

Committee: Security Council

Issue: The Question of Venezuela

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Position: The President of the Security Council

Introduction

It is undeniable that daily demonstrations in the capital of Venezuela (Caracas), from April 2017 to June 2017, have been perceived as both the initial internal outrage and accusation towards the president, Nicolas Maduro, who is considered to be unlawful – a dictatorship. However, Nicolas Maduro counterattacked such accusation by asserting that there have been conspiracies among his opposition forces with the involvement of foreign nations (i.e. the United States of America) in order to destabilise his position and Venezuela as a whole. In fact, this conflict between the opposition group and the president has sparked one of the gruesome affairs around the globe, causing a substantial number of casualties followed by the economic crisis.

The protest is thought to have arisen from the election result of four legislators (one enrolled with the ruling party and three enrolled with the opposition) being suspended in January 2016, owing to the Supreme Court that claimed alleged voting irregularities. As a result, the opposition blamed the court for deliberately implementing such procedure that menaced their supermajority. The deadlock had lasted until when the court not only suspended a stay-or-go referendum against the President but also postponed regional elections. Subsequently, its preposterous rulings over the National assembly and the Congress legislative powers have initiated the protest on the next day.

As a matter of fact, the inflation rate is fluctuating at a rate unprecedented in Venezuelan history, yet it has been over 50 percent since 2014 because of rapidly alternating depreciation of the local currency. As of 2017, it reached 536 percent. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) estimated that it would eventually reach 2069 percent by 2018. Even though the government endeavours to manipulate the price of essential goods, it is still volatile due to the fact that the black market holds a great deal of influence over the price of goods and services. For this reason, prices fluctuate erratically; it has led to a macabre series of deaths related to food shortages. By some accounts, it is reported that crossing the border near Colombia is widely prevalent among Venezuelan civilians in order to get access to necessary goods. On top of this situation, a Venezuelan doctor, Orfram Moreno stated that "Most of the time patients die because their families are out of the hospital looking for the treatments and they don't

come at a time we can use the treatment when they bring the treatment, the patient's already dying". What is worse, the conflict gave birth to a more precarious position, an adverse impact on their education – still living lives of poverty, persecution, and prejudice. 27,479 people were murdered in 2016 according to statistics from the Venezuelan Violence Observatory (Observatorio Venezolano de Violencia – OVV).

Definition of Key Terms

Venezuelan Constituent Assembly election

Constituent Assembly elections were held in order to elect the members of the Constituent National Assembly. The presidential decree of Nicolas Maduro convened this election. The international community, the European Union and the organisations of the United States of America blamed the decision to hold such election because it would only worsen the tensions with the opposition group. However, foreign involvements in Venezuelan politics were discouraged by Syria, Bolivia, Cuba, Nicaragua, Ecuador and Russia.

Demonstration

A public march protesting against alleged or unfair actions done by authorities especially on a political dispute.

Bilateral Diplomacy

Bilateral Diplomacy incorporates analysing affairs around the globe, examining causes and operating trades or agreements under international law between a pair of nations – often mediated by non-state actors in extreme cases. It serves as a vital role in consolidating peace and building block of international relations.

Imperialism

Imperialism is considered as a form of the procedure of policies to extend its power through governing affairs of diplomatic incidents, sometimes with support from military forces.

Sovereignty

Sovereignty gives rise to the government being able to govern itself; the authority of a state.

Background Information

The declaration from the United States of America

Venezuela has been recognised as a national security threat by the United States of America since 2015 – permitted sanctions against seven Venezuelan officials that consistently deteriorated bilateral diplomatic dispute. It followed by the executive order from the former president of the United States, Barack Obama. Nicolas Maduro, the Venezuelan president, reviled such sanctions as a trial to tumble his government. He stated that this imperialist threat would be reciprocated by decree jurisdictions, and nominated one of the sanctioned officials as the interior minister onwards. Meanwhile, a stance of the White House was to eliminate abuse of human rights and acts of violence that undermined democratic processes of associated institutions. In other words, the executive order focused on government officials who were involved in penalising freedom of actions, prohibiting freedom of speech and promoting public corruption.

“Venezuelan officials past and present who violate the human rights of Venezuelan citizens and engage in acts of public corruption will not be welcome here, and we now have the tools to block their assets and their use of the United States financial systems...” White House spokesman remarked on the current conflict of Venezuela. Nevertheless, Nicolas Maduro marched in a formal procession specifically for the sanctioned seven officials, naming them as heroes. Washington accuses them of executing violence against protesters. Furthermore, Venezuela was called on to emancipate all political prisoners by the White House. The United States officials emphasised that the Venezuelan civilians and economy were not the targets of the executive order; only legislative elections to be held without any alleged reversals of a decision are allowed.

The Democratic Unity Roundtable (MUD)

The Democratic Unity Roundtable is considered to be a coalition of parties that have no unified ideology, yet their goals are to establish solidarity, freedom and prosperity against the social decay of Venezuela, consolidating national sovereignty. They confronted with Chavez’s political agenda as the opposition (the president of Venezuela from 1999 to 2013). The MUD became the largest party in the National Assembly with 112 out of 167. However, the 2017 Venezuelan Constituent Assembly election was boycotted by the MUD, owing to the unfair and alleged decision of the Supreme Court over such election. As a result, the United Socialist Party of Venezuela (Partido Socialista Unido de Venezuela – PSUV) took back their parliamentary majority soon, and the protest was initiated.

