Committee:Venezuelan National Assembly

Topic:Safety and Security in Venezuela

Representative:Héctor Rodríguez Castro (Bolívar)

Since 1998 crime in Venezuela has been growing at an exponential rate, which is completely unacceptable. Rich and poor neighborhoods alike are at risk, which means that we must do everything in our power to solve this issue. High homicide rates, an increase in organized crime and drug violence, along with an inadequate police force, and recent government actions have all attributed to an increase in crime within the country. These issues are rooted in high inflation, which has lead to poverty and a lack of access to basic necessities, along with a culture of lawlessness, and have continued to be the causes of violence in Venezuela. [[1]](#endnote-1)

With homicides increasing from 25 per 100,000 in 1999 to 90 homicides per 100,000 in 2015 The crime rates in Venezuela are posing a state of emergency[[2]](#endnote-2). Recently the capital city of caracas has been declared the most dangerous city in the world with homicide rates of 120 per 100,000 inhabitants[[3]](#endnote-3). These high homicide rates are caused by blatant disregard for small law, which leads to a disregard for larger laws, along with lack of access to basic resources.

A lack of regulation on organized crime and drug violence has allowed Colombian guerrillas such as Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC) and Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN) to thrive in barrios, near the Venezuelan-Cuban border.[[4]](#endnote-4) It is imperative that we expand upon President Maduro's calls for security in order to stop right-wing paramilitaries from flooding into our country. The current measures to close the Venezuelan-Cuban border are in order, seeing as the border will be reopened permanently in the future with better security measures[[5]](#endnote-5). Barrios in Venezuela are used as bases of operation for many of these guerrilla groups, where there is very little police intervention. These barrios are the poorest areas of Venezuela where people often do not have access to electricity, adequate shelter, or even food or water; this allows organized crime to thrive and instill fear and disregard for national laws in the residents of the barrio[[6]](#endnote-6).

This perpetuating cycle of crime, is allowed to continue because of the inadequacy of the current police forces in Venezuela. Our police forces are severely under funded, slow to arrive to crime scenes and ultimately at at high risk of attack from criminal groups [[7]](#endnote-7). The Policía Nacional Bolivariana (Bolivarian National Police, PNB)-which is an arm of the Ministry of Popular Power for Interior Justice and Peace is in charge of general crime prevention but it currently only operates in a few states. It would be beneficial to expand the reach of the PNB in order to protect all of our citizens. In order to do this we would need to increase police funding and set up a large distinct police base in each of the 23 states in order to extend the reach of the police. It would also be beneficial to provide the police force with better protective equipment along with non lethal weapons to stop the killing of police officers for their guns. Instead of guns, police officers can carry taser, guns with rubber bullets or cost effective bean bags to deter criminals[[8]](#endnote-8).

In 2014 President Maduro passed a national disarmament plan and a motion to increase police funding, and in 2012 private gun ownership was outlawed. security forces were ordered to destroy weapons seized during the police operations, 50 centers were aimed to be established where citizens could voluntarily surrender their firearms – but this only increased interest in owning guns.[[9]](#endnote-9) In July 2015 President Maduro passed “Operation to Liberate and Protect the People” (OPL), which has been facing scrutiny in the press recently[[10]](#endnote-10). This operation’s goal was to crack down on the rampant crimes in urban areas of Venezuela. However a few police forces have started to abuse this operation, using it to raid homes, deport civilians and engage in mass detentions. Though crime briefly declined after this plan was passed, police brutality increased slightly which lead to a resurgence of crime in densely populated cities.[[11]](#endnote-11)This plan could work, if we were to come together as a committee and place regulations on our police forces, as well as strengthen them we would be able to control the rampant crime in our country and ensure the safety of our civilians.

The root cause of most violence in Venezuela is due to high inflation because of the drop in oil prices. Oil being a huge export for the country of Venezuela caused many people living in rural areas to migrate to the cities, ultimately causing large population densities and a scarcity of resources.[[12]](#endnote-12) Because of the decrease in the manufacturing and agricultural fields, venetians must rely on oil exports to sustain the economy. The drop in oil prices has caused a lack of access to basic human resources such as food , housing, electricity, roads in order to combat this we must incentivize agriculture and encourage migration from urban areas to rural areas. Next we must address the blatant disrespect for basic laws in Venezuela. The police forces allowing lower level crimes such as not paying transit fees, shoplifting, or petty theft, leads to bigger crimes, this is known as the Broken Windows Theory which suggests that once a small crime is committed such as breaking a window, it would make no difference if you committed a larger crime or broke all the windows[[13]](#endnote-13). The individual states, along with the federal government have been doing what they can to increase security and safety however it is imperative to address any corruption on the state and city level as it directly affects citizens. In order to combat this we would like to have bi-annual scheduled check ins on local governments to make sure they are fulfilling their duties to the people and our great nation.

