

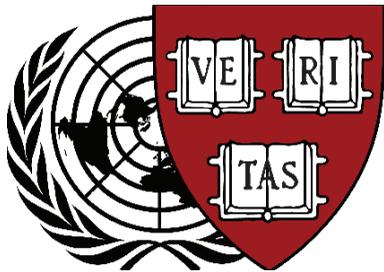
Background Guide in Brief

for the

*Organization of American
States*

Harvard Model United Nations China

March 21- 24, 2019



Harvard Model United Nations China

A LETTER FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON BACKGROUND GUIDES IN BRIEF

Dear Delegates,

Welcome once more to Harvard Model United Nations China 2019! The entire Staff and Secretariat of HMUN could not be more excited to see you in person in Beijing in a few short weeks.

By now, you have most likely begun preparing for HMUN China 2019. Preparing for a Model UN conference can be intimidating, but our team is committed to providing you with the support and resources that you will need to succeed. In keeping with that mission, this year at HMUN China we are piloting a new resource—the Background Guide in Brief.

Background Guides are intended to outline the major issues and ideas that delegates will have to confront in the committee room. However, reading the Guide can also be intimidating for delegates without prior experience in English-language Model UN, or MUN in general. To help all delegates succeed, we have asked your Director to create an abbreviated version of your committee's Guide, enclosed in the following pages.

We hope that this Background Guide in Brief provides a helpful overview of your topic. That being said, your preparation should not end with this document. We encourage you to also read the full Background Guide, which goes into much greater detail and includes the full bibliographical documentation of our Directors' work. Full Guides also contain useful information on committee expectations and procedure, and you should use it as a resource now and at conference. In short, consider what you learn from the Background Guide in Brief to be a launching point for further research—be sure to take advantage of the time you have to prepare for conference as best you can, and feel free to reach out to your committee Directors with additional questions.

Thank you once again for choosing to participate at HMUN China 2019! We are beyond excited for conference, and look forward to welcoming you in Beijing in a few weeks.

Sincerely,

Anthony Bogachev

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Secretary-General
Harvard Model United Nations 2019

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Introduction and History

Venezuela successfully gained its independence by seceding from Gran Colombia in 1830. Since then it has experienced periods of both democratic and dictatorial rule and has experienced periods of extreme prosperity. Today, however, political, social and economic turmoil exists in what was once considered the richest country in South America. Venezuela's current state is endangering its future as a country and the lives of its citizens. Hyperinflation, food shortages, malnutrition, crime, poverty, lack of medical attention, and suppression of freedom of expression are just a few of the many issues that have called international attention to the state of Venezuela as it becomes the center of a humanitarian crisis.

Current Situation

The legacy of Hugo Chavez's dependence on oil revenues, extensive public spending, and currency controls have led to unheard-of levels of inflation in Venezuela and have caused the country to enter an economic crisis. On May 31, 2018 economist Steve Hanke estimated that Venezuela's inflation rate had reached a high of 27,364 percent. The hyperinflation that is currently taking place in Venezuela is slashing the value of the bolivar. Venezuelan's wages and salaries are shriveling with the continuing increase in inflation. Oil workers are now making less than a dollar a day. Individual's lifelong savings have also been destroyed by the hyperinflation that is ravaging Venezuela. With decreasing salaries and wages, individuals in Venezuela no longer have the money to be able to purchase goods, and even if they did, they would have to wait in outrageous lines to purchase basic goods like flour and milk. Individuals must sometimes wait in lines of more than 1,500 people in hopes that they will be able to purchase some food. The lack of available food in Venezuela is causing never before seen levels of malnutrition. A survey conducted in 2016 by three Venezuelan universities reported that nine

out of 10 households had become "food insecure" in Venezuela. Malnutrition is having a negative effect on all citizens, from infants to the elderly population. In an investigative piece conducted by the New York Times, they followed 21 public hospitals over a period of five months and found that hundreds of kids are dying of starvation.

The Healthcare system in Venezuela is collapsing. A survey conducted by the opposition-controlled National Assembly found that a majority of labs and hospital nutrition services were inoperative. People have died in state run hospitals where a lack of gas has stopped the generators from running, where x-ray machines no longer work, incubators are broken, and doctors perform crucial surgeries in unsanitary environments. The greatest harm being done to the Venezuelan people is actively caused by the lack of medicine, supplies, and personnel. The Pharmaceutical Federation of Venezuela estimates that the country is suffering from an 85 percent shortage of medicine.

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees there are about 5,000 people leaving Venezuela each day, which means that by the end of 2018 around 1.8 million people will have left Venezuela – a number that is larger than five percent of Venezuela's total population. What is taking place today in Venezuela is being called the largest mass migration crisis in the history of modern Latin America and is thought to soon rival the Syrian refugee crisis. Many individuals are seeking asylum and refuge in the neighboring countries including Colombia, Brazil, Peru, Panama, and Ecuador. Colombia specifically has been the country that is most affected by the recent influx of Venezuelan citizens. A majority of Venezuelans choose to flee to Colombia because of geographic, commercial, and familial ties. Colombian immigration officials report that there are about 600,000 Venezuelans in the country, 250,000 since August 2017, and 3,000 more entering every day.

According to a report by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Venezuelan

government is committing blatant human rights violations. In response to the Supreme Court's attempt to take away power from the country's legislative branch in early 2017, thousands of Venezuelans took to the streets to protest. These anti-government protesters were however met with extreme and sometimes deadly force.

Past International Actions

The Organization of American States has taken action to address the situation in Venezuela in the past, however, historically their efforts have not been enough. The majority of the action that they have taken has only addressed the political unrest and turmoil that is taking place within the country and has ignored the economic and social issues that are also present. The Organization of American States needs to take further action if it hopes to ameliorate the situation in Venezuela.

Bloc Positions

The crisis in Venezuela is worsening by the minute and it is imperative that OAS member states reach a consensus on how to address the situation quickly. However, this may be difficult as all member states do not agree on what action to take against Venezuela, if any. It is important to look at each member states' history with Venezuela and how their past could influence their stance on Venezuela today. There are four main groups of countries that might work together considering their perspective on the situation in Venezuela. The first group is Venezuela and its allies which includes Venezuela, Nicaragua, Bolivia, Ecuador, and El Salvador. The second groups is the Caribbean Nations that include Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Bahamas, Commonwealth of Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Haiti, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Trinidad and Tobago. The third group is South and Central America which includes Argentina, Belize,

Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, and Uruguay. The last group consists of Canada and the United States.

This Background Guide in Brief is not meant to provide an exhaustive introduction to the topic. Please consult the full Background Guide on the HMUN China website, which also includes citations for the material in this document.