

A Fragile Equilibrium: Policy Options to Prevent Venezuela from Falling Further

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Acronyms

ALC	Authority, Legitimacy and Capacity
CAF	Development Bank of Latin America
CIFP	Country Indicators for Foreign Policy
CNE	Consejo Nacional Electoral (National Electoral Council)
COVID-19	SARS-CoV-2 Disease Outbreak of 2019
CSO	Civil Society Organization
EU	European Union
FAES	Fuerza de Acción Especial de la Policía Nacional Bolivariana (Special Action Forces)
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HDI	Human Development Index
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
MUD	Mesa de la Unidad Democrática (Democratic Unity Roundtable)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OAS	Organization of American States
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights
PDVSA	Petróleos de Venezuela S.A (Petroleum of Venezuela)
PNB	Policía Nacional Bolivariana (National Bolivarian Police)
PSUV	Partido Socialista Unido de Venezuela (United Socialist Party of Venezuela)
SEDI	Executive Secretariat for Integral Development
SMS	Secretariat for Multidimensional Security
SSD	Secretariat for Strengthening Democracy
TSJ	Tribunal Supremo de Justicia (Supreme Tribunal of Justice)
UN	United Nations
UNHRC	United Nations Human Rights Council
US	United States
WFP	World Food Programme
WOLA	Washington Office on Latin America

Executive Summary

Once the richest country in Latin America, Venezuela currently rests in a delicate equilibrium between stability and fragility.¹ The hybrid regime and rentier state characteristics of the government have meant that institutional frameworks create false illusions of adherence to democratic processes and rule of law. The individuals forming the country's elite, namely high-ranking military and United Socialist Party of Venezuela officials, are able to maintain power by relying on oil revenues to establish provisional stability among state security forces and non-state armed groups.² The desire to maintain the status quo, notably in the context of a contested presidency, is demonstrative of a capacity trap, a negative feedback loop between reduced capacity and legitimacy. In the context of Venezuela, it is caused by an unwillingness to improve the country's situation by those in power. This has led to a neglect of the social contract, leading to significant levels of poverty, food insecurity, and emigration. It has also led to the mismanagement of the country's resources, which threatens Venezuela's long-term stability. Societal trust in governing institutions is low.

The present brief analyzes the drivers of fragility for Venezuela following the methodology of the Country Indicators for Foreign Policy. Characterized as having a high impact on the country's fragility, with a deteriorating trend, the primary drivers of Venezuela's fragility are the Governance and Economic Development clusters. The overall worsening of indicators in these clusters has a snowball effect which negatively impacts the secondary drivers of fragility: Security and Crime, Human Development, Demography and Population, and Environment. To resolve the structural causes of fragility, three policy options are presented. They are based on scenarios projected over the next six months and focus on improved relations between Venezuela and the US, technical policy training for government officials, and regional border security enhancement.

This brief is directed to the Organization of American States as it is well positioned to address the structural causes of Venezuela's fragility. The organization maintains an extensive network of partners, has significant technical experience, and is mandated to promote democracy, human rights, and security in Latin America. Despite challenging the jurisdiction of the OAS in 2017, contested Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro Moros has expressed a willingness to engage in negotiations with the opposition in order to work towards lifting US sanctions. The OAS can therefore use this to encourage the government's participation in the proposed Policy Options One and Two. In the event he declines to engage, Policy Option Three presents a course of action that does not require Venezuela's cooperation.

Methods

This report uses the CIFP methodology, which is grounded in structural data and event analysis to support the policy development process.³ For the purposes of this report, data from 100 indicators between 2002 and 2021 are organized into six different clusters of analysis: Security and Crime; Governance; Economic Development; Human Development; Population and Demography; and Environment. Examining data over a 20-year period allows for the identification of trends and structural causes of Venezuela's fragility (Annex A). The trends and structural causes are then analyzed to determine primary and secondary drivers of fragility. When faced with missing or unreliable data, it was either dismissed or presented while acknowledging the gap. In those instances, event analysis took a greater role in explaining phenomena.

Alongside the clustered structural data, event-based data are gathered and analyzed to provide information on domestic and international stakeholders and their impact on the drivers of fragility. While the CIFP methodology allows for an indexing model that attributes a value to a state's level of fragility in the categories of Authority, Capacity, and Legitimacy, this brief focuses on its method for assessing engagement effectiveness to provide strategically evaluated policy options. Stemming from scenarios projected over the next six months, policy options describe how to affect the structural causes of fragility, accounting for the network of stakeholders that have agency over fragility, in relation to the impact and relevance of the OAS' objectives. The CIFP methodology thus yields demand-driven policy options.

Background

From 1958 to the 1980s, Venezuela was ruled by a series of democratic governments before economic downfall caused by declining oil prices led to political crisis and increased violence.⁴ Following riots in 1989, two attempted coups in 1992, the impeachment of President Carlos Andrés Pérez in 1993, and further collapse in confidence in the existing parties; President Hugo Chávez was elected in 1998.⁵ The Bolivarian Revolution was declared and has since defined political discourse through the 1999 Constitution. The PSUV has remained in power under former President Hugo Chávez (1998-2013) and current President Nicolás Maduro (2013-today).

Venezuela is rich in natural resources. The national oil corporation, PDVSA, was created in 1975, during an international energy crisis.⁶ When the Bolivarian Revolution began, the government nationalized private oil companies to increase state revenues and fund social programming. Privatizations also benefitted the rent-seeking elite, as it allowed them to seize greater control over the state's wealth and assets.^{7,8} The current situation and events, as set against the backdrop of the Bolivarian Revolution, indicates few structural changes since 1975.

Stakeholders

Political Stance	
Aligned	A country, institution, and/or organization that has publicly declared support for the Maduro government.
Opposed	A country, institution, and/or organization that has publicly declared support for Juan Guaidó as interim President of Venezuela.
No Stance	A country, institution, and/or organization that has not publicly declared support for or against the Maduro government or Juan Guaidó.

Primary Stakeholders
<p>OAS (end-user): Regional forum for political discussion, mandated to promote democracy, human rights, security, and development in Latin America. The organization has a vested interest in Venezuela due to the country's importance for regional stability. The OAS has the necessary resources to support its mandate in Venezuela, with 35 member nations, including the US, and partnerships with various UN agencies.^{9, 10} It has publicly declared support for opposition leader Juan Guaidó after the 2018 federal elections.¹¹</p>
<p>The Government: Nicolás Maduro Moros is leader of the PSUV and has been President of Venezuela since 2013. His presidency has been disputed since the 2018 federal elections, due to allegations of vote buying, voter intimidation, handpicking candidates, and the exclusion of opposition members.¹² As of December 2020, Maduro has the five branches of government under his control along with the loyalty of the National Bolivarian Armed Forces, the Bolivarian militia, and the PNB (Annex B-C).¹³</p>
<p>Juan Guaidó: Leader of the Voluntad Popular party and former President of the National Assembly. In 2019, he declared himself interim President of Venezuela through constitutional provisions, after allegations that the 2018 federal elections were fraudulent. While various international community members recognize Guaidó as interim president, the EU has revoked their recognition after he lost the Presidency of the National Assembly in December 2020.¹⁴</p>
<p>MUD: Represents most opposition parties, notably the Primero Justicia, Voluntad Popular and Acción Democrática. Between 2017 and October 2021, the MUD boycotted all elections on claims that the electoral system was biased and undemocratic.^{15,16} The opposition chose to participate in the November 2021 regional elections, winning three of the 23 governorships (one less than the last election).¹⁷ The opposition has very little practical power.¹⁸ See Annex B for more information.</p>
<p>State Security Forces: Refers to the National Bolivarian Armed Forces, the PNB, and the Bolivarian Militia. They receive financial and political support from the government and are often involved in social repression.¹⁹ See Annex C for more information.</p>
<p>Non-State Armed Groups: Refers to the <i>Colectivos</i> and Colombian, Brazilian, and Hezbollah armed groups. <i>Colectivos</i> receive arms support from the government while Colombian, Brazilian, and Hezbollah armed groups are left alone. See Annex D for more information.</p>
<p>CSOs/NGOs (international and domestic): Continue to speak out against the government and encourage the international community to do the same.²⁰ The government continues to restrict the activities of these organizations. The government also controls the media, with reports of blocked internet access²¹, restricted broadcast of certain TV channels²², and arbitrary detention of reporters.²³ See Annex E for more information.</p>

Secondary Stakeholders
<p>US: Has imposed sanctions on Venezuela since 2006. While originally targeting individuals, the Trump Administration significantly expanded economic sanctions in 2017.²⁴ A report by WOLA found that, while Venezuela’s economic crisis began before the new sanctions, they “directly contributed to... the further deterioration of the quality of life of Venezuelans.”²⁵ The sanctions have also pushed Venezuela closer to its other allies, undermining US influence in the region. Prior to 2018, the US was Venezuela’s largest oil importer (Annex F).</p>
<p>Border Neighbours: Venezuela shares a border with Colombia, Brazil, and Guyana. Poor border control between Venezuela and Colombia/ Brazil has resulted in the increase of non-state armed groups presence, while poor border control with all its neighbours has resulted in an increase of illicit transnational activities.²⁶ Academics suggest that fragile states pose a threat to their neighbours and emphasize the importance of regional stability.^{27, 28}</p>
<p>EU: Recently revoked its recognition of Guaidó as interim President of Venezuela after he lost his position as President of the National Assembly in January 2020.²⁹ For the first time in 16 years, the EU sent a mission to observe the November regional elections, after receiving an invitation from President Maduro.³⁰ Preliminary reports from the mission suggest that the electoral process in Venezuela has improved, although the opposition’s participation remains impeded by the PSUV.³¹ The EU will release its official report early 2022.</p>
<p>Global Financial Institutions: International institutions are reluctant to engage with Venezuela. In September 2021, the IMF stated that it was guided by the international community and that due to the lack of clarity regarding the government’s legitimacy, Venezuela could not access IMF resources.³² The World Bank does not have any active funds engaged in Venezuela either.³³ While regional banks (e.g., IDB³⁴ and CAF³⁵) have small portfolios in the country, they are largely focused on macro-economic projects. This has meant that Venezuela has become largely dependent on China and Russia for financial assistance.</p>
<p>Government Allies: Primarily consists of China, Russia, Turkey, Cuba, Iran, and Palestine – all of which have publicly recognized Maduro as the President of Venezuela and have supported Venezuela financially and diplomatically to a varying degree. For instance, Russia purchases Venezuelan oil and offers diplomatic support at the UN.³⁶ China has become the primary financial enabler of Venezuela through loans and South-South development aid.³⁷ Venezuela has also recently secured an oil export deal with Iran.³⁸ Anecdotal evidence suggests that many of these alliances are of “convenience”, characterized by growing bilateral trade and mutual dislike of the US.³⁹</p>

Fragility Risk Assessment

Legend			
Impact on Fragility	Low	Moderate	High
Trend	Improving ▲	Stable ►	Worsening ▼

The Fragility Risk Assessment identifies primary and secondary drivers of a country’s fragility, based on indicator data and event-analysis. In the case of Venezuela, Governance and Economic Development have been identified as the primary drivers. This is because the structural causes of fragility, namely the hybrid regime, rentier state, capacity trap, and weak social contract, have the most significant impact on Venezuela’s fragility (Annex A). They also lead to secondary impacts in Security and Crime, Human Development, Demography and Population, and Environment.