Committee:Venezuelan National Assembly

Topic: Venezuela’s Economic Crisis

Representative: Héctor Rodríguez Castro (Bolívar)

Seeing as 95% of our countries exports are concentrated into the oil industry, the continuous plummet in oil prices have affected our economy extremely negatively, causing extreme poverty and crime to plague the nation of Venezuela [[14]](#endnote-14). When Hugo Chavez originally implemented his economic policies of price controls and foreign exchange controls he aimed to protect citizens and stabilize the economy. These plans did help some people get out of poverty, but with inflation at an alarmingly high and agriculture/manufacturing at an all time low these policies have caused some backlash; however this can be fixed by addressing other issues.

Venezuela's oil boom has caused a devaluation of the national currency, weakened the agricultural industry and halted foreign investments. Currently, Venezuela is the country with the highest inflation rate, right now we are at 500% inflation, and it is estimated that this number rise to 1600% in 2017, which would be detrimental to our economy[[15]](#endnote-15). This massive inflation has caused our national currency the Bolivar to decrease in value to 6.30 bolivars per 1 USD [[16]](#endnote-16). In order to bring value back to our currency the most effective thing to do would be to support industrial growth in venezuela, by supporting local companies.

Oil used to be an immensely profitable industry, and our country has an extremely large amount of oil reserves. The abundance of oil, shifted the country's focus from agriculture to oil and caused mass migrations of people from rural to urban areas [[17]](#endnote-17). These migrations caused the settlement of barrios and caused a strain on basic resources. Venezuela imports almost all consumer goods, which puts a massive strain on the federal government. In order to reduce dependency on oil it is essential that the federal government starts to incentivize agriculture and industry. To do this we can recruit people still struggling with poverty and offer them land, while providing them with seeds and farming tools. We could also decrease federal taxes by 0.1% on anyone who owns a farm over 200 acres. We would also like to accept more help from the FAO in order to catalyze this program. Much of our current farmland isn't being used to its full potential, so it would be beneficial to set a model of a farm for people to follow.

In order to solve the energy crisis plaguing Venezuela it would be ideal to look into renewable forms of energy to sustain our growing nation. Seeing as our nation ratifies the Paris Climate Agreement dependence on wind and solar power would serve our country greatly[[18]](#endnote-18). Once power is restored to Venezuela it will be much easier to bring industry back into the country. The world is moving in a direction which will make the switch to renewable energy [[19]](#endnote-19) In order to solve our crisis, we can implement these solar panels and wind turbines through NGOs such as Practical Action, and Bennu Solar [[20]](#endnote-20).

In using oil to pay off debts the Venezuelan government has allowed foreign governments to take advantage of us, as we are basically giving away oil for free. We must reaffirm our support for OPEC’s oil policy in order to properly stabilize the global oil markets.[[21]](#endnote-21) If the global oil market is stabilized it will insure economic prosperity for our nation.

Hugo Chavez’s economic policy of price caps has attributed to a significant decline in poverty, from 50 percent in 1998 to approximately 30 percent in 2013[[22]](#endnote-22). These price caps stopped companies from overcharging for basic goods such as cooking oil, milk, rice and others. This price gap is causing some problems however, many people are buying more than they need and selling it in other nations - such as Columbia - for a profit [[23]](#endnote-23). This take away products from other citizens and forced the federal government to implement security measures, such as finger scanners and surveys, at most grocery stores, which is inconvenient and time consuming[[24]](#endnote-24).

Hugo Chavez’s foreign exchange controls have done both good and bad for the country of Venezuela. They set out to stop greedy corporations from stealing from the common man, and keep wealth circulating within the country. This policy established in 2003 was a reaction to a loss of over US$ 500 million in the last month of 2002, which prompted the government to try and avoid a similar situation in the future, which would immensely jeopardize the country's finances [[25]](#endnote-25). However foreign exchange is limited to the Centro Nacional de Comercio Exterior (National Center for Foreign Commerce, CENCOEX), which has prompted a black market exchange of US dollars and other foreign currencies [[26]](#endnote-26).