The death toll



Caption #1: Anti-government unrest showing security forces and demonstrators

A couple of days before a referendum to elect a constituent assembly, the government has banned nationwide protests as violence has also escalated between the opposition and the government officials; those who violate such ban will face a jail sentence. Nonetheless, the opposition members were still rallying against the regime of Nicolas Maduro, holding a massive anti-government protest in the capital. Since April 2017, violent clashes between police forces and demonstrators were reported along with numerous human rights violations, excessive forces and the use of torture. In July 2017, according to the attorney general's office, roughly 2000 people have been killed or injured in the first place of one day, including armed government supporters, colectivos. As animosity continues to aggravate, the United States Department not only issued a travel warning but supported backing the opposition-led demonstrations against the government. The ensuing moments of tensions between the United States of America and Venezuela have persisted and deteriorated diplomacy subsequently ahead of the upcoming election. During July 2017, the president Donald Trump threatened on Venezuela to imposed "strong and swift economic actions", and on the same day, targeted 13 top Venezuelan officials have been sanctioned by his administration. By some accounts, several experts speculated that such implementation might prefigure a gruesome set of economic penalties.

The latest developments

Nicolas Maduro has declared that taking part in 2018 presidential elections is no longer available for his opposition parties – banned from voting, and also stated that in local elections, the government (the ruling socialist party) won 90 percent of 335 mayorships. International criticism was inevitable.

Timeline of Events

| Date | Description of event |
|-------------------------------|---|
| March 29 th , 2017 | The Supreme Court attempted to strip the opposition-controlled Congress |
| April 1 st , 2017 | Although the Supreme Court reversed parts of its decision to take over the authority of the National Assembly, Venezuela's political opposition and demonstrators continue to accuse Nicolas Maduro of violating the rule of law. |
| May 18 th , 2017 | Members of the Supreme Court have been sanctioned in retaliation for their alleged implementation to take over the powers of the National Assembly by the United Nations. |
| June 27 th , 2017 | Venezuelan police officer launched a helicopter attack on the Supreme Court. Actor Oscar Perez dropped grenades from the helicopter, but no injuries happened. |
| July 28 th , 2017 | The United States of America ordered embassy workers to leave Venezuela owing to the safety concern. The death toll from daily demonstrations is over 100 since April 2017. |
| July 31 st , 2017 | Nicolas Maduro has been sanctioned by the United States of America. Donald Trump told supporters, "I don't take orders from the empire". |
| August 2 nd , 2017 | The Constituent Assembly election is now believed to be manipulated, claimed by Smartmatic, the United Kingdom based company. |

UN Involvement, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events

An informal Security Council meeting on Venezuela has been organised by the United States of America and Italy on the 21st of September 2017 as stated by the United Nations officials. The meeting aimed at combating the crisis happening in Venezuela, and discussing "the role the international community and regional organisations can play in seeking a political solution and facilitating humanitarian access to those affected by the tensions". The United States Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley asserted that the Security Council must focus on the situation in Venezuela, which until now ensured that regional organisations were best suited to cope with the crisis. In addition, there have been no resolutions submitted regarding this particular issue at this stage.

Appendices

I. Venezuela Stance – September 24th, 2014

NICOLÁS MADURO MOROS, President of Venezuela, thanking the United Nations for the tributes paid to the late president of his country, Hugo Chávez, noted that the Charter was really one of the most beautiful poems that the world could ever read, but it had become an instrument that was unfortunately set aside, overlooked and consistently flouted.

He stressed that the United Nations was an historic experiment and that only with its establishment had humanity begin to see the light of the future at the end of a long tunnel of wars, battles and global conflicts. Given the importance of having such an institution, the international community must stress the need for an in-depth transformation. It was necessary to revamp the leadership of the Security Council. The Organization now had to deal with a multi-polar world with emerging countries and regions, each with their own faults. There was also a need to adapt and submit to the broader sovereignty of the peoples of the world who wished to be heard, and to strengthen the strength and clout of the Secretary-General so that he could find solutions to the conflicts of the world.

Observing the emergence of a new regionalism, he pointed to the Bolivarian Alliance, which was observing its tenth anniversary. Petrocaribe, the oil alliance, supported that southern regionalism and was now starting to form ties with the rest of the world. There was optimism for the new regionalism, and new forms were arising towards establishing a new road map for rethinking and overhauling the United Nations. That momentum must not fall through the cracks. A common road map for humanity was needed if the international community wished to tackle the important issues that it faced. He asked when President Obama would take the opportunity to go down in history by ending the embargo in Cuba.

In addition, the General Assembly needed to draft a document that would become a mandatory text for the United Nations to defend poor countries against the “vulture funds” that sought to plunder those countries’ economies and impose detrimental economic systems. He expressed solidarity with the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) countries, and Argentina in particular.

He also stressed the need for a decolonization plan for Puerto Rico, which was part of the Caribbean community and should be a part of CELAC. Oscar Lopez, whose only offense was to defend Puerto Rico, had been in a United States prison for almost 35 years and had been tortured. Calling for Mr. Lopez’s immediate release, he compared him to Nelson Mandela.

Venezuela had the largest oil reserves in the hemisphere, he went on to say. For the first time in 90 years, the country had fully recovered its own oil resources for the basis of its own development, after facing the persecution of imperialist forces. The imperialist Powers could not succeed with Hugo Chávez, and they would not succeed with him.

The loss of human lives should pain the whole world, he said. Because bombs killed the innocents, there was no other way to overthrow the terrorist networks of the world, but to invite the Governments of the region to come up with a comprehensive strategy that could be supported by the Security Council. Anything else was “crazy”, he said. Current methods, such as was done in Libya, were a “crazy race towards more terrorism and more violence”.

Caption #2: General Debate of the 69th Session of the UN General Assembly

II. 36th Session of the Human Rights Council – September 11th, 2017:

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