Primary Drivers

Governance ▼																																											
Selected Indicator	Value and Trends																																										
<p>Government Effectiveness Worldwide Governance Indicator <i>Measures the quality of the public service and its independence from political pressures, as well as policy formulation and government commitment to such policies.</i>⁴⁰</p>	<table border="1"> <caption>Government Effectiveness: Percentile Rank</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Percentile Rank</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>2002</td><td>12</td></tr> <tr><td>2003</td><td>15</td></tr> <tr><td>2004</td><td>10</td></tr> <tr><td>2005</td><td>18</td></tr> <tr><td>2006</td><td>14</td></tr> <tr><td>2007</td><td>15</td></tr> <tr><td>2008</td><td>12</td></tr> <tr><td>2009</td><td>15</td></tr> <tr><td>2010</td><td>12</td></tr> <tr><td>2011</td><td>10</td></tr> <tr><td>2012</td><td>13</td></tr> <tr><td>2013</td><td>12</td></tr> <tr><td>2014</td><td>11</td></tr> <tr><td>2015</td><td>10</td></tr> <tr><td>2016</td><td>8</td></tr> <tr><td>2017</td><td>7</td></tr> <tr><td>2018</td><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>2019</td><td>4</td></tr> <tr><td>2020</td><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>2021</td><td>2</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	Percentile Rank	2002	12	2003	15	2004	10	2005	18	2006	14	2007	15	2008	12	2009	15	2010	12	2011	10	2012	13	2013	12	2014	11	2015	10	2016	8	2017	7	2018	5	2019	4	2020	3	2021	2
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<p>Voices of Citizens and Accountability in Decision Making Worldwide Governance Indicator <i>Measures freedom of expression, association, and political participation.</i>⁴¹</p>	<table border="1"> <caption>Voices and Accountability: Percentile Rank</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Percentile Rank</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>2002</td><td>35</td></tr> <tr><td>2003</td><td>36</td></tr> <tr><td>2004</td><td>28</td></tr> <tr><td>2005</td><td>27</td></tr> <tr><td>2006</td><td>29</td></tr> <tr><td>2007</td><td>26</td></tr> <tr><td>2008</td><td>27</td></tr> <tr><td>2009</td><td>25</td></tr> <tr><td>2010</td><td>26</td></tr> <tr><td>2011</td><td>21</td></tr> <tr><td>2012</td><td>22</td></tr> <tr><td>2013</td><td>21</td></tr> <tr><td>2014</td><td>20</td></tr> <tr><td>2015</td><td>19</td></tr> <tr><td>2016</td><td>17</td></tr> <tr><td>2017</td><td>14</td></tr> <tr><td>2018</td><td>10</td></tr> <tr><td>2019</td><td>9</td></tr> <tr><td>2020</td><td>7</td></tr> <tr><td>2021</td><td>5</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	Percentile Rank	2002	35	2003	36	2004	28	2005	27	2006	29	2007	26	2008	27	2009	25	2010	26	2011	21	2012	22	2013	21	2014	20	2015	19	2016	17	2017	14	2018	10	2019	9	2020	7	2021	5
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<p>Corruption Corruption Perception Index <i>Measures the perceived levels of public sector corruption in 179 countries.</i>⁴²</p>	<table border="1"> <caption>Corruption Index Data (2002-2020)</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Index Value</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>2002</td><td>25</td></tr> <tr><td>2003</td><td>24</td></tr> <tr><td>2004</td><td>23</td></tr> <tr><td>2005</td><td>23</td></tr> <tr><td>2006</td><td>23</td></tr> <tr><td>2007</td><td>20</td></tr> <tr><td>2008</td><td>19</td></tr> <tr><td>2009</td><td>19</td></tr> <tr><td>2010</td><td>15</td></tr> <tr><td>2011</td><td>19</td></tr> <tr><td>2012</td><td>19</td></tr> <tr><td>2013</td><td>20</td></tr> <tr><td>2014</td><td>19</td></tr> <tr><td>2015</td><td>17</td></tr> <tr><td>2016</td><td>17</td></tr> <tr><td>2017</td><td>18</td></tr> <tr><td>2018</td><td>18</td></tr> <tr><td>2019</td><td>16</td></tr> <tr><td>2020</td><td>15</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	Index Value	2002	25	2003	24	2004	23	2005	23	2006	23	2007	20	2008	19	2009	19	2010	15	2011	19	2012	19	2013	20	2014	19	2015	17	2016	17	2017	18	2018	18	2019	16	2020	15
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<p>Democracy Index Economist Intelligence Unit <i>Measures electoral process and pluralism, civil liberties, functioning of government, political participation, and political culture.</i>⁴³ <i>Data were only available for the indicated years.</i></p>	<table border="1"> <caption>Democracy Index Data (2006-2020)</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Index Value</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>2006</td><td>5.5</td></tr> <tr><td>2007</td><td>5.5</td></tr> <tr><td>2008</td><td>5.5</td></tr> <tr><td>2009</td><td>5.0</td></tr> <tr><td>2010</td><td>5.0</td></tr> <tr><td>2011</td><td>5.0</td></tr> <tr><td>2012</td><td>5.0</td></tr> <tr><td>2013</td><td>5.0</td></tr> <tr><td>2014</td><td>5.0</td></tr> <tr><td>2015</td><td>5.0</td></tr> <tr><td>2016</td><td>4.5</td></tr> <tr><td>2017</td><td>3.8</td></tr> <tr><td>2018</td><td>3.0</td></tr> <tr><td>2019</td><td>2.8</td></tr> <tr><td>2020</td><td>2.8</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	Index Value	2006	5.5	2007	5.5	2008	5.5	2009	5.0	2010	5.0	2011	5.0	2012	5.0	2013	5.0	2014	5.0	2015	5.0	2016	4.5	2017	3.8	2018	3.0	2019	2.8	2020	2.8								
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<p>Rule of Law Worldwide Governance Indicator <i>Measures confidence in societal rules and law enforcement.</i>⁴⁴</p>	<table border="1"> <caption>Rule of Law Indicator Data (2002-2020)</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Percentile Rank</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>2002</td><td>14</td></tr> <tr><td>2003</td><td>8</td></tr> <tr><td>2004</td><td>10</td></tr> <tr><td>2005</td><td>10</td></tr> <tr><td>2006</td><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>2007</td><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>2008</td><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>2009</td><td>2.5</td></tr> <tr><td>2010</td><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>2011</td><td>1.5</td></tr> <tr><td>2012</td><td>1.5</td></tr> <tr><td>2013</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2014</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2015</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2016</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2017</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2018</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2019</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2020</td><td>0.5</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	Percentile Rank	2002	14	2003	8	2004	10	2005	10	2006	5	2007	2	2008	2	2009	2.5	2010	2	2011	1.5	2012	1.5	2013	1	2014	1	2015	1	2016	1	2017	1	2018	1	2019	1	2020	0.5
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Venezuela’s governing structure demonstrates the characteristics of a hybrid regime and isomorphic mimicry (Annex A). According to the 1999 Constitution, Venezuela has two partisan and three nonpartisan branches of government. In practice, however, each branch is used for political advantage, notably to reward military loyalty. At least 60 of the 576 state-run companies and 9 of 32 government ministries are run by military officials, appointed through provisions in the 1999 Constitution.⁴⁵ In addition, rule of law has declined by 100% between 2002 and 2020.⁴⁶ While Venezuela’s Constitution ensures the independence of the judiciary, the majority of judges (85%) hold provisional positions⁴⁷ and are not appointed through constitutional procedures.⁴⁸ The TSJ is also routinely used to punish political opponents.⁴⁹

Due to significant government centralization (Annex B) and politicization of non-political institutions (Annex G), basic freedoms are not respected. Between 2002 and 2020, restrictions on civil liberties have worsened by 33%,⁵⁰ while the Voices and Accountability indicator has worsened 80%.⁵¹ Freedom of the Press has also been restricted, worsening by 16% between 2002

and 2016.⁵² This is in addition to the fact that most television is state-run, and there are various policies that prevent the media from publishing negative stories about the government.⁵³ Journalists are also arbitrarily detained and threatened.⁵⁴

This explains Venezuela’s steady worsening of corruption levels (a 40% increase between 2002 and 2020)⁵⁵ and democracy levels (a 49% decrease between 2002 and 2020),⁵⁶ as well as the deterioration of the quality of public institutions: state legitimacy has worsened by 26% between 2006 and 2021⁵⁷ and government effectiveness has worsened by 80% between 2002 and 2020⁵⁸. As a result, 79.2% of Venezuelans have little or no trust in the government, 78.4% have little or no trust in the National Assembly, and 79.6% have little or no trust in the judicial branch.⁵⁹ In addition, 60.8% of Venezuelans believe that corruption has “increased a lot in the past year”.⁶⁰