Companies still must exchange all currency at the central bank of Venezuela, because without this currency exchange all profits remain within the Venezuelan market. We must keep this policy, seeing as Chavez implemented it for good reasons In order to address this situation, however in order to address this situation it would be beneficial to create branches of the central bank and put a branch within each state in order to make currency more accessible for large corporations. Also if more industry starts to be set up in a specific state we would build more banks in order to give companies more access to foreign currency.

Committee:Venezuelan National Assembly

Topic: Social Division and Venezuelan Politics

Representative: Héctor Rodríguez Castro (Bolívar)

The Venezuelan constitution written in 1999 by democratically elected officials strives to ensure equality and protection of all citizens. This constitution recognizes fundamental social, civil political, and environmental rights [[27]](#endnote-27). It outlines the principles of a participatory democratic system and epiphyses social justice in the economic sphere. This document also outlines the function of the national assembly, which is made up of deputies elected from each state in the country[[28]](#endnote-28). This allows citizens to have a say in who they want creating laws, authorizing decrees of the president, along with executing international treaties. The Venezuelan constitution is a very important part of our current government system.

In 2008 two prominent political parties emerged, the Partido Socialista Unido de Venezuela (PSUV) [[29]](#endnote-29), the current party in executive power and the joint political organization composed of almost all opposition parties, Mesa de la Unidad Democrática (MUD)[[30]](#endnote-30). Currently the MUD holds two thirds of the seats within the Venezuelan National Assembly, while the PSUV holds executive office.

The MUD party claims to bring democracy back to our nation, however our political system is already on its way to becoming extremely democratic. However there are always improvements to be made, and to appease the concerns of the MUD slight checks and balances are in order. These checks and balances would only serve to stop the President from passing an unconstitutional decree or the National assembly from passing an unjust law. In order to make this happen any decree made by the president must go through the the national assembly, where it must be passed by a two thirds vote, then looked over by the vice presidents of the national assembly.

The constitutional national state of emergency that was declared by President Murado declared back in May 2016 shows how divided this country is. President Maduro accused the business elite from boycotting the Venezuelan market, along with accusing the United States of plotting a coup against the socialist government[[31]](#endnote-31).The state of emergency allows the armed forces and local committees to distribute and sell food, authorities will also be able to cut the working week in the private sector to conserve electricity, and allow the government to take control of basic goods or services.The MUD members within the National Assembly deemed the state of emergency unconstitutional, however supreme court overturned the national assembly's ruling which caused opposition leaders to call for a referendum to take Maduro out of power[[32]](#endnote-32).

The communal councils implemented by Chavez give citizens access to federal funds to direct projects and services within their communities, allowing opportunity that isn't available in many other places. These communal councils are made up of a group of elected persons from a self-defined neighborhood of about 150 to 400 families in urban areas, 20 families in rural areas, and 10 in indigenous communities [[33]](#endnote-33). Over 19,500 councils have already been registered throughout the country and billions of dollars have been distributed to support their efforts.[[34]](#endnote-34)

Until Venezuela is economically sound it is imperative to keep political parties strong in order to give citizens a clear idea of what they are voting for. Since 1950 Venezuela has utilized a party system efficiently, so the current political parties should grow or diminish based on support from the public.[[35]](#endnote-35) After the election in 2019 it would be desirable to break the MUD into smaller political parties order to account for all of the needs of the Venezuelan citizens, seeing as Venezuela has usually had more than two political parties.

In the barrios and large cities political protests have been abundant in Venezuela for a very long time. Since the reelection of Nicolas Maduro in 2013 protesters have called for his removal. Continuous weeks of protest of lack of gods and exorbitantly high murder rates in 2014 left 43 people dead [[36]](#endnote-36).Several opposition figures were later prosecuted for their alleged role in inciting violence. Leopoldo López, the leader of a radical faction of the opposition, was put in prison for 17 years, for his crimes against the Venezuelan government [[37]](#endnote-37)

So far this Year about 125 police officers have been killed in Caracas alone, and 2014-2016 protests more than 3,700 people have been arrested for either protesting or looting[[38]](#endnote-38). There have been both opposition marches and pro government parches, however only the opposition marches seem to get rowdy[[39]](#endnote-39). Many people have called for the release of the violent people who were detained at some of these rallies, however they are in jail for a reason. There was a recent amnesty bill that was passed by our own National Assembly, but then deemed unconstitutional by the supreme court, showing that the protesters are in fact in the wrong [[40]](#endnote-40). Our streets need to be safe from these violent protesters.

