**Crisis Position Paper**

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The present Venezuelan government is facing a serious crisis that began two years ago and is continuing today. The people of Venezuela are outraged with the poor leadership of current president, Nicolas Maduro and his party, The United Socialist Party of Venezuela. The party, which was started by Hugo Chavez has been in power for the past nine years. Over the past two months, our people have finally revolted in the form of protests and demonstrations against the government because it has not taken any steps to reduce crime, hunger, inflation and corruption throughout our country. I am outraged by the government in power and strongly believe it must be overturned. I may be just a 27 year old student from a small town located in the city of Caracas, Venezuela, but I am also considered to be a powerful leader. I serve as a public speaker to my people, and my voice is used to represent a majority of the population who oppose the government.

Venezuela is undergoing a severe economic depression. Historically, our economy has never suffered more than it is today. In the eyes of the world, Venezuela is seen as a financially stable country, rich with plenty of oil. However, in reality, we are immensely suffering.The Maduro-led government has recently called a state of emergency. Nicolas Maduro is seemingly blaming the most powerful and influential business owners in the U.S.A., who, in 2015, had significantly reduced oil prices, which aided the collapse of our economy. Venezuela is crashing and if we, as the people, do not take action and stop it, the situation in our country will only get worse. Protests lead by me share a specific goal; to hold a governmental plebiscite. Constitutionally, a plebiscite is allowed half way through a president’s term and Maduro’s halfway point would be in 2017, which is the earliest the plebiscite can take place. Once this takes place, the opposition party that I support-Justice First (lead by Henrique Capriles), will hopefully come into power. A plebiscite is necessary, as Venezuela is facing triple digit inflation, a third year of economic recession and a shortage of basic needs; food is being rationed to our citizens. This cannot go on, we need a leader and a government that can be relied on and trusted.

Furthermore, protests against the government are becoming violent and uncontrollable - a terrible approach to electing a new government party. We must be calm and peaceful even if it takes longer to reach our goal. Eventually, we will be thankful for the outcome. If the Venezuelan people continue to violently approach the situation, our country will be ruined. Similar situations have recently taken place in countries like Syria, Libya and Egypt. If we look at these examples, we can see that their citizens are struggling to survive. I believe that it is extremely strategic to win the support of former Chavez supporters, as they too are now losing hope in Maduro. Hugo Chavez, who died from cancer three years ago, was a president of controversy; he was loved by many, but hated by others. To some, he demonstrated the real form of democracy and opened the gateway of trade and international relationships with Venezuela. But to others, he wasted unthinkable amounts of money.

My primary group of supporters consist of young students who are a major part of this uprising; the new and modern generation. I have strong alliances with similar leaders like myself; students who are trying to make a difference while keeping a mindset that resembles my own. Radical student organizations often contact me asking to form alliances, but I do not wish to achieve my goals through violence. For this reason, I am inclined to deny their pressing offers to be partners. Henrique Capriles, is an extremely valuable ally of mine, he is also the leader of the Justice First party. He is a man with agreeable views; he does not believe in violence and is clearly in opposition with the current Maduro government in a moderate and rational way.

The Venezuelan government opposition was created at the same time as the Socialist Party, in 2007. They only recently became violent in 2014. It was created to oppose the socialist ways of the Venezuelan government that were in place for the past 17 years. Although the Socialist party was formally created in 2007, socialist views have been inputted by the government since 1999, when Chavez was elected. Current protests in September and October of 2016 have become destructive; over 100 people have been classified as injured, detained or dead. If our people continue to protest aggressively, instead of 100 people being hurt or detained, the number will be significantly greater.

A majority of the Venezuelan government opposes Maduro and his cabinet; making us a large and powerful group of passionate Venezuelan citizens who care deeply about our country’s future. Unfortunately, as people are remarkably passionate, violence frequently becomes a common occurrence. As mentioned, if it continues, it will lead to the ruin of our lovely nation. Protesters must approach this crisis peacefully; a major point I highlight when speaking to protesters is to remain calm. If we remain civilized throughout our demonstrations, our country will not face an even larger problem with its’ innocent citizens being killed daily.

It is a shame to see our great nation, Venezuela, where it is today. Our people have resorted to begging for food on the streets of our largest and most major city, Caracas. I strongly believe that the government is accountable for the problems we are facing as a whole country, today. They are disregarding the troubles faced by average citizens; prices of everyday goods have dramatically increased, causing people to loot and raid shops and markets, making the crime rate greatly increase. I truly fear for our land, but I am working assiduously for our population to regain power and have a say in the decisions Venezuela makes.

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