Economic Development ▼																																											
Selected Indicator	Value and Trends																																										
<p>Economic Size International Monetary Fund <i>Measures the value of the economic output of the country, the gross domestic product.</i>⁶¹</p>	<p>Economic Size – Total – GDP (Billions)</p> <table border="1"> <caption>Estimated Data for Economic Size – Total – GDP (Billions)</caption> <thead> <tr><th>Year</th><th>GDP (Billions)</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>2002</td><td>100</td></tr> <tr><td>2003</td><td>110</td></tr> <tr><td>2004</td><td>130</td></tr> <tr><td>2005</td><td>150</td></tr> <tr><td>2006</td><td>180</td></tr> <tr><td>2007</td><td>220</td></tr> <tr><td>2008</td><td>280</td></tr> <tr><td>2009</td><td>250</td></tr> <tr><td>2010</td><td>300</td></tr> <tr><td>2011</td><td>350</td></tr> <tr><td>2012</td><td>340</td></tr> <tr><td>2013</td><td>250</td></tr> <tr><td>2014</td><td>200</td></tr> <tr><td>2015</td><td>320</td></tr> <tr><td>2016</td><td>280</td></tr> <tr><td>2017</td><td>150</td></tr> <tr><td>2018</td><td>100</td></tr> <tr><td>2019</td><td>80</td></tr> <tr><td>2020</td><td>50</td></tr> <tr><td>2021</td><td>40</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	GDP (Billions)	2002	100	2003	110	2004	130	2005	150	2006	180	2007	220	2008	280	2009	250	2010	300	2011	350	2012	340	2013	250	2014	200	2015	320	2016	280	2017	150	2018	100	2019	80	2020	50	2021	40
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<p>Real GDP Growth International Monetary Fund <i>Measures the annual change in value of the economic output of the country, in the gross domestic product.</i>⁶²</p>	<p>Real GDP Growth (Annual %)</p> <table border="1"> <caption>Estimated Data for Real GDP Growth (Annual %)</caption> <thead> <tr><th>Year</th><th>Growth (%)</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>2002</td><td>-10</td></tr> <tr><td>2003</td><td>-10</td></tr> <tr><td>2004</td><td>20</td></tr> <tr><td>2005</td><td>10</td></tr> <tr><td>2006</td><td>10</td></tr> <tr><td>2007</td><td>10</td></tr> <tr><td>2008</td><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>2009</td><td>-5</td></tr> <tr><td>2010</td><td>-5</td></tr> <tr><td>2011</td><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>2012</td><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>2013</td><td>0</td></tr> <tr><td>2014</td><td>-5</td></tr> <tr><td>2015</td><td>-5</td></tr> <tr><td>2016</td><td>-20</td></tr> <tr><td>2017</td><td>-15</td></tr> <tr><td>2018</td><td>-15</td></tr> <tr><td>2019</td><td>-25</td></tr> <tr><td>2020</td><td>-30</td></tr> <tr><td>2021</td><td>-25</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	Growth (%)	2002	-10	2003	-10	2004	20	2005	10	2006	10	2007	10	2008	5	2009	-5	2010	-5	2011	5	2012	5	2013	0	2014	-5	2015	-5	2016	-20	2017	-15	2018	-15	2019	-25	2020	-30	2021	-25
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<p>Inflation Rate International Monetary Fund <i>Measures the annual change in average consumer prices.</i>⁶³</p>	<p>Inflation Rate</p> <table border="1"> <caption>Estimated Data for Inflation Rate</caption> <thead> <tr><th>Year</th><th>Inflation Rate (%)</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>2002</td><td>0</td></tr> <tr><td>2003</td><td>0</td></tr> <tr><td>2004</td><td>0</td></tr> <tr><td>2005</td><td>0</td></tr> <tr><td>2006</td><td>0</td></tr> <tr><td>2007</td><td>0</td></tr> <tr><td>2008</td><td>0</td></tr> <tr><td>2009</td><td>0</td></tr> <tr><td>2010</td><td>0</td></tr> <tr><td>2011</td><td>0</td></tr> <tr><td>2012</td><td>0</td></tr> <tr><td>2013</td><td>0</td></tr> <tr><td>2014</td><td>0</td></tr> <tr><td>2015</td><td>0</td></tr> <tr><td>2016</td><td>0</td></tr> <tr><td>2017</td><td>0</td></tr> <tr><td>2018</td><td>65000</td></tr> <tr><td>2019</td><td>20000</td></tr> <tr><td>2020</td><td>5000</td></tr> <tr><td>2021</td><td>0</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	Inflation Rate (%)	2002	0	2003	0	2004	0	2005	0	2006	0	2007	0	2008	0	2009	0	2010	0	2011	0	2012	0	2013	0	2014	0	2015	0	2016	0	2017	0	2018	65000	2019	20000	2020	5000	2021	0
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<p>Inflation Rate (0% - 100% axis) International Monetary Fund <i>Measures the annual change in average consumer prices.</i>⁶⁴ Note the Y axis formatting. Missing values: 2015: 122% 2018: 65,370% 2016: 255% 2019: 19,910% 2017: 439% 2020: 2,360%</p>	
<p>Reserve Holdings World Development Indicators <i>Measures a country's total reserves of liquid and near-liquid assets, including gold.</i>⁶⁵</p>	
<p>Foreign Direct Investment, Net Inflows World Development Indicators <i>Measures the value of economic investments into the country, made by foreign entities.</i>⁶⁶</p>	
<p>Regulatory Quality World Governance Indicators <i>Measures the degree with which a country's institutional regulations are implemented and respected.</i>⁶⁷</p>	

Venezuela is a rentier state that depends on oil revenue to buy provisional stability from the elite (Annex A). Fragility is thus primarily found within the country's economic institutions. This is illustrated by the BTI Economy index worsening by 24% and the Fragile State Index's Economy

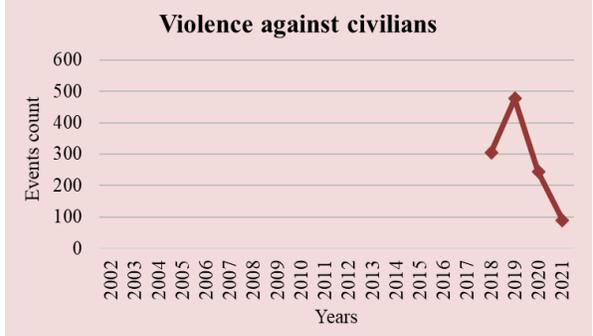
value worsening by 48% between 2006 and 2021.^{68, 69} This has led economic factors of production to lose their efficiency, apparent in the real GDP annual growth which gradually declined from +5.6% in 2012 to -30% in 2020 (not specifically linked to COVID-19).⁷⁰ According to the Doing Business indicators, Venezuela is within the bottom three countries for starting a business, paying taxes, and trading across borders.⁷¹ This is significant as Venezuela needs to diversify its economy and generate endogenous economic development, in order to exit the capacity trap in this cluster.

Between 2015 and 2020, PDVSA saw oil production decrease by 84%. This was largely due to a lack of infrastructure maintenance, a diminishing workforce, and reduced foreign investments and markets for Venezuelan oil (Annex H).⁷² This, along with the US sanctions, has reduced government revenue, causing the Maduro Administration to deplete the national reserve holdings, which fell from current US \$43 billion in 2008, to approximately US \$6.1 billion today.⁷³ It also led to the reversal of the country's trade balance, which fell from 8.18% of GDP (2002) to -4.3% of GDP (2020).⁷⁴ As a result, Venezuela has become increasingly dependent on Russia and China's financial support, in the form of greater FDI in Venezuela's oil industry, which increased from constant 2018 US \$46 millions in 2016 to US \$291 million in 2019.^{75, 76} Venezuela has also accrued US \$46 billion in external debt, in 2019⁷⁷, reducing the economic agency of its financial institutions.

The loss of financial confidence in the Venezuelan economy has contributed to the significant increase of inflation rates, which doubled annually between 2014 and 2017, culminating to 65,370% in 2018.⁷⁸ This is a significant symptom of the country's fragility, which has led to further shortages of goods in the country, including basic necessities. Corruption, rent seeking, and mismanagement has also led 62% of Venezuelans to have no or little trust in national companies, banks, and trade unions.⁷⁹

Secondary Drivers

Security and Crime ▼	
Selected Indicator	Value and Trends
<p>Political Stability/ Absence of Violence World Governance Indicators <i>Measures the perception of the likelihood of political instability and/or politically motivated violence, including terrorism.⁸⁰</i></p>	
<p>Societal Safety and Security Global Peace Index <i>Measures the level of harmony or discord within a nation, including crime rates, terrorist activity, relations with neighbouring countries, displacement levels, and political stability.⁸¹ Data were only available from 2008 onwards.</i></p>	
<p>Terrorism Global Terrorism Database <i>Total number of recorded terrorist attacks per year.⁸²</i></p>	
<p>Police Corruption Perception Corruption Perception Index <i>Measures the percent of people who think police are highly corrupt.⁸³ Data were only available for the indicated years.</i></p>	

<p>Protests Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project <i>Number of incidents annually.⁸⁴ Data were only available from 2018 onwards.</i></p>	 <table border="1"> <caption>Protests (2018-2021)</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Events count</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2018</td> <td>1800</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2019</td> <td>2500</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2020</td> <td>2400</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2021</td> <td>1800</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	Events count	2018	1800	2019	2500	2020	2400	2021	1800
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<p>Violence against Civilians Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project <i>Number of incidents annually.⁸⁵ Data were only available from 2018 onwards.</i></p>	 <table border="1"> <caption>Violence against civilians (2018-2021)</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Events count</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2018</td> <td>300</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2019</td> <td>480</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2020</td> <td>250</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2021</td> <td>100</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	Events count	2018	300	2019	480	2020	250	2021	100
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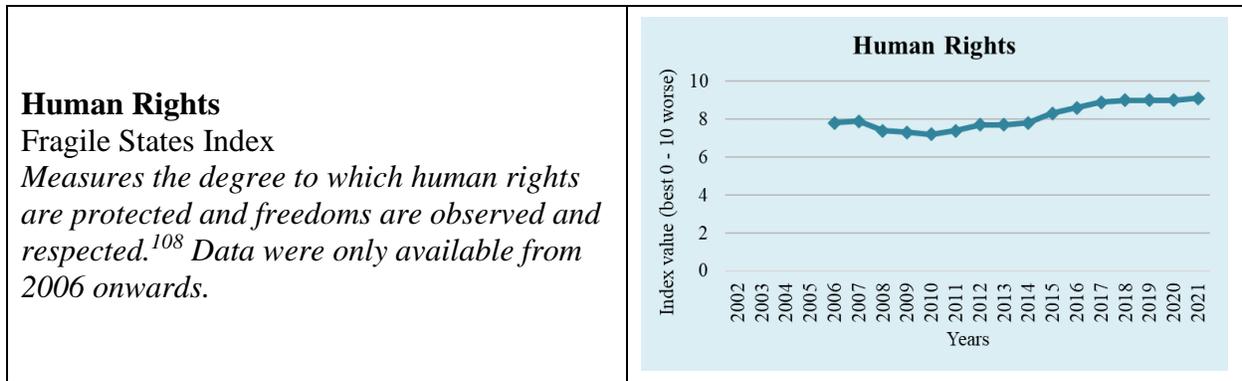
The Venezuelan government does not have a monopoly on violence. In fact, state security forces are largely responsible for the high level of violence in the country. According to the OHCHR, security forces committed more than 2,000 murders (many of which considered extrajudicial) between January and September 2020, amounting to more than 25,000 since 2014.⁸⁶ Trends related to violence against citizens also correlates to the number of protests in the country which emphasizes the use of state security forces as a tool of repression.⁸⁷ Officials that participate in violence are not held accountable; while the exact numbers of murders is unknown, only five FAES agents were convicted of attempted murder for events that occurred in 2018.⁸⁸

Venezuela also experiences a security gap. This is evident by the various non-state armed groups that exist in “ungoverned” regions (Annex I). Incidents of terrorism significantly increased from its average of 2.3 incidents between 2002 to 2016 to 17 in 2017, in response to the increase in protests and riots before and following the 2018 federal election.⁸⁹ *Colectivos* also receive resources from the government⁹⁰ while Colombian, Brazilian, and Hezbollah groups are left unrestricted to engage in transnational illicit activities,⁹¹ labour exploitation, human trafficking, and violence.⁹² The government has also been accused of appointing members to public positions^{93,94} and militarizing policing institutions, which is illustrative of corruption (Annex J). This suggests mutual support between the government and non-state armed groups.