Two months ago on September 2nd there was another anti-Maduro rally in which protesters clashed with the police, causing injury to both police and protester[[41]](#endnote-41). It is apparent that the opposition will result to violent tactics if necessary to get their point across. In order to appease the opposition, it is essential to hold fair and speedy trials for all of the people involved in these riots.

In Order to come to a unified decision on the matters at hand we must come together to fix the issues that we all agree on to bring peace and prosperity to Venezuela.

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3. <http://www.worldatlas.com/articles/most-dangerous-cities-in-the-world.html> [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. <https://panampost.com/pedro-garcia/2016/07/22/colombias-guerrilla-quietly-migrate-to-venezuela-ahead-of-disarmament/> [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. <http://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/Colombia-and-Venezuela-to-Review-Border-Security-Issues--20160804-0009.html> [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. <https://culanth.org/fieldsights/639-where-are-the-barrios-protest-and-history-in-venezuela> [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. <http://www.miamiherald.com/news/nation-world/world/americas/venezuela/article44290584.html> [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. <https://www.themarshallproject.org/2015/09/23/alternatives-to-bullets#.pGsYPh3V8> [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
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10. <http://www.insightcrime.org/news-analysis/controversy-continues-over-venezuela-s-new-security-operation> [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. <http://www.miamiherald.com/news/nation-world/world/americas/venezuela/article69941737.html> [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. <http://www.country-data.com/cgi-bin/query/r-14526.html> [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. <https://psmag.com/breaking-down-the-broken-windows-theory-bbe9c06ae2a2#.3ml3fxilu> [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. <http://atlas.media.mit.edu/en/profile/country/ven/> [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
15. <http://blogs.wsj.com/economics/2016/07/18/venezuelas-inflation-is-set-to-top-1600-next-year/> [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
16. <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2016-02-17/venezuela-raises-gasoline-prices-for-first-time-since-1996-ikrf0ppn> [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
17. <http://www.country-data.com/cgi-bin/query/r-14526.html> [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
18. <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/blog/2016/04/parisagreementsingatures/> [↑](#endnote-ref-18)
19. <http://www.renewableenergyworld.com/ugc/blogs/2014/11/40-companies-organizations-bringing-solar-power-to-the-developing-world.html> [↑](#endnote-ref-19)
20. <http://www.cnn.com/2016/09/01/world/eco-solutions-renewables-spc/> [↑](#endnote-ref-20)
21. <http://www.opec.org/opec_web/en/> [↑](#endnote-ref-21)
22. <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/venezuela/overview> [↑](#endnote-ref-22)
23. <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-03-12/venezuela-s-price-caps-currency-fuel-smuggling-to-colombia> [↑](#endnote-ref-23)
24. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-31791878> [↑](#endnote-ref-24)
25. <http://latitude.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/04/10/remembering-the-2002-chavez-coup/?_r=0> [↑](#endnote-ref-25)
26. <https://panampost.com/editor/2016/04/03/a-day-out-at-the-black-market-in-venezuela/> [↑](#endnote-ref-26)
27. <https://venezuelanalysis.com/constitution/title/1> [↑](#endnote-ref-27)
28. <https://venezuelanalysis.com/constitution/title/5> [↑](#endnote-ref-28)
29. <http://www.psuv.org.ve/> [↑](#endnote-ref-29)
30. <http://unidadvenezuela.org/> [↑](#endnote-ref-30)
31. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-36339721> [↑](#endnote-ref-31)
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33. <https://nacla.org/article/communal-state-communal-councils-communes-and-workplace-democracy> [↑](#endnote-ref-33)
34. <http://www.aporrea.org/poderpopular/n94588.html> [↑](#endnote-ref-34)
35. <http://www.janda.org/ICPP/ICPP2000/Countries/3-SouthAmerica/39-Venezuela/Venezuela63-00.htm> [↑](#endnote-ref-35)
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37. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/aug/31/venezuela-protests-caracas-politics-president-nicolas-maduro-food-shortages> [↑](#endnote-ref-37)
38. <http://time.com/4473715/venezuela-maduro-protest-arrests/> [↑](#endnote-ref-38)
39. <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/news/venezuela-violence/> [↑](#endnote-ref-39)
40. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-36021976> [↑](#endnote-ref-40)
41. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-37243191> [↑](#endnote-ref-41)