



## Position Paper – Venezuela

**Committee:** SOCHUM (Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural Committee)

**Agenda:** The Impact of Unilateral Sanctions on Human Rights

**Country:** Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela recognizes SOCHUM's essential responsibility in addressing the human rights and humanitarian consequences of conflict, colonial legacies, and coercive policies that undermine international law. Among these challenges, the imposition of unilateral coercive measures—commonly referred to as sanctions—stands out as one of the most pressing issues confronting the global South. Venezuela stresses that such measures, particularly when applied outside the framework of the United Nations Security Council, erode sovereignty, disrupt economic stability, and directly harm the well-being of civilian populations.

### Historical Background

Venezuela's struggle with unilateral sanctions is not an isolated issue but part of a broader historical pattern. Since the founding of the United Nations, the principle of non-intervention in the domestic affairs of states has been enshrined in the Charter. However, beginning in 2015, Venezuela became the target of extensive unilateral sanctions imposed by certain states, including measures restricting financial transactions, freezing national assets abroad, and blocking oil exports—the backbone of Venezuela's economy.

These sanctions have severely restricted the country's access to international banking systems, foreign currency reserves, and critical imports. Reports from the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures highlight that restrictions have directly obstructed Venezuela's ability to purchase medical equipment, vaccines, and even spare parts for power plants and water treatment facilities.

Historically, Venezuela has been a founding member of the United Nations and an active contributor to peacekeeping, disarmament discussions, and regional solidarity through organizations like CELAC and UNASUR. Venezuela has consistently defended the principles of sovereignty and self-determination, arguing that sanctions weaponize the global economy against weaker states, thereby creating humanitarian crises rather than preventing them.

### Venezuela's Current Stance

The Venezuelan government holds that unilateral sanctions constitute collective punishment and directly contradict human rights law, which prioritizes access to food, health care, and development. According to UN statistics, sanctions have exacerbated an already fragile economy, contributing to shortages of essential goods and accelerating migration flows across Latin America. Over seven million Venezuelans are estimated to live abroad, many of whom left due to economic hardship worsened by sanctions.

From Venezuela's perspective, sanctions are not neutral political tools but deliberate strategies of economic warfare. They disproportionately affect vulnerable groups such as children, the elderly, and patients requiring specialized medicines. Furthermore, sanctions undermine humanitarian aid delivery by creating logistical and financial barriers for UN agencies and NGOs operating in Venezuela.

Venezuela has cooperated with the UN Human Rights Council, invited Special Rapporteurs to assess the humanitarian impact of sanctions, and called repeatedly in the General Assembly for multilateral action to condemn such measures. The nation continues to advocate that any use of sanctions must follow international law and be approved exclusively by the Security Council.

## Proposed Solutions

- **International Legal Safeguards:** Develop a binding UN framework that clearly distinguishes legitimate multilateral sanctions, authorized by the Security Council, from illegitimate unilateral sanctions imposed for political purposes.
- **Humanitarian Exemptions and Mechanisms:** Establish an independent humanitarian channel under UN supervision to ensure that food, medicine, and essential supplies can reach populations in sanctioned countries without delay.
- **Monitoring and Accountability:** Expand the mandate of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to systematically monitor and report the humanitarian consequences of unilateral sanctions. This data should inform resolutions in the General Assembly and SOCHUM.
- **Regional and South-South Cooperation:** Encourage regional organizations such as CELAC, UNASUR, and ALBA to create pooled humanitarian funds and trade mechanisms to assist populations affected by sanctions.
- **Economic Alternatives:** Support initiatives for de-dollarization and the use of regional payment systems that allow sanctioned countries to engage in lawful trade without being excluded from the global financial system.
- **Dialogue and Diplomacy:** Promote negotiation frameworks between sanctioning states and sanctioned states under UN mediation to resolve disputes peacefully rather than resorting to coercive economic measures.

## Conclusion

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela urges SOCHUM to reaffirm the foundational principles of the United Nations: sovereignty, equality of states, and the right to development. Sanctions imposed outside the framework of the Security Council must be recognized as illegitimate and harmful to human rights. Venezuela does not only speak for itself but for many developing nations in Africa, Asia, and Latin America that face similar threats of economic coercion.

By addressing unilateral sanctions within SOCHUM, the international community has the opportunity to reduce human suffering, strengthen the multilateral system, and restore faith in international law. Venezuela stands ready to collaborate with all member states in constructing a fairer, more humane, and more cooperative international order that protects the dignity of all peoples.

## References

- UN General Assembly Resolutions on Unilateral Coercive Measures (A/RES/74/200, A/RES/75/181).
- Human Rights Council, Reports of the UN Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures (A/HRC/39/54, A/HRC/48/59/Add.2).
- Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 'Report on the impact of sanctions in Venezuela,' 2021.
- UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) debates on the right to development, 2020.
- CELAC and ALBA official declarations on solidarity against sanctions (2019–2023).