Although capable of designing and implementing policies, the security sector is stuck in a capacity trap. Federal policing laws are considered to align with the “Western-liberal model of democratic policing,”^{95,96,97} however, anecdotal evidence suggests overcrowding, insufficient staffing, and poorly trained staff in jails and police stations.^{98,99} Trust in this sector is weak, with the perception of police corruption averaging 78% between 2004 and 2019;¹⁰⁰ Societal Safety and Security having worsened 29% between 2008 and 2021¹⁰¹; and Political Stability / having

worsened 40% between 2002 and 2020.¹⁰² As a result, 40% of Venezuelans want government resources to be provided to the public to fight crime, rather than to the police.¹⁰³

Human Development ▼																																									
Selected Indicator	Value and Trends																																								
<p>Human Development Index United Nations Development Programme <i>Measures ultimate criteria for assessing the development of a country, not economic growth alone.¹⁰⁴ Note that the Index Value axis begins at 0.64.</i></p>	<table border="1"> <caption>Human Development Index (Index value, worse 0 - 1 best)</caption> <thead> <tr><th>Year</th><th>Index Value</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>2002</td><td>0.69</td></tr> <tr><td>2003</td><td>0.70</td></tr> <tr><td>2004</td><td>0.71</td></tr> <tr><td>2005</td><td>0.72</td></tr> <tr><td>2006</td><td>0.73</td></tr> <tr><td>2007</td><td>0.74</td></tr> <tr><td>2008</td><td>0.75</td></tr> <tr><td>2009</td><td>0.76</td></tr> <tr><td>2010</td><td>0.76</td></tr> <tr><td>2011</td><td>0.76</td></tr> <tr><td>2012</td><td>0.77</td></tr> <tr><td>2013</td><td>0.78</td></tr> <tr><td>2014</td><td>0.78</td></tr> <tr><td>2015</td><td>0.77</td></tr> <tr><td>2016</td><td>0.76</td></tr> <tr><td>2017</td><td>0.75</td></tr> <tr><td>2018</td><td>0.74</td></tr> <tr><td>2019</td><td>0.73</td></tr> <tr><td>2020</td><td>0.71</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	Index Value	2002	0.69	2003	0.70	2004	0.71	2005	0.72	2006	0.73	2007	0.74	2008	0.75	2009	0.76	2010	0.76	2011	0.76	2012	0.77	2013	0.78	2014	0.78	2015	0.77	2016	0.76	2017	0.75	2018	0.74	2019	0.73	2020	0.71
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<p>Food Insecurity Global Food Security Index <i>Measures food affordability, availability, quality and safety, and natural resources and resilience.¹⁰⁵ Data were only available from 2012 onwards.</i></p>	<table border="1"> <caption>Food Insecurity (Index value, worse 0 - 100 best)</caption> <thead> <tr><th>Year</th><th>Index Value</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>2012</td><td>48</td></tr> <tr><td>2013</td><td>48</td></tr> <tr><td>2014</td><td>47</td></tr> <tr><td>2015</td><td>47</td></tr> <tr><td>2016</td><td>48</td></tr> <tr><td>2017</td><td>52</td></tr> <tr><td>2018</td><td>45</td></tr> <tr><td>2019</td><td>44</td></tr> <tr><td>2020</td><td>43</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	Index Value	2012	48	2013	48	2014	47	2015	47	2016	48	2017	52	2018	45	2019	44	2020	43																				
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<p>Access to Water World Development Indicators <i>Percentage of the population using at least basic drinking water services.¹⁰⁶ Note that the Percentage axis begins at 92.</i></p>	<table border="1"> <caption>Access to Water (Percentage)</caption> <thead> <tr><th>Year</th><th>Percentage</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>2002</td><td>97.0</td></tr> <tr><td>2003</td><td>96.8</td></tr> <tr><td>2004</td><td>96.6</td></tr> <tr><td>2005</td><td>96.5</td></tr> <tr><td>2006</td><td>96.4</td></tr> <tr><td>2007</td><td>96.3</td></tr> <tr><td>2008</td><td>96.2</td></tr> <tr><td>2009</td><td>96.1</td></tr> <tr><td>2010</td><td>96.0</td></tr> <tr><td>2011</td><td>95.9</td></tr> <tr><td>2012</td><td>95.8</td></tr> <tr><td>2013</td><td>95.7</td></tr> <tr><td>2014</td><td>95.6</td></tr> <tr><td>2015</td><td>95.5</td></tr> <tr><td>2016</td><td>95.4</td></tr> <tr><td>2017</td><td>95.3</td></tr> <tr><td>2018</td><td>95.2</td></tr> <tr><td>2019</td><td>95.1</td></tr> <tr><td>2020</td><td>95.0</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	Percentage	2002	97.0	2003	96.8	2004	96.6	2005	96.5	2006	96.4	2007	96.3	2008	96.2	2009	96.1	2010	96.0	2011	95.9	2012	95.8	2013	95.7	2014	95.6	2015	95.5	2016	95.4	2017	95.3	2018	95.2	2019	95.1	2020	95.0
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<p>Health Expenditure World Development Indicators <i>Health care expenditure (excluding capital health expenditure).¹⁰⁷</i></p>	<table border="1"> <caption>Health Infrastructure - Expenditures as a Percentage of GDP</caption> <thead> <tr><th>Year</th><th>Percentage</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>2002</td><td>3.5</td></tr> <tr><td>2003</td><td>3.8</td></tr> <tr><td>2004</td><td>3.7</td></tr> <tr><td>2005</td><td>2.8</td></tr> <tr><td>2006</td><td>4.5</td></tr> <tr><td>2007</td><td>4.0</td></tr> <tr><td>2008</td><td>2.5</td></tr> <tr><td>2009</td><td>2.6</td></tr> <tr><td>2010</td><td>2.6</td></tr> <tr><td>2011</td><td>3.0</td></tr> <tr><td>2012</td><td>2.8</td></tr> <tr><td>2013</td><td>2.0</td></tr> <tr><td>2014</td><td>2.0</td></tr> <tr><td>2015</td><td>2.7</td></tr> <tr><td>2016</td><td>2.4</td></tr> <tr><td>2017</td><td>3.8</td></tr> <tr><td>2018</td><td>1.8</td></tr> <tr><td>2019</td><td>1.8</td></tr> <tr><td>2020</td><td>1.8</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	Percentage	2002	3.5	2003	3.8	2004	3.7	2005	2.8	2006	4.5	2007	4.0	2008	2.5	2009	2.6	2010	2.6	2011	3.0	2012	2.8	2013	2.0	2014	2.0	2015	2.7	2016	2.4	2017	3.8	2018	1.8	2019	1.8	2020	1.8
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While Venezuela has a relatively high HDI (0.711 in 2019)¹⁰⁹ and literacy rate for people 15 and older (97%),¹¹⁰ over 90% of households live below the poverty line,¹¹¹ with 32.3% food insecure¹¹² and 23% without access to potable water.¹¹³ Due to the economic crisis, most Venezuelans cannot afford basic necessities: in 2019, 75% did not have enough money to buy food, 80% could not pay for medical or health care, and 87% could not afford clothing for their family.¹¹⁴ Health care expenditure has also significantly decreased from 7.3% of GDP in 2000 to 1.2% in 2017.¹¹⁵ Shortages in medications and health supplies as well as the migration of healthcare workers affect the country's operational capacity to care for its people.¹¹⁶ As a result, only 15% of the population has been fully vaccinated as of September 2021.¹¹⁷ While the US has pledged \$226 million in humanitarian, economic and development assistance, it is unclear how the Venezuelan government will respond, given its rejection of aid from the UN in 2019.¹¹⁸

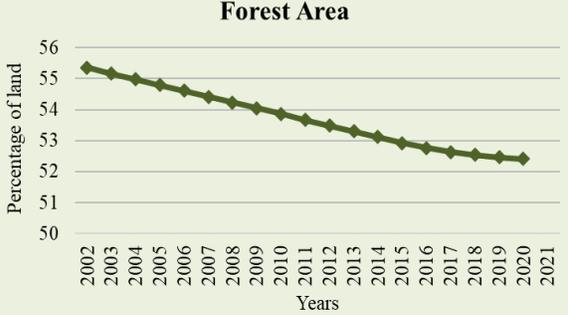
The weak Social Contract explains why Venezuela is stuck in a capacity trap (Annex A). Channels of expression have become disregarded and delegitimized, leading to a marginalization of social policies.¹¹⁹ Human rights' abuses and crimes against humanity are committed by the government, including the persecution of political opponents, torture of detainees, arrests of protesters, extrajudicial killings, and political discrimination.¹²⁰ Those who support the government have been given greater access to services, food, and education¹²¹ in addition to COVID-19 vaccines.¹²² Further, budget allocations to the Ministry of Defence are significantly higher than any government ministry.¹²³ Corruption is thus causing the healthcare system to collapse and leading to an increase in food insecurity. It also directly relates to reductions in government legitimacy and social trust.

