

General Assembly (GA)



Topic: The Crisis in Venezuela

Director: Kellie Fernandez

October 10th, 2020

To Delegates of CHSMUN Novice 2020

Dear Delegates,
Welcome to CHSMUN Novice 2020!

It is our highest honor and pleasure to welcome you all to our 2020 online novice conference here at Cerritos High School. On behalf of the Cerritos High School Model United Nations program, we are proud to host our very first virtual novice conference, where you will become more knowledgeable on international issues, participate in intellectually stimulating discussions, and create new and everlasting friendships.

The CHSMUN program continues to compete around the world as a nationally ranked MUN program. Our delegates utilize diplomacy in order to create complex solutions towards multilateral issues in the global community. Our head chairs are selected from only the best seniors of our program, undergoing a rigorous training process to ensure the highest quality of moderating and grading of debate. Furthermore, all the topic synopses have been reviewed and edited numerous times. We strongly believe that by providing each and every delegate with the necessary tools and understanding, he or she will have everything they need to thrive in all aspects of the committee. We thoroughly encourage each delegate to engage in all of the facets of their topic, in order to grow in their skills as a delegate and develop a greater knowledge of the world around them.

Although this wasn't what we expected, our advisors and staff have put in countless hours to ensure delegates have an amazing experience at the online conference. Our greatest hope is that from attending CHSMUN 2020, students are encouraged to continue on in Model United Nations and nevertheless, inspired to spark change in their surrounding communities. CHSMUN Novice 2020 will provide a quality experience for beginner delegates to develop their speaking and delegating skills.

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please contact us! We look forward to seeing you at CHSMUN Novice 2020!

Sincerely,

Anjali Mani and Karishma Patel

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Secretary-Generals

A Note From The Director

Delegates,

Hi everyone! My name is Kellie Fernandez and I'm super excited to be your General Assembly Plenary Director for the 2020 Cerritos Advanced Conference! Outside of MUN, I take part in the cross country and track and field team where I do pole vault. Outside of school sports, I just started surfing and I've been doing Tahitian dance since I was 6 and ballet since I was 3. You can always engage in a conversation with me about politics, football, baseball, dance, TIKTOK, or just life in general. During my free time, I like to do yoga or watch The Office (the BEST show), That 70's Show, or Selling Sunset (A new favorite). I also really enjoy reading mystery books as well as books on American history and politics (i know BORING) My COVID project has been trying to learn Arabic, so if you know how to speak Arabic, please message me because I am struggling. I also have two dogs, a Golden Retriever and a Shiba Inu and they are so cute, I wish I could insert a picture here. Anyways, I know this has been all over the place, but I hope you guys have become a little more familiar with me:)

As I enter my fifth year in MUN, I'm really happy to be able to conduct debate on a topic that I hold dear to my heart. I'm looking forward to being able to work with such a great group of delegates, which I know you all are :)! I just wanted to say that everything about MUN takes patience and while it may be frustrating, nerve-wracking, and exciting all at the same time, don't give up because there will be a light at the end of the tunnel! While there is uncertainty regarding how this year will go, I will do everything in my power to make sure that this conference is the most enjoyable experience for all of you! I'm excited to watch you all debate and I hope that you will learn a lot from this conference and continue on your journey in MUN. If you have any questions or concerns feel free to contact me:) See you guys soon!

Sincerely,

Kellie Fernandez

Director, OHCR

Committee Introduction

First established in 1945, the United Nations General Assembly serves as one of the main functions of the UN in terms of policy making and representing the UN(1). The GA is a very unique committee of the UN, seeing as it comprises all 193 members of the UN, which allows for detailed discussions regarding international issues that require a multifaceted approach. It also plays an integral role in setting the standard for international law and it accepts multiple international cases and works to conduct informal consultations. It also has many functions, with its main being to make recommendations to nations regarding international issues. The GA has initiated multiple political, economic, humanitarian, social, and legal actions that have directly benefited the lives of millions throughout the world. The role of the GA is reflected in the Millenium Declaration as well as the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document (1) which aim to attain peace, security, disarmament, protect human rights and promote the rule of law, protect the

environment, meet the needs of Africa, and to strengthen the UN. The GA can be seen to address a multitude of different issues from economic to humanitarian and educational issues and works to achieve consensus on issues as opposed to deciding by a formal vote. The goals of the GA were further pushed in September of 2015 when it adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The main focus of this Agenda was to leave no nation behind, with a detailed approach outlined to achieve the 17 Sustainable Development goals (2). Ultimately, the jurisdiction of the General Assembly gives it the power to create only non-binding recommendations regarding international issues. Given this, the GA has been able to formulate groundbreaking and lasting actions and suggestions as well as made significant progress through its achievements which have impacted the lives of millions.

