



## Refugee, Law and Crises

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# Takeaways from the Venezuelan Refugee Crisis

- There needs to be a redefinition of what a refugee is.
  - Protection can be difficult for those who fall out of set categories
- Manipulation by the government to deflect accusations of committed atrocities and corruption.
- There are current issues with **sovereign** governments and current situations; what warrants an “intervention” in a foreign country.

# Deteriorating Conditions and “Brain Drain”

- **Elections of Hugo Chavez and Nicolas Maduro**
  - Bolivarian Revolution to establish ‘Cultural Hegemony’
  - Chavez declares “Economic War” due to shortages + 2015 oil prices drop
- Brain drain: human capital flight (upper class and scholars)
- Increase support for Maduro as opposition flees
- Hyperinflation, corruption, shortages, and foreign exchange control
- Government denying basic rights to its citizens + extrajudicial killings
- Denial of allegations leading to continued mistreatment
- Lack of overall recognition

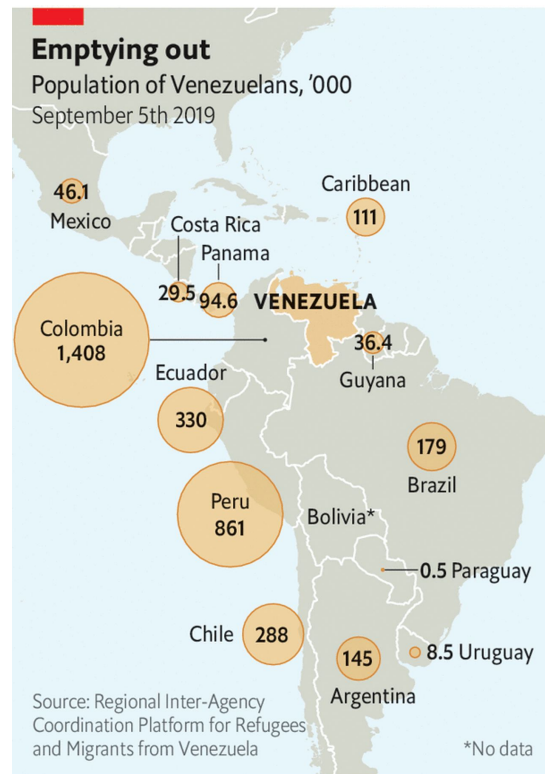
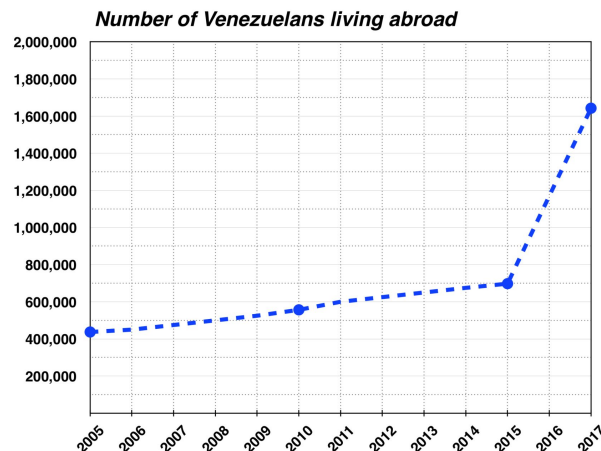
# Overview of the Venezuelan Refugee Crisis

- There are an estimated 4.8 Million refugees and migrants from Venezuela worldwide (16% of population, largest recorded modern refugee crisis in the Americas). *6.5 Million Venezuela are expected to be displaced at the end of 2020. (USG Venezuelan Refugee Crisis Fact Sheet, USAID, 2020).*
- \$472 Million in Humanitarian Funding (Syria \$7 Billion Pledged (UNOHCA)).
- Deterioration in Health Conditions (Measles and Malaria Outbreaks).
- Inflation increased from 9.02 percent to 10 million percent since 2018.

Venezuelan refugees are fleeing the current situation in Venezuela due to unbearable inflation, and widespread shortages, undernourishment, corruption, little recognition and funding (*Venezuela situation*, UNCHR, 2019).

# Overview of the Venezuelan Refugee Crisis

- Colombia - 1.4 million
- Peru - 861,000
- Ecuador - 330,000
- Island Nations - 111,000
- Panama - 94,000



# The 'Crisis'

Venezuelan Presidential Crisis

Venezuela's 'Brain Drain'

Deteriorating Conditions

*How does the current situation compare to situations of past?*

# **An account from a Venezuelan refugee**

Manuel had a house and land that he farmed in Venezuela. He lived there with Sandra and their children until he was bitten by a snake and became ill. Sandra came to Colombia for medicine and supplies, but with Manuel unable to work, they decided to relocate the family.

“All that I had in Venezuela is gone now. The government nationalized my farmland, and once we left the house, people were allowed to come in and take everything. They ransacked the place,” Manuel says. He would like to farm again, “But really, I’d take any opportunity to work, anything I can do.”

Kathryn Reid, *Venezuela migrants share their stories about why they left*, World Vision.



The logo consists of the letters 'FT' in a bold, black, serif font, centered within a white square. This square is positioned in the upper left corner of the video frame, partially overlapping the background scene.

FT

A solid maroon horizontal bar spans the width of the video frame. The word 'World' is written in a white, sans-serif font, centered within this bar.

World



# International Law and Legislation

- Cartagena Declaration on Refugees adopted by 10 Latin-American Countries (Belize, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, and **Venezuela**).
- The **ERD** lends itself to refugees, *protecting* them in poverty, economic decline, inflation, violence, disease, and food insecurity.
  - **July 24, 2019** - Brazil applied the criteria of **ERD** to accept the petitions of 174 Venezuelans.
  - As of December 6, 2019, the decision by Brazil's National Committee for Refugees (CONARE) accepts asylum-seekers on a prima facie basis (21,000 Venezuelans).

***Why isn't it being applied in Venezuela, Colombia, Peru, and Ecuador...?***

# Future Outlook

In a government where one controls the military, and the little money the country has, there is very little that can be done.

(1) the country will continue on its unsustainable course, bringing itself down

(2) continued violence, criminality, and insurgency,

(3) the overthrow of the current regime, and establishment of a new government that will have to work to undo Maduro's crippling policies

It may be best for Maduro to keep on this track; because of the lack of food and basic necessities, the people are weak and unable to push-back.

# Legacy

- New Definition of a refugee: “The unconventional refugee”/ratification of the Cartagena Declaration of 1984 to ensure that countries are acting to protect refugees.
- Regionalism: Harmonization of South American States through the Cartagena Declaration?
- Intervention: What qualifies an intervention in a sovereign state?

# Conclusion

- The refugee situation does not look to be getting any better, unless:
  - Maduro is taken out of power
  - Juan Guaido + the 60 countries that recognize him as President lead efforts to find a diplomatic solution to the crisis
- Unconventional crisis → Little attention paid to Venezuela
- Coordination between host countries and donor countries (More money, aid, and direction is needed)
- Global response is needed -- shift from regional to global issue
- Redefine who is a refugee and IDP (and revisit non-refoulement in Cartagena Declaration)

# Questions

1. Do Venezuelans fall under the extended definition of 'refugee' as per international law?
2. Are Venezuelans who are currently displaced, receiving adequate protection?
3. What qualifies for outside intervention in a sovereign state?
4. Are bordering countries being given adequate supplies and funding necessary to support refugees?
5. How can we further incentivize bordering countries to take in more refugees?