Demography and Population ▼																																											
Selected Indicator	Value and Trends																																										
<p>Total Population World Development Indicators <i>Total population in million.¹²⁴ Note that the 'Number of People' axis begins at 22 million.</i></p>	<p>Total Population (millions)</p> <table border="1"> <caption>Estimated Data for Total Population (millions)</caption> <thead> <tr><th>Year</th><th>Population (millions)</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>2002</td><td>25.0</td></tr> <tr><td>2003</td><td>25.5</td></tr> <tr><td>2004</td><td>26.0</td></tr> <tr><td>2005</td><td>26.5</td></tr> <tr><td>2006</td><td>27.0</td></tr> <tr><td>2007</td><td>27.5</td></tr> <tr><td>2008</td><td>28.0</td></tr> <tr><td>2009</td><td>28.5</td></tr> <tr><td>2010</td><td>29.0</td></tr> <tr><td>2011</td><td>29.5</td></tr> <tr><td>2012</td><td>29.8</td></tr> <tr><td>2013</td><td>30.0</td></tr> <tr><td>2014</td><td>30.2</td></tr> <tr><td>2015</td><td>30.0</td></tr> <tr><td>2016</td><td>29.8</td></tr> <tr><td>2017</td><td>29.5</td></tr> <tr><td>2018</td><td>29.2</td></tr> <tr><td>2019</td><td>29.0</td></tr> <tr><td>2020</td><td>28.8</td></tr> <tr><td>2021</td><td>28.5</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	Population (millions)	2002	25.0	2003	25.5	2004	26.0	2005	26.5	2006	27.0	2007	27.5	2008	28.0	2009	28.5	2010	29.0	2011	29.5	2012	29.8	2013	30.0	2014	30.2	2015	30.0	2016	29.8	2017	29.5	2018	29.2	2019	29.0	2020	28.8	2021	28.5
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2021	28.5																																										
<p>Urban Population Growth World Development Indicators <i>De facto percentage of the population living in areas classified as urban.¹²⁵</i></p>	<p>Urban Population Growth (annual %)</p> <table border="1"> <caption>Estimated Data for Urban Population Growth (annual %)</caption> <thead> <tr><th>Year</th><th>Percentage</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>2002</td><td>1.8</td></tr> <tr><td>2003</td><td>1.7</td></tr> <tr><td>2004</td><td>1.6</td></tr> <tr><td>2005</td><td>1.5</td></tr> <tr><td>2006</td><td>1.4</td></tr> <tr><td>2007</td><td>1.3</td></tr> <tr><td>2008</td><td>1.2</td></tr> <tr><td>2009</td><td>1.1</td></tr> <tr><td>2010</td><td>1.0</td></tr> <tr><td>2011</td><td>1.1</td></tr> <tr><td>2012</td><td>1.5</td></tr> <tr><td>2013</td><td>1.0</td></tr> <tr><td>2014</td><td>0.5</td></tr> <tr><td>2015</td><td>0.0</td></tr> <tr><td>2016</td><td>-0.5</td></tr> <tr><td>2017</td><td>-1.0</td></tr> <tr><td>2018</td><td>-1.8</td></tr> <tr><td>2019</td><td>-1.5</td></tr> <tr><td>2020</td><td>-1.0</td></tr> <tr><td>2021</td><td>-0.5</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	Percentage	2002	1.8	2003	1.7	2004	1.6	2005	1.5	2006	1.4	2007	1.3	2008	1.2	2009	1.1	2010	1.0	2011	1.1	2012	1.5	2013	1.0	2014	0.5	2015	0.0	2016	-0.5	2017	-1.0	2018	-1.8	2019	-1.5	2020	-1.0	2021	-0.5
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2021	-0.5																																										
<p>Fertility Rates World Development Indicators <i>Average number of births per woman.¹²⁶</i></p>	<p>Fertility Rates (births per woman)</p> <table border="1"> <caption>Estimated Data for Fertility Rates (births per woman)</caption> <thead> <tr><th>Year</th><th>Births per woman</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>2002</td><td>2.7</td></tr> <tr><td>2003</td><td>2.65</td></tr> <tr><td>2004</td><td>2.6</td></tr> <tr><td>2005</td><td>2.55</td></tr> <tr><td>2006</td><td>2.5</td></tr> <tr><td>2007</td><td>2.45</td></tr> <tr><td>2008</td><td>2.4</td></tr> <tr><td>2009</td><td>2.35</td></tr> <tr><td>2010</td><td>2.3</td></tr> <tr><td>2011</td><td>2.25</td></tr> <tr><td>2012</td><td>2.2</td></tr> <tr><td>2013</td><td>2.15</td></tr> <tr><td>2014</td><td>2.1</td></tr> <tr><td>2015</td><td>2.05</td></tr> <tr><td>2016</td><td>2.0</td></tr> <tr><td>2017</td><td>1.95</td></tr> <tr><td>2018</td><td>1.9</td></tr> <tr><td>2019</td><td>1.85</td></tr> <tr><td>2020</td><td>1.8</td></tr> <tr><td>2021</td><td>1.75</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	Births per woman	2002	2.7	2003	2.65	2004	2.6	2005	2.55	2006	2.5	2007	2.45	2008	2.4	2009	2.35	2010	2.3	2011	2.25	2012	2.2	2013	2.15	2014	2.1	2015	2.05	2016	2.0	2017	1.95	2018	1.9	2019	1.85	2020	1.8	2021	1.75
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<p>Life Expectancy World Development Indicators <i>Average mortality age in years.¹²⁷ Note that the 'Years of Life' axis begins at 71.5.</i></p>	<p>Life Expectancy at Birth, Female (years)</p> <table border="1"> <caption>Estimated Data for Life Expectancy at Birth, Female (years)</caption> <thead> <tr><th>Year</th><th>Years of life</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>2002</td><td>76.4</td></tr> <tr><td>2003</td><td>76.6</td></tr> <tr><td>2004</td><td>76.8</td></tr> <tr><td>2005</td><td>76.9</td></tr> <tr><td>2006</td><td>77.0</td></tr> <tr><td>2007</td><td>77.0</td></tr> <tr><td>2008</td><td>77.0</td></tr> <tr><td>2009</td><td>77.0</td></tr> <tr><td>2010</td><td>77.1</td></tr> <tr><td>2011</td><td>77.1</td></tr> <tr><td>2012</td><td>77.0</td></tr> <tr><td>2013</td><td>76.9</td></tr> <tr><td>2014</td><td>76.8</td></tr> <tr><td>2015</td><td>76.7</td></tr> <tr><td>2016</td><td>76.6</td></tr> <tr><td>2017</td><td>76.5</td></tr> <tr><td>2018</td><td>76.4</td></tr> <tr><td>2019</td><td>76.3</td></tr> <tr><td>2020</td><td>76.2</td></tr> <tr><td>2021</td><td>76.0</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	Years of life	2002	76.4	2003	76.6	2004	76.8	2005	76.9	2006	77.0	2007	77.0	2008	77.0	2009	77.0	2010	77.1	2011	77.1	2012	77.0	2013	76.9	2014	76.8	2015	76.7	2016	76.6	2017	76.5	2018	76.4	2019	76.3	2020	76.2	2021	76.0
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Venezuela is not a very ethnically or religiously diverse country. The population is 67% Mestizo (“mixed”), 21% White, 10% Afro-Venezuelan, and 2% Indigenous,¹²⁸ with 96% Roman Catholic and 97% speaking Spanish.¹²⁹ In addition, more than 88% of Venezuelans live in urban areas.¹³⁰ However, deterioration in people’s quality of life and the government’s failure to deliver social services is leading to forced internal migration from rural to urban areas.¹³¹ As a result, many police, doctors, schoolteachers, and social workers have migrated to urban areas; overcrowding has led to higher urban crime rates.¹³² Internal migration has also led to the collapse of many rural areas, where the number of poor households reached 74% in 2017.¹³³

Due to the socioeconomic and political crises, together with high unemployment and difficulty in accessing food, medicine, and other basic necessities, over 5.9 million Venezuelans have left the country since 2014 (Annex K).¹³⁴ This is particularly problematic since a high portion of Venezuelan emigrants are young, educated, and of working age,¹³⁵ causing the dependency ratio to increase.¹³⁶ As nearly 7% of the nation’s population has emigrated since 2014,¹³⁷ it is projected that the number of emigrants could reach seven million by the first quarter of 2022, becoming the largest emigration crisis in the world.¹³⁸ This has also contributed to lower population growth and density rates¹³⁹ in addition to a declining life expectancy.¹⁴⁰

Environment ▼																																											
Selected Indicator	Value and Trends																																										
<p>CO₂ Emissions / GDP IEA Energy Balances Report <i>Measures the amount of CO₂ emissions per dollar value of a country’s economic activity, the gross domestic product.</i>¹⁴¹</p>	<table border="1"> <caption>CO₂ Emissions / GDP (using PPP)</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Kilograms of CO₂ per constant 2015 US \$</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>2002</td><td>0.38</td></tr> <tr><td>2003</td><td>0.40</td></tr> <tr><td>2004</td><td>0.35</td></tr> <tr><td>2005</td><td>0.33</td></tr> <tr><td>2006</td><td>0.30</td></tr> <tr><td>2007</td><td>0.28</td></tr> <tr><td>2008</td><td>0.28</td></tr> <tr><td>2009</td><td>0.28</td></tr> <tr><td>2010</td><td>0.30</td></tr> <tr><td>2011</td><td>0.28</td></tr> <tr><td>2012</td><td>0.28</td></tr> <tr><td>2013</td><td>0.28</td></tr> <tr><td>2014</td><td>0.28</td></tr> <tr><td>2015</td><td>0.28</td></tr> <tr><td>2016</td><td>0.30</td></tr> <tr><td>2017</td><td>0.35</td></tr> <tr><td>2018</td><td>0.38</td></tr> <tr><td>2019</td><td>0.40</td></tr> <tr><td>2020</td><td>0.40</td></tr> <tr><td>2021</td><td>0.40</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	Kilograms of CO ₂ per constant 2015 US \$	2002	0.38	2003	0.40	2004	0.35	2005	0.33	2006	0.30	2007	0.28	2008	0.28	2009	0.28	2010	0.30	2011	0.28	2012	0.28	2013	0.28	2014	0.28	2015	0.28	2016	0.30	2017	0.35	2018	0.38	2019	0.40	2020	0.40	2021	0.40
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<p>Lead Exposure Yale Environmental Performance Index <i>Provides the country’s ranking on an index of life years lost due to lead contamination in the environment.</i>¹⁴² Note that the Index Value axis begins at 36.</p>	<table border="1"> <caption>Lead Exposure</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Index value (worse 0 - 100 best)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>2002</td><td>39.5</td></tr> <tr><td>2003</td><td>39.8</td></tr> <tr><td>2004</td><td>40.0</td></tr> <tr><td>2005</td><td>40.2</td></tr> <tr><td>2006</td><td>40.5</td></tr> <tr><td>2007</td><td>40.8</td></tr> <tr><td>2008</td><td>41.0</td></tr> <tr><td>2009</td><td>41.2</td></tr> <tr><td>2010</td><td>41.5</td></tr> <tr><td>2011</td><td>42.0</td></tr> <tr><td>2012</td><td>42.5</td></tr> <tr><td>2013</td><td>43.0</td></tr> <tr><td>2014</td><td>43.5</td></tr> <tr><td>2015</td><td>44.5</td></tr> <tr><td>2016</td><td>44.0</td></tr> <tr><td>2017</td><td>43.8</td></tr> <tr><td>2018</td><td>43.5</td></tr> <tr><td>2019</td><td>43.5</td></tr> <tr><td>2020</td><td>43.5</td></tr> <tr><td>2021</td><td>43.5</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	Index value (worse 0 - 100 best)	2002	39.5	2003	39.8	2004	40.0	2005	40.2	2006	40.5	2007	40.8	2008	41.0	2009	41.2	2010	41.5	2011	42.0	2012	42.5	2013	43.0	2014	43.5	2015	44.5	2016	44.0	2017	43.8	2018	43.5	2019	43.5	2020	43.5	2021	43.5
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<p>Fish Stock Status Yale Environmental Performance Index <i>Measures the percentage of a country's total catch that comes from overexploited or collapsed stocks.</i>¹⁴³</p>	 <table border="1"> <caption>Fish Stock Status Data</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Index value (worse 0 - 100 best)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>2002</td><td>13.5</td></tr> <tr><td>2003</td><td>15.0</td></tr> <tr><td>2004</td><td>13.5</td></tr> <tr><td>2005</td><td>10.5</td></tr> <tr><td>2006</td><td>5.5</td></tr> <tr><td>2007</td><td>3.5</td></tr> <tr><td>2008</td><td>3.5</td></tr> <tr><td>2009</td><td>2.5</td></tr> <tr><td>2010</td><td>2.0</td></tr> <tr><td>2011</td><td>1.5</td></tr> <tr><td>2012</td><td>1.5</td></tr> <tr><td>2013</td><td>1.5</td></tr> <tr><td>2014</td><td>1.0</td></tr> <tr><td>2015</td><td>1.0</td></tr> <tr><td>2016</td><td>1.0</td></tr> <tr><td>2017</td><td>1.0</td></tr> <tr><td>2018</td><td>1.0</td></tr> <tr><td>2019</td><td>1.0</td></tr> <tr><td>2020</td><td>1.0</td></tr> <tr><td>2021</td><td>1.0</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	Index value (worse 0 - 100 best)	2002	13.5	2003	15.0	2004	13.5	2005	10.5	2006	5.5	2007	3.5	2008	3.5	2009	2.5	2010	2.0	2011	1.5	2012	1.5	2013	1.5	2014	1.0	2015	1.0	2016	1.0	2017	1.0	2018	1.0	2019	1.0	2020	1.0	2021	1.0
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<p>Forest Area World Development Indicators <i>Measures the average annual loss in forest area over the past five years, divided by the total extent of forest area in the year 2000.</i>¹⁴⁴ Note that the 'Percentage of Land' axis begins at 50.</p>	 <table border="1"> <caption>Forest Area Data</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Percentage of land</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>2002</td><td>55.5</td></tr> <tr><td>2003</td><td>55.2</td></tr> <tr><td>2004</td><td>55.0</td></tr> <tr><td>2005</td><td>54.8</td></tr> <tr><td>2006</td><td>54.6</td></tr> <tr><td>2007</td><td>54.4</td></tr> <tr><td>2008</td><td>54.2</td></tr> <tr><td>2009</td><td>54.0</td></tr> <tr><td>2010</td><td>53.8</td></tr> <tr><td>2011</td><td>53.6</td></tr> <tr><td>2012</td><td>53.4</td></tr> <tr><td>2013</td><td>53.2</td></tr> <tr><td>2014</td><td>53.0</td></tr> <tr><td>2015</td><td>52.8</td></tr> <tr><td>2016</td><td>52.6</td></tr> <tr><td>2017</td><td>52.4</td></tr> <tr><td>2018</td><td>52.3</td></tr> <tr><td>2019</td><td>52.2</td></tr> <tr><td>2020</td><td>52.1</td></tr> <tr><td>2021</td><td>52.0</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	Percentage of land	2002	55.5	2003	55.2	2004	55.0	2005	54.8	2006	54.6	2007	54.4	2008	54.2	2009	54.0	2010	53.8	2011	53.6	2012	53.4	2013	53.2	2014	53.0	2015	52.8	2016	52.6	2017	52.4	2018	52.3	2019	52.2	2020	52.1	2021	52.0
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The environmental health of Venezuela is not a priority of investments and is accompanied by poor legitimacy, which is suggestive of a capacity trap. In fact, 66% of Venezuelans think that the protection of the environment is not guaranteed by the state.¹⁴⁵ This reflects poor regulatory effectiveness: after a 5% improvement of lead exposure from 2002 to 2015, exposure has begun worsening again due to the economic crisis.¹⁴⁶ While total and per capita CO₂ emissions have decreased since 2014^{147,148}, the measure of CO₂ per GDP has increased: Venezuela's economic activities are 42% more polluting than in 2015.¹⁴⁹