Topic: The Crisis in Venezuela

Background:

In the 1950s, Venezuela was an ever prospering nation, ranking fourth-place in terms of per capita GDP worldwide and was by far the most advanced nation in Latin America. It experienced unprecedented levels of economic growth up until around the 1970s where it grew 6.5 percent year-on-year (3). However, once Hugo Chavez came to power, the economic situation that was present in the nation as a whole began to go on a steady decline. Chavez began to nationalize industries, with the most important being its petroleum industry which allowed them to experience such growth in its earlier years. Eventually, Venezuela became a petrostate which was characterized by skyrocketing oil prices and frequent as well as unchecked borrowing (3). Chavez did succeed in decreasing pressing issues in Venezuela such as cutting the poverty rates by almost half from 48.6% to 29.5% over the span of 9 years and improving social relations through the amendment to the Venezuelan Constitution, however, the progress ended up being overturned once Chavez began to resort to violent means to suppress protests (4). Following the death of Chavez in 2013, Venezuela was already at its peak of disaster with extreme hyperinflation, immense debt, and food shortages which had never been seen before in such a broad spectrum in modern Venezuela (3). Hyperinflation is when a nation continues to print money and is characterized by a rapid increase of general prices in the economy for goods and services which then erodes the value of currency, and in extreme cases, can even render it worthless. This is currently happening in Venezuela and has resulted in mass business closures, raises the unemployment rate, and significantly increases the cost of living. Following Chavez's death, Nicolas Maduro came to power in a time where the economy was on the verge of imploding from the inside out. Major changes took place in terms of the state of the nation with Maduro being forced to devalue the Bolivar by 30 percent against the dollar, GDP contracted by an upwards of 10 percent, inflation was at 26,000 percent, and 75% of the country's population has lost an average of 19 pounds in weight from the scarcity of food (3). Maduro was deemed as responsible for this horrible turn of events in his nation, but in reality, Maduro was simply a continuation of Chavez's presidency which was one day doomed to fail. Chavez's work to decrease poverty by half eventually came back even stronger than it was before with poverty in Venezuela now soaring to 87 percent. The Crisis in Venezuela is a multifaceted issue with a raging humanitarian crisis accompanied by both an economic and political crisis. In regards to the political situation, there remains uncertainty on who leads Venezuela, seeing as there is currently a challenge of power between Nicolas Maduro and National Assembly Leader Juan Guaido. Following Maduro's first term in office, the Venezuelan economy plummeted which resulted in many unhappy Venezuelan's who sought change. However, Maduro was re-elected to serve a second six-year term in May of 2018, which was seen as a very controversial election and was not recognized by the National Assembly seeing as many candidates were not allowed to run and others were either jailed or fled the nation out of fear (5). On January 23 of 2019, Juan Guaido announced himself as acting president of Venezuela, in which he was recognized by more than 50 nations as the legitimate president. However, some other socialist nations such as Russia and China continue to stand by President Maduro (5). This followed with mass protest in

the nation who were met with severe military uprising (16). The economic crisis in Venezuela has also fueled the humanitarian crisis, seeing as the majority of the Venezuelan population is now in poverty. As a socialist leader, Nicolas Maduro aimed to decrease income inequality and status in Venezuela, which ended up backfiring. For example, Maduro implemented price controls which are government-mandated minimum or maximum prices that are set for goods which aimed to make basic commodities and goods more affordable to the poor, however, this eventually led to Venezuelan businesses stopping production due to a lack of profit, which in turn led to the extreme shortages of basic goods that we see in Venezuela today (5). Even food items like a simple cup of coffee have increased in price dramatically, which has been measured as an increase of 9,900% in just a year (5). The nationalizations of industries in Venezuela have turned its economy into ruins. Despite having the largest proven oil reserves worldwide, its oil production is down by over 10% and its economy is in tatters. Moreover, the economic crisis continues to worsen with U.S. sanctions against the oil industry as well as the Gold Mining Industry on the Central Bank of Venezuela with the aim of cutting off institutions that connect the Venezuelan government to any form of U.S. currency, putting even more pressure on the Maduro regime (16). Lastly, one of the worst aspects of this crisis is the humanitarian side. Because of the economic collapse and lack of goods as well as providers in the nation, the citizens of Venezuela are suffering in great lengths. It is estimated by the UN that over 4.8 million Venezuelans have fled Venezuela since 2014, making it the largest mass migration and forced displacement in the western hemisphere (5). There is an extreme lack of basic necessities, especially food and medicines which make it extremely difficult to survive. The average wait time to enter a grocery store is currently at three hours, and there is no guarantee of food once you are let in (3). It is also estimated that one million children are unvaccinated and are contracting diseases that are re-emerging from decades ago (7). Not to mention the increase of anti-immigrant sentiment in neighboring countries such as Colombia who are taking in the majority of Venezuelan immigrants (7). With a large influx of Venezuelan migrants crossing borders in Latin America, many of them are hopeful to find jobs in neighboring countries, but either cannot find work or they are not permitted to work. Some nations such as Peru, however, are being proactive in letting certain Venezuelan migrants work with permits to serve as healthcare workers(14).

