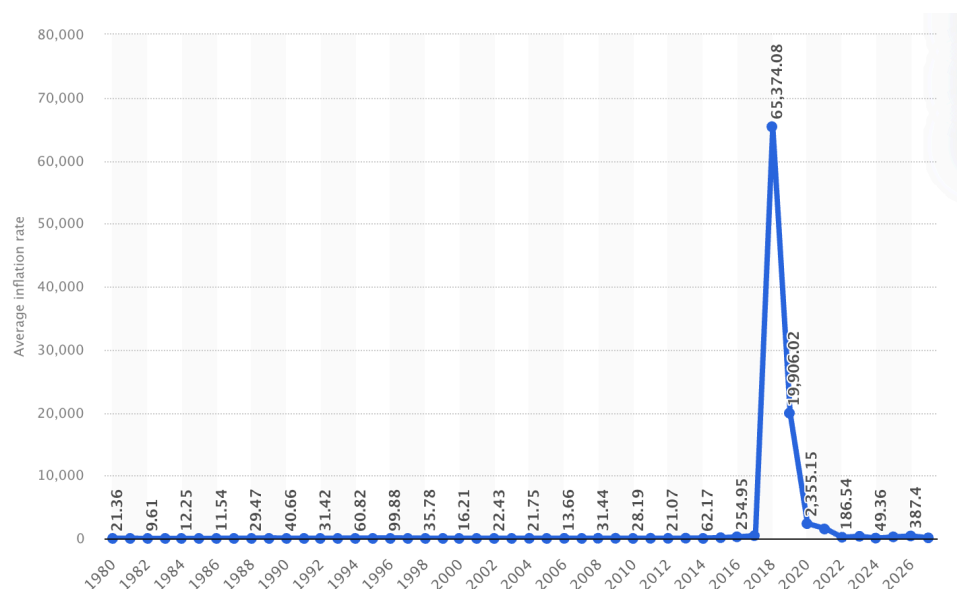


Figure 1: average inflation rates in Venezuela

The humanitarian effects have also spread beyond the borders of Venezuela. The UNHCR reports nearly 7.9 million Venezuelan refugees and migrants worldwide, including more than 1.3 million people seeking asylum and over 395,000 refugees (UNHCR, 2025). Many Venezuelans in other countries still face difficulties accessing services, employment, and stable living conditions. Venezuela's situation also affects the neighbouring countries. Colombia and Brazil have a large number of Venezuelan migrants, who place pressure on housing, healthcare, education, and more.

Another issue is the territorial conflict with Guyana over the Essequibo region. The conflict dates back to the nineteenth century and is currently being brought up by the International Court of Justice (ICJ), which describes it as a long history of conflict.

Organisations and Major Countries Involved

Venezuela

Venezuela is the centre of this crisis. Its government focuses on protecting the country's sovereignty and has been against foreign interference, while also dealing with international concerns about human rights, democracy, and the humanitarian situation.

United States

The United States has put major pressure on Venezuela through its multiple attempts at diplomatic action. As of January 2026, following the operations that resulted in the capture of Nicolás Maduro, the US has mainly focused on security, political change, and other issues.

United Nations

The UN has focused on the protection of human rights, providing humanitarian aid, and encouraging peaceful dialogue. Also supporting the solutions based on international law and continues to monitor the political and humanitarian situation in Venezuela.

Colombia and Brazil

Both countries are heavily affected by this crisis as they both share borders with Venezuela and have received large numbers of migrants. Their main concerns are managing migration, protecting their borders, and maintaining regional stability while supporting the crisis.

Guyana

Guyana's main concern is the Essequibo dispute with Venezuela. It supports using the ICJ (International Court of Justice) and international law to settle the dispute, while Venezuela continues to claim the territory.

Possible Solutions

Support a Venezuelan-led political process

The UN and regional organizations could support negotiations between Venezuelan political groups. A clear political roadmap could include transparent elections and independent observation.

Increase international humanitarian support

Countries and international organizations could provide more funding for food, healthcare, and education for the migrants and refugees. UNHCR has highlighted the financial pressure on countries hosting Venezuelans.

Strengthen human rights monitoring

Independent organizations should continue to monitor political and human rights violations. Current unlinked reporting says that, despite some changes following Nicholas Maduro's removal, many people have been detained and major security has not been reformed.

Encourage regional cooperation

Neighboring countries could work together on migration, border security, and humanitarian assistance. This could help reduce the pressure on countries and make it easier to support Venezuela.

Consider humanitarian effects of sanctions

Countries imposing sanctions could regularly review their humanitarian effects and make sure that measures intended to target governments or individuals do not reduce people's access to essential goods or services.

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