Irresponsible mining and land development operations present the greatest environmental risk.¹⁵⁰ On land, rushed mining operations under the oversight of state security forces and non-state armed groups encourage the destruction of the land biome.¹⁵¹ On sea, the authority of Venezuelans over their own land and coastal waters has decreased as the state sells the rights to natural resource exploitation to foreign entities.¹⁵² Venezuela's fish stock¹⁵³ offers anecdotal evidence: the poor maintenance of the country's oil rigs has significantly reduced marine health due to the increased frequency of spills.¹⁵⁴ The pollution of the Orinoco River basin by mining activities is likely to have long-lasting effects on agricultural potential. The country's poorly regulated economic activity thus impacts the environment and wellbeing of Venezuelans.

ALC Analysis

Legend			
Impact on Fragility	Low	Moderate	High
Trend	Improving ▲	Stable ►	Worsening ▼

Per the CIFP framework, the ALC analysis of Venezuela presents Legitimacy and Capacity as having the highest impact on the country's fragility, with Authority having a moderate impact. Each dimension demonstrates a worsening trend (Annex L).

Authority ▼
<p>Venezuela's government does not hold the monopoly on violence, as described in the Stakeholders and the Security and Crime sections. The state security actors are prioritized over other members of society for budgetary allocations and are given prestigious positions within the public and private sector (Annex M). They engage in human rights violations, often on behalf of the state, to repress social dissent and are not held accountable.¹⁵⁵ In fact, in October 2021, a UNHRC fact-finding mission in Venezuela concluded that "had the prosecutorial and judicial actors performed their constitutional role appropriately and fully, they could have either prevented many of the crimes and violations committed against real or perceived opponents of the government, or placed rigorous impediments upon public security and intelligence services' ability to commit them".¹⁵⁶ This has ramifications for service delivery. Recent accounts suggest that COVID-19 vaccinations and other social services are being limited to government supporters.¹⁵⁷ In addition, the state security forces, in conjunction with non-state armed groups, control human and material resources. This leads to larger black-market activities and reduces interest from the international community to engage in FDI.</p> <p>Having spent most of its national reserve holdings to compensate for the reduced production of PDVSA, the state has had to sell the rights to natural resource exploitation.¹⁵⁸ This takes away from the government's economic agency by reducing potential revenue and increasing dealings with corporate entities or security forces that do not answer to the Venezuelan government. The situation is also precarious for rural areas with mining resources, such as the Orinoco basin, where non-state armed groups adopt a pseudo-state function. For example, Colombian armed groups have taken over the village of Parmana due to the lack of government presence.¹⁵⁹ Irresponsible mining and land development, including a lack of enforcement of related regulations, is also leading to a deterioration of Venezuela's environment.</p>

Capacity ▼
<p>Venezuela has the institutional framework to procure and deliver goods and services, design and implement policies, build infrastructure, collect revenue, dispense justice, and maintain a conducive environment for the private sector. The effectiveness or non-politicization of these activities, however, is weak and has contributed to a prominent capacity trap related to an unwillingness, rather than inability, by the elite to act or reform. The lack of willingness to act or reform results in significantly reduced legitimacy and trust in government by Venezuelans, which results in even less capacity.</p>

Of concern, however, is that current trends suggest that the lack of willingness may soon become an inability to reform. As discussed in the Fragility Risk Assessment, there is already evidence of irreversible damage. For instance, the country's fish stock is zero and the emigration crisis has led to the departure of many young, educated, and working-age citizens. Economically, the real GDP annual growth rate has declined from 5.6% in 2012 to -30% in 2020¹⁶⁰ and dependence on financial assistance has increased from US \$46M in 2018 to \$291M in 2019.¹⁶¹ The US sanctions continue to reduce the government's financial capacity.

Legitimacy ▼

Venezuelans do not feel that the government has the right to govern due to the fractured Social Contract. A 2020 Latinobarómetro survey demonstrates that 79.2% of Venezuelans have little or no trust in the government (with 74.1% having no trust in Maduro himself), 78.4% have little or no trust in the National Assembly, 79.6% have little or no trust in the judicial branch, 77% have little or no trust in the CNE, and 85% have little or no trust in police.¹⁶² In fact, distrust extends to all clusters, as evident in the Fragility Risk Assessment. This is due to high instances of corruption and lack of respect for the rule of law. It is also because those who speak out against the government are discriminated against or threatened.¹⁶³ Discontent with the government is also evident in the high number of annual protests and discrepancy of voter participation in the 2018 (46%)¹⁶⁴ versus the 2013 (80%)¹⁶⁵ federal election.

That said, there have been recent signals of increased legitimacy. For instance, the opposition participated in the November 2021 elections, ending its electoral boycott that began in 2017. Similarly, the government began negotiating a Memorandum of Understanding with the opposition to establish "clear rules for political and social coexistence" in August 2021 (although negotiations stalled after the US extradited Alex Saab, a Colombian businessman close to the President, on charges of money laundering). The EU also formally revoked its recognition of Guaidó as interim President in early 2021¹⁶⁶ and sent a mission to observe the November 2021 election for the first time in 16 years. Preliminary reports suggest that the electoral process in Venezuela has improved, although the lack of judicial independence prevents the fair participation of opposition candidates.¹⁶⁷ That said, the mission was ordered to leave days before its pre-determined date of departure, with accusations by the government of the being spies.¹⁶⁸ This cast a shadow on recent efforts towards international legitimacy.

Scenarios

Most Likely

Maduro returns to the discussion table to negotiate the partial ease of US sanctions in exchange for concession to the opposition.¹⁶⁹ Power centralization and corruption levels are maintained. The balance of power remains between the state security forces and non-state armed groups within the country. The humanitarian and economic crises persist, and emigration continues. Venezuela's health system supply chains further collapse, causing shortages in medications, health supplies, and basic utilities at medical facilities. The country's operational capacity is further disrupted due to the migration of healthcare workers, leading to an exacerbation in the seriousness of COVID-19.¹⁷⁰ While violence levels slowly decrease, protests continue to take

place across the nation calling for more accountability and better delivery of social services. The US continues to impose sanctions. Russia, China, and other allies maintain relations with Venezuela. The international support for the government and opposition remains divided.

Best Case

The government commits to prevent election fraud. Following allegations of rigging the 2018 presidential election and the 2021 regional and municipal elections, the Maduro administration ensures that future elections will be free and fair, and allows observation by an independent third party, such as the EU.¹⁷¹ The government begins to re-engage with civil society toward a safe process of consultation and freedom of expression for citizens. The government agrees to start releasing detained political opponents and protesters, as well as ceasing human rights' violations, paving the way to depoliticize the military and key political institutions, notably the judiciary. The government ensures an efficient and transparent way to administer COVID-19 vaccines. The government begins talks towards financial and commercial assistance in a step to inspire trust from international donors, help relieve sanctions affecting the population, regain some international legitimacy, and improve the current domestic context. The US expresses its interests to engage in discussions to explore the reduction of sanctions. The international community moves towards restoring diplomatic and political relations with Venezuela.

Worst Case

The new Omicron variant worsens the COVID-19 situation and death rates increase due to low vaccination rates. The US tightens sanctions against Venezuela, leading to further shortages in medical and food supplies. As a result, emigration and protest levels increase. The government calls on state security forces to repress dissent, resulting in greater levels of state-citizen violence. The Bolivar's devaluation and PDVSA's reduced production capacity continues. Without the funds necessary to ensure the support of state security forces, tensions between key political and security actors rise. Negotiations between the government and opposition remained stalled.¹⁷² The capacity gap worsens, pushing Venezuela into greater fragility.

Wild Card

Despite the political and diplomatic isolation by the international community, the US calls for an embargo on Venezuela, imposing a comprehensive set of sanctions against the country – similar to those imposed on Cuba.¹⁷³ The country reaches unprecedented levels of economic and humanitarian decline. COVID-19 continues to spread and take more lives and the healthcare system further collapses. Given its determination to bring the Guaidó administration to power, the US supports a military coup to oust Maduro and replace his supporters with US sympathizers (Annex N). Russia offers support to the Maduro administration while Colombia supports the US, increasing the issue of regional security instability. This triggers a mobilization of the Venezuelan state security forces and other non-state armed groups, potentially leading to a civil war.

Policy Options

Option 1 – Geopolitical Cohabitation Between Venezuela and the US

This option proposes that the OAS mediate a dialogue between the Venezuelan and US government. Through multi-track diplomacy, the objective is to relax the political tensions between both countries by opening direct communications channels. Given the tension and publicly declared hatred for one another, such meetings will need to remain private, and assurance will need to be provided to the Venezuelan elite that their power will not be threatened. This option will be relevant to the OAS' SSD, the primary political forum, as it aims to promote democracy.¹⁷⁴ The OAS has, within its SSD, experts working in a Special Missions section, which “assists Member States in developing national and local capacities and mechanisms to promote dialogue and consensus-building initiatives; and designing and using institutional tools for dealing with social conflict including the generation of strategies for the medium and long term prevention and management of these conflicts.”¹⁷⁵

The benefits of such an option will affect the Governance, Security and Crime, and Economic Development drivers of fragility as well as Legitimacy and Authority. The primary objective is to regularize the relationship between the US and Venezuela to replace geopolitical ties between Venezuela and its current allies. In improving the relationship with the US, OAS negotiators should involve democratic principles and a discussion on the Inter-American Democratic Charter (IDC)¹⁷⁶ but should refrain from imposing any democratic conditionality. Instead, the OAS can engage in traditional performance measurement practices to measure good governance and political freedom. As demonstrated by the EU's electoral observation mission, the Venezuelan government is willing to accept a certain degree of oversight.^{177,178} Success is measurable through an improvement of the Rule of Law, Voices and Accountability, Political Stability / Absence of Violence, and Global Peace Index indicators, in the next 12 to 24 months.