United Nations Involvement:

The United Nations has played an integral role in attempting to aid this crisis, particularly with WHO and UNHCR at the forefronts granting them over 1 billion dollars collectively (8). More recently, the UNHCR launched a 1.35 billion dollar appeal in order to assist the humanitarian needs of the Venezuelan refugees as well as for the Latin American and Caribbean nations which have been hosting them (8). The UNHCR has also created the 2020 Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan (RMRP) to address both the government, economic, and humanitarian aspects of this crisis with the hope of its implementation across 140 organizations (8). THE UN is working to increase funding of this plan since its currently only 21% funded and more children

are in need of assistance and outreach (15). UNICEF has also made a significant contribution to the cause donating an upward of 55 tons of health supplies such as midwifery kits, antibiotics, and malaria kits to 25 hospitals in the most affected regions in Venezuela (15). Moreover, with an estimated 4,000 Venezuelan's crossing the border daily, the UNHCR has increased its funding and resources to Ecuador and Columbia. The Security Council has also reviewed this crisis and has decided that Venezuelan's must resolve the crisis themselves and they refuse to have any military intervention (9). Other organizations such as the UN Food and Agriculture Organization as well as the UN Financial Tracking Service have dedicated donations of both food and funds in an attempt to alleviate the suffering of the Venezuelan people (8). The Venezuelan government also retracted itself from the American Convention on Human Rights, which left Venezuelan citizens unable to report abuse (11).

Bloc Positions:

Western Bloc: The overwhelming majority of Western nations are in support of Juan Guaido, specifically with the U.S., Canada, UK, France, Germany, and Spain showing support (10). Russia is an exception seeing as its government has backed the Chavez government and continued its support throughout the Maduro presidency. As a socialist nation, Russia continues to justify the presidency of Maduro and is hopeful that he will remain in power, so it continues to send financial grants to individuals in Venezuela, however, the majority of it ends up going straight to the government.

Latin America and the Caribbean Bloc: The far majority of nations in the Latin American bloc show support for Guaido, with exception to Mexico, Guyana, and St. Lucia which have not taken a stance. 13 nations in Latin America along with Canada have created a coalition known as the Lima Group which works to ensure safe migration for Venezuelan refugees (11). This group even presented the first resolution to Venezuela, which focused on the mass human rights violations that were occurring in the nation.

African Bloc: The nations in the African bloc are not as set on this issue, seeing as some nations chose to avoid it and believe that this crisis should not be extended to the African bloc. During a security council meeting, South Africa along with Equatorial Guinea voted not to discuss the crisis, and similarly, other African nations chose to abstain. Many recognize that while there is a humanitarian crisis present in Venezuela, direct involvement is not the way they would like to go (12).

Asian-Pacific Bloc: The Asian bloc is also divided on support for Guaido or Maduro depending on their government-type. China, for example, is a strong proponent for the Maduro government and wishes to see the expansion of the socialist government. China has also directed efforts in Venezuela such as delivering aid and attempting to fix the power outages (10). More democratic nations such as Japan are not in support of Maduro, as they are hopeful for a more democratic future for Venezuela (13).

Basic Solutions:

Recognizing that the Crisis in Venezuela is a multifaceted issue, there should be a wide range of solutions presented, with an emphasis on political peace and decision making in the government. Moreover, human rights violations are rampant in Venezuela, and solutions to cover the lack of food, electricity, and funds in Venezuela should be touched upon. When considering the mass migration occurring, it is also important to address providing aid to neighboring countries, specifically in Latin America who are dealing with the massive influx of Venezuelan refugees. Economic solutions will also be smiled upon to help fix Venezuela's crumbling economy. Peace talks will be considered as more basic solutions seeing as the two sides have not seemed to come to a conclusion with this solution being put into place. Delegates should understand your nation's position on this issue seeing as that places a crucial role on which president you support and what policies you will propose to help Venezuela going forward. A program to look at would be the Lima Group which was able to deliver the first specific and comprehensive resolution to the High Commissioner on Human Rights (12). They addressed the human rights violations that were occurring as well as a request to declare Juan Guaido as the official president of Venezuela.

Questions to Consider:

1. What administration does your nation support, Nicolas Maduro or Juan Guaido, or do they choose to abstain from the issue?
2. How can Venezuela revitalize its economy following the crash of its oil sector?
3. Can other nations assist in decreasing inflation rates in Venezuela?
4. What are some ways the nation can go about diversification of their economy?
5. What legislation can be put into place in order to deliver aid to Venezuelans and its neighboring nations?
6. What has your country done to help the crisis?
7. Is your nation accepting Venezuelan refugees?
8. How can we come to an agreement on which president is the legitimate president of Venezuela?

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