

VENEZUELA



THE ISSUE:

Venezuela is currently undergoing a massive institutional crisis that has had a devastating impact on the human rights of Venezuelans. Inflation has skyrocketed by 53 million percent since 2016, leaving Venezuelans unable to afford even basic goods, and the shortage of food products and essential medicines has left many Venezuelans both starving and sick. The government's refusal to act in the face of these severe shortages of medicine and food jeopardizes Venezuelans' lives and violates their human rights. Venezuelans who have stood up for change have faced deadly crackdowns by the Maduro regime, which has overseen the deaths of hundreds of political dissidents and the arbitrary detention of thousands more.

This ongoing crisis has impelled 4.7 million people living within its borders—that is over one in every ten Venezuelans—to seek protection throughout the region. Today, in terms of numbers of people fleeing, the Venezuelan exodus is outpaced only by the Syrian refugee crisis.

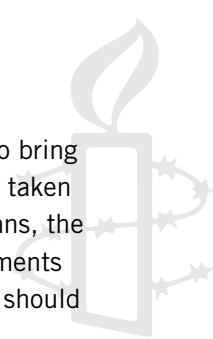
Venezuela's regional neighbors have shouldered most of the burden of response. Colombia has taken in over 1.5 million Venezuelans since the onset of the crisis. Other neighboring countries, notably Peru and Ecuador, have also received hundreds of thousands of Venezuelans, though both countries have recently introduced restrictionist measures limiting Venezuelans' ability to enter.

Amnesty International called on the international community to recognize that Venezuela is facing a situation of massive human rights violations and that Venezuelans seeking international protection require an immediate response under a framework of respect for human rights, with strict adherence to the principle of non-refoulement.

While the United States has provided a significant amount of humanitarian assistance to help neighboring countries respond to Venezuelan refugees, it has failed to protect Venezuelans seeking safety at our borders. In 2019, the United States reportedly continued deportations to Venezuela, and the government has failed to designate temporary protected status (TPS) for Venezuelans. An estimated 200,000 Venezuelans could potentially benefit from TPS.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **Immediately designate TPS for Venezuelans.** The United States must immediately act to protect Venezuelans at risk of deportation by designating TPS for Venezuela. Because many individuals fleeing Venezuela may be at risk of grave human rights violations upon return but may not qualify for asylum under the refugee definition under U.S. law, TPS is necessary to ensure that Venezuelans are protected from forcible return to harm's way. (DHS and Department of State)
- **Cease the imposition of broad economic sanctions.** Broad economic sanctions, imposed by the United States in January 2019 and increased in August 2019, have had an adverse effect on the economic and social rights of ordinary Venezuelans, given the already dire scarcity of essential medicines and medical supplies, food, and basic goods in the country. While the Maduro government's responsibility for the origins of the crisis cannot be ignored, the United States' punitive financial measures have thus far been ineffective in their stated objectives and have risked worsening the human rights crisis in Venezuela. (Department of State, Treasury)

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- **Support multilateral solutions to the crisis.** The United States should support multilateral efforts to bring about an end to the crisis and ensure victims of massive human rights violations that have already taken place in Venezuela can access justice. As the largest funder of the regional response for Venezuelans, the United States should consider convening a global humanitarian summit to elicit concrete commitments from states around the globe regarding funding crisis response and hosting refugees. This summit should build upon existing mechanisms responsive to the crisis in Venezuela, including the Quito process. (Department of State, National Security Council, U.S. Mission to the United Nations)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- “Welcome Venezuela: Regional Campaign for Those Fleeing Massive Human Rights Violations in Venezuela” (May 2019). <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2019/05/bienvenida-venezuela-campana-regional-personas-que-huyen-crisis-derechos-humanos/>
- “Hunger for Justice: Crimes Against Humanity in Venezuela” (May 2019). <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/amr53/0222/2019/en/>

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