This option may offer a direct way to address the root causes in governance fragility, but it will have the additional benefit of security and economic improvements. Thus, it will serve to avoid alienating the US geopolitically, and protect Venezuela from scenarios like tightened sanctions or military intervention as described above. Venezuela recently invited international oil companies to invest in the country,¹⁷⁹ the PSUV has participated in political negotiations with the opposition, and the government accepted European electoral observers for its regional elections. This suggests that the Venezuelan elite is not resisting foreign intervention and collaboration, but generally rejecting that from the US. Bringing both states' elite together may develop an accepted form of geopolitical cohabitation, an improvement from the current relationship.

Option 2 – Policy Design and Implementation Training, for Integral Development

This option proposes the establishment of a policy design and implementation training program, offered by OAS experts to Venezuelan public servants and policymakers. It will be relevant to the OAS' SEDI and its mission of “integral development,” which includes measures to strengthen the economic means of OAS members, but also democracy, multidimensional security, and the promotion of human rights.¹⁸⁰ The cost of programming will be relatively low

as the OAS has related programs already in place.¹⁸¹ Venezuela's elite will be interested in participating in the policy training program: this policy will not challenge the elite's hold on the state's institutions, nor will it be tied to democratic transformation conditionality. This context offers an opportunity for the Maduro government and the OAS to define the terms of mutually beneficial collaboration. It may do so by engaging with Venezuela's Ministry of Industries and National Production, or the Ministry of Economy, Finance, and Public Banking, which do not have socio-political mandates. Within a diversified and sustainable economy, pressures of financial liquidity shortages and overdependence on oil revenues will be reduced. Success is measurable through an improvement of the Government Effectiveness, Regulatory Quality, Ease of Doing Business, and State Legitimacy indicators, over the next 24 to 36 months.

The policy will affect the economic, humanitarian and security drivers of fragility. Experts from the OAS will train executive and mid-level policy analysts in the Venezuelan government's Ministry of Planning; Ministry of Industries and National Production; Ministry of Economy, Finance, and Public Banking; Ministry of Ecosocialism and Water; or other pertinent public departments. SEDI's integral development approach centers around intersectoral dialogue, public-private partnerships, and consensus-building in the integration of government policies on sustainable human development.¹⁸² While not a primary objective of such programming, the professional cultural exchange between OAS experts and Venezuelan policymakers may also bring with it additional governance benefits, such as improved service delivery.

This option will help Venezuela cope with the "most likely" scenario described above, where the state's support is needed to stop further humanitarian harm. The OAS will help generate the expertise to diagnose and suggest capacity improvements in the health and economic sectors. Emigration will also likely decrease as a result of this policy as economic opportunity encourages the younger generation to stay. Venezuelans are generally well educated,¹⁸³ and the OAS' Trade and Economic Development section provides support to the areas of micro-, small-, and medium-sized enterprises, and trade.¹⁸⁴ Opening new economic opportunities, through diversification in sustainable fields, can be an opportunity for those forced into informal and illicit activities by necessity, enabling them to transition to the formal economy. Supported by the OAS expertise, the Venezuelan public service will be apt to identify the factors that impede success in the business environment, addressing them effectively and sustainably.

Option 3 – Increased Regional Border Security Cooperation

This option proposes bringing together Colombia, Brazil, and Venezuela to work together to improve border security and reduce the prominence of transnational non-state armed groups. Guyana will also be invited to the discussion, however, due to the territorial dispute between the country and Venezuela, it is unlikely it will participate.¹⁸⁵ This option is relevant to the OAS' SMS, which has a goal to assess, prevent, confront, and respond effectively to threats to security, developing cooperation and capacity-building in member states.¹⁸⁶ The OAS can partner with regional banks to finance border security measures, as it did with the CAF in 2008.¹⁸⁷ The OAS can also partner with domestic and international CSOs to provide grassroots support for people affected by the prominence of non-state armed groups. Despite its rejection of OAS jurisdiction, the Venezuelan government has demonstrated a willingness to re-engage with Colombia and

Brazil over the past year.^{188, 189} Venezuela also has counterterrorism laws¹⁹⁰ that can be leveraged for domestic action should projects resulting from discussions require it.

Currently, the prominence of non-state armed groups is contributing to significant levels of violence and human rights abuses which has decreased the ability of the government to maintain a monopoly on violence and societal trust. It is expected that this option will improve Authority and Legitimacy in Venezuela. This approach will improve the Security and Crime cluster as the removal or reduction of non-state armed groups will be reflected in various indicators, such as Security and Safety, Political Stability / Absence of Violence, and Conflict Intensity over 24 to 36 months. It will also likely lead to improvements in the Environment cluster, which is negatively impacted by unregulated mining, in addition to the Human Development and Demography and Population clusters, which are negatively impacted by human rights violations and resulting migration.

This option will help avoid the infighting between armed forces described in the scenarios above and increase the security of migrants. The degree this option's success largely depends on the participation of the Venezuelan government. While efforts by Guyana, Colombia, and Brazil can help to restrict transnational travel of non-state armed groups, the presence of these groups will likely remain in Venezuela so long as the government leaves them to act independently. As described in the Governance and Security and Crime section above, the Venezuelan government has close political and security ties with various non-state armed groups which will be strained should the government choose to actively work against them. This may lead to an increase in violence between state security forces and these groups. That said, the OAS can leverage its expertise through the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission¹⁹¹ and the Inter-American Terrorism Commission to best address this issue.

Annexes

Annex A: Structural Causes of Fragility in Venezuela

Hybrid Regime / Isomorphic Mimicry

Menocal et al. defines hybrid regimes as “ambiguous systems that combine rhetorical acceptance of liberal democracy, the existence of some formal democratic institutions and respect for a limited sphere of civil and political liberties with essentially illiberal or even authoritarian traits”.¹⁹² The most unstable countries are those with moderate levels of democratic performance and are therefore neither clearly democratic nor conventionally authoritarian.¹⁹³ These regimes coincide with the existence of isomorphic mimicry which “allows organizations (and states) to maintain legitimacy by adopting the forms of successful organizations and states even without their functions.”¹⁹⁴

Hybrid regimes generally have the following characteristics: populist politics, unaccountable ‘strong-man’ leadership, and opaque decision-making processes; lack of credibility and/or trust in formal (democratic) institutions; shallow political participation outside of elections and weak governmental accountability; prioritization of informal institutions (presidentialism, clientelism, and corruption) over formal institutions (which are often viewed as biased or unfair); corruption and clientelism; weak state capacity failing to meet popular expectations for increased accountability; and democratic reversals by elites rather than by popular demand.¹⁹⁵

Capacity Trap

TakeUCHO et al. defines the capacity trap as a situation when “countries have failed to improve state capacity to provide security and social services and that consequently have failed to establish state legitimacy”.¹⁹⁶ States are deemed victims of the capacity trap when they are incapable or unwilling to provide *minimal* public goods and services to its population.¹⁹⁷

Capacity trap states are also more likely to experience isomorphic mimicry, eroding the social contract further.¹⁹⁸ Measures of state capacity include making and enforcing binding rules, monopolising the means of violence, and collecting taxes.¹⁹⁹ Political interference, rent seeking, and lobbying reduce the effectiveness of governance capacity which in turn increases the probability of state fragility.²⁰⁰

Security Gap

Related to the capacity trap. Exists when states are unable or unwilling to provide minimal levels of security (disorder, vandalism, petty crimes) to its population from organized armed groups “transmit[ing] a signal of weakness or indifference to nearby criminals which encourages them to intensify their illegal activities”.²⁰¹ ²⁰² The security gap and failure of the state to hold a monopoly of violence thus results in a series of “ungoverned spaces” which leads to the production of new forms of governance.²⁰³

Rentier State

According to Abulof, rentier regimes “draw on their non-tax revenues to buy [provisional] political legitimacy and stability”; provisional stability, however, only occurs in the absence of acute domestic challenges to the regime, whereas sustainable stability “signifies a publicly

shared commitment to resolving disputes peacefully”.²⁰⁴ Some suggest that the existence of significant non-tax revenues (i.e. oil rents, ODA, remittances, etc.) contributes to the lack of government prioritization on social programs.^{205 206} In differentiating between resource dependence and abundance, the literature also concludes that oil rent dependence “tends to brew social dynamics of dependence on the distributive state, fuelling corruption, nepotism and authoritarian practices”.^{207 208} This is because democratization is known to result in instability, so by preventing such a process, rentier regimes can use oil (and rents more generally) to protect itself from instability. In fact, rents may even “render authoritarian regimes both ‘bullet-proof’ and ‘ballot-proof’ - sheltering these regimes from violence and votes, democratisation’s destabilising effects”.²⁰⁹ Such an interaction between oil rents and political interference, however, reduces government effectiveness and capacity thus increasing the probability of extreme state fragility.²¹⁰

Social Contract

The social contract is an implicit agreement between the state and its citizens that binds society together to coexist within a set of formal and informal rules and institutions.²¹¹ The state fulfills its role through guaranteeing fundamental rights, ensuring a certain quality of life through the provision of public goods and services, while citizens vote and pay taxes.²¹² When deep social fragility makes members of society unable to cooperate within this framework, society is unable to hold its leaders accountable for their actions or inactions.²¹³ The state can then prioritize its supporters through the distribution of material benefits in order to promote regime legitimacy. If political elites monopolize available resources, however, then citizens tend to see corruption.²¹⁴ The social contract is further complicated by the interference of foreign powers, which can incentivize and persuade state behaviour.²¹⁵

Annex B: Government Centralization

Legislative: Before achieving control of the National Assembly electorally in December 2020, the government used its constitutional prerogative to create a parallel legislative body, the Constituent Assembly, to bypass the democratically elected and opposition controlled National Assembly, and enact laws and appoint key personnel to public positions. After gaining control, the government passed legislation increasing the number of seats in the National Assembly by 110 seats.²¹⁶ Because most opposition parties either boycotted the 2020 legislative election or were physically prevented from voting in the election by members of the military²¹⁷, the PSUV won 253 out of 277.²¹⁸

Judiciary: the judicial system is the primary body responsible for upholding the law and is one of the four branches of government designed to check the power of the executive. However, with the passage of the 2004 *Organic Law of the TSJ*, three important changes were made which negatively altered the institution’s processes: it removed the guarantee of tenure thus allowing for the nullification of temporary and provisional judges; it raised the number of judges of the TSJ from 20 to 32; and it changed the vote threshold within the National Assembly for appointment of new judges to a simple majority making it easier to appoint government supporting judges.²¹⁹

As a result, 29 out of the 32 TSJ justices selected for the 2015-2027 term were chosen based on their alignment with the current government's ideology.²²⁰ Human rights are no longer respected, with hundreds of civilians being tried in military court proceedings since 2017.²²¹ In October 2021, the UNHRC fact-finding mission in Venezuela concluded that “had the prosecutorial and judicial actors performed their constitutional role appropriately and fully, they could have either prevented many of the crimes and violations committed against real or perceived opponents of the government, or placed rigorous impediments upon public security and intelligence services’ ability to commit them”.²²²

Citizen’s Branch: comprises the Prosecutor General, Comptroller General, and Ombudsman.²²³ Together, these officials compose the Republican Moral Council which submits actions to the TSJ which they believe to be in violation of the Constitution and is designed to ensure that citizens and government officials obey the law. That said, members of the Council are elected by the National Assembly and are currently members of the PSUV. In 2019, a press release from the Council publicly condemned the statements of President Trump and supported the 2018 federal election results.²²⁴

Electoral National Council: In 2020, the TSJ appointed new members to the CNE without input from the opposition, as required under the Constitution. These new members were either direct supporters of PSUV or generally not aligned with the opposition parties. In September, the US sanctioned Indira Alfonso Izaguirre, the vice-president of the CNE, and other state officials, citing their efforts to prevent free and fair elections.²²⁵ The current President of the CNE is Pedro Calzadilla who is also a known member of the PSUV.

Annex C: State Security Forces

National Bolivarian Armed Forces: the most important elite group needed to secure presidential power. Despite reports of division among troops shortly after the 2018 election, Maduro has continually bribed officials with promotions to ensure their loyalty, including the most recent promotion of 3,000 officers and 12,000 professional troops in July 2021.²²⁶ This is in addition to reports of an “intimate financial relationship between the administration of President Nicolás Maduro and a coterie of generals [referred to as Club 35]”.²²⁷ Maduro has used financial rewards, such as state contracts and the control of the state-run oil company, to ensure their loyalty.²²⁸

The 35 Club: a group of 35 Venezuelan generals that sit on the boards of private companies. Listed on the National Contractor Registry, these companies are authorized to receive lucrative state contracts allowing the generals to directly profit from them.²²⁹ Contracts are awarded with expectations of loyalty to the Maduro Government and maintenance of the political status quo. Under the Venezuelan Constitution and anti-corruption law, however, it is illegal for public officials to use their office for personal benefit, either directly or through a third party.²³⁰

Bolivarian Militia: established through law in 2008 by Chávez to support the military.²³¹ The militia is a reserve force composed of civilian volunteers to supplement the ordinary branches of the Bolivarian National Armed Forces. In 2020, the government claimed to have had over four

million members.²³² In January 2020, the National Constituent Assembly approved legislation that officially made the militia part of the military, providing it with state resources.²³³

PNB: national police force created in 2009 in response to a recommendation by the 2006 National Commission on Police Reform.²³⁴ It, along with the Experimental Security University, were designed to address police corruption, extrajudicial killings, insufficient training, and lack of protocols in existing municipal police forces.²³⁵ While known to work with the military and *Colectivos* to repress social dissent,²³⁶ the PNB was recorded launching a major offensive against *Colectivo* in Caracas in July 2021, marking “the first time in years” this had been done.²³⁷

FAES: a special police unit within the Bolivarian National Police founded by Maduro as a mechanism of social control. Officers in the force have been accused of extortion, torture, and extrajudicial killings such that the FAES has been linked to hundreds of deaths since its creation in 2017.²³⁸ Some of the most notable officers of the FAES belong to *Colectivos*, including FAES Chief Commissioner, José Miguel Domínguez Ramírez.²³⁹

Annex D: Non-State Armed Groups

***Colectivos*:** known as the “Bolivarian Circles” upon creation by Chávez in 2001, these political groups were designed to build up grassroots political support.²⁴⁰ They provided social services and allowed local communities to address socio-economic and political concerns.²⁴¹ They gained prominence in 2002, after opening fire on protestors in 2002 during the failed coup attempt. Now, the primary role of *Colectivos* is to rapidly repress anti-government demonstrations.²⁴² They often operate jointly with the military and the Bolivarian National Police.²⁴³ They receive financial and firearm support from the Venezuelan Government²⁴⁴ and preside over entire neighbourhoods in place of state authorities.²⁴⁵ Despite their support for the Maduro Government, *Colectivos* maintain autonomy from the PSUV and have acted against it.²⁴⁶

Colombian Armed Groups: refers to Colombian left-wing guerilla groups such as the National Liberation Army (ELN), the Popular Liberation Army (EPL), and former members of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC).²⁴⁷ These groups are expanding their presence in Venezuela to more easily carry out drug trafficking operations.²⁴⁸ The Venezuelan government denies any ties to these groups, however, the ELN has claimed it would come to Maduro’s defence if foreign intervention by the US occurred.²⁴⁹

Brazilian Armed Groups: Família do Norte and Comando Vermelho members have been recorded in the south-eastern Venezuela and Colombian border region.²⁵⁰ According to local Colombian law enforcement, shipments of cocaine and coca paste are transported through the Vichada region of Colombia to Venezuela regularly.²⁵¹

Hezbollah Armed Groups: a Lebanese Shia Islamist political party and militant group. Hezbollah gained prominence in Venezuela due to the close relationship between Chávez and President of Iran, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.²⁵² It is primarily engaged in money laundering activities and has connections with a variety of Venezuelan political officials.²⁵³ The Venezuelan government has been accused of employing and providing refuge for Hezbollah members.²⁵⁴

Annex E: Government Restrictions on CSOs

In October 2020, the government issued a resolution requiring international NGOs seeking to operate within Venezuela to register “activities to be carried out in the territory of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela,” and their intentions.²⁵⁵ In November 2020, the government’s Superintendency of Venezuelan Banking Institutions announced that it would require all financial institutions in Venezuela to monitor all business and financial operations carried out by NGOs in the country.²⁵⁶ Most recently, the Venezuelan Ministry of Interior and Justice published a new requirement for the registry of “natural and legal entities” under the Organic Law Against Crime and Terrorism, which requires all NGOs to provide sensitive information regarding their activities, contributions, and beneficiaries.²⁵⁷

Annex F: US Imports from Venezuela

Figure 1: Monthly Venezuela Crude Oil Exports by Destination (January 2017 – April 2019)²⁵⁸

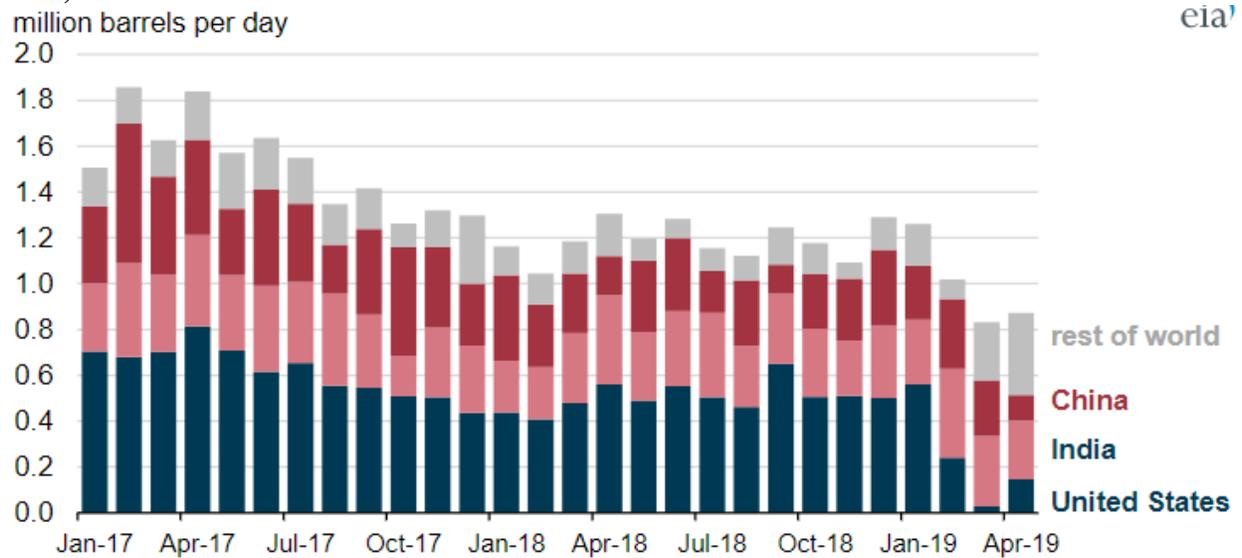


Figure 2: US Imports from Venezuela of Crude Oil and Petroleum Products (Thousand Barrels)²⁵⁹

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1993	43,317	36,275	36,375	39,425	39,187	38,756	42,905	42,875	38,180	39,564	39,661	38,127
1994	37,552	34,283	39,077	39,090	41,363	44,078	40,188	38,897	42,831	42,939	42,959	43,551
1995	44,689	40,294	46,467	40,940	45,894	44,358	47,607	44,929	49,639	45,047	45,215	45,217
1996	47,072	43,346	53,289	51,948	52,704	49,261	52,402	54,223	51,242	55,214	51,846	50,863
1997	50,860	44,841	54,833	50,836	59,723	56,776	53,888	55,624	54,647	61,736	50,672	52,659
1998	49,494	49,389	52,645	52,301	59,234	48,473	55,134	52,792	44,687	60,845	51,233	51,189
1999	50,879	49,017	41,246	52,107	48,806	42,789	49,647	45,872	44,506	41,537	36,662	41,730
2000	42,173	46,400	48,592	46,118	45,503	45,478	44,833	51,499	41,351	49,915	48,954	55,049
2001	55,668	42,009	52,761	48,702	46,948	48,689	52,241	49,152	38,457	46,845	42,687	42,837
2002	44,948	40,435	43,523	34,010	40,674	35,651	49,144	52,664	46,684	49,762	48,735	24,132
2003	13,198	17,171	40,222	48,774	53,858	48,650	39,653	48,499	46,419	48,472	46,859	50,553
2004	48,442	45,382	49,893	47,955	49,682	51,693	46,341	45,697	39,408	48,382	45,966	50,103
2005	50,285	47,877	47,919	47,438	51,082	47,997	50,594	49,620	41,207	38,895	37,754	47,489
2006	48,538	43,470	47,507	42,006	45,567	39,188	45,526	44,617	41,584	42,035	38,421	39,488
2007	37,055	38,087	39,903	42,355	47,184	40,922	43,372	40,924	39,437	43,015	41,429	43,001
2008	39,569	32,810	32,009	35,672	36,304	36,436	41,206	40,459	31,543	36,018	37,071	35,932
2009	41,950	31,905	34,274	26,725	35,364	37,686	30,252	33,178	34,392	29,619	26,205	26,306
2010	28,232	28,285	32,878	28,523	34,635	26,976	33,590	31,669	30,235	28,828	28,245	28,430
2011	31,924	27,701	33,024	30,260	31,482	32,519	29,576	28,328	24,181	28,072	23,008	26,914
2012	23,293	27,088	30,496	27,134	26,683	23,829	33,469	32,478	31,141	29,494	32,275	33,840
2013	28,310	17,205	24,202	25,966	22,896	26,958	28,936	21,021	25,122	23,518	23,869	26,256
2014	21,290	22,592	23,926	25,600	23,922	22,448	27,946	26,874	24,721	21,753	23,994	23,061
2015	20,781	21,921	26,326	24,734	27,834	22,697	25,054	28,959	25,658	24,877	25,281	27,867
2016	21,748	22,431	26,228	23,654	24,400	22,439	28,936	23,962	24,760	22,976	25,461	24,466
2017	23,227	21,022	23,684	25,698	23,763	19,901	21,259	18,786	18,601	17,419	16,727	15,893
2018	16,379	13,210	17,377	18,945	17,315	19,303	19,386	18,345	21,228	17,672	16,889	17,846
2019	19,648	8,096	2,143	3,429	343	7						

Annex G: Examples of Non-Political Institutions Controlled by Government Supporters

The names of officials and their affiliation are based on media reports or Twitter accounts because there is no comprehensive list of government officials publicly available. This list is up to date as of December 2021.

Supreme Tribunal Justice			
Position	Name	Date in Office	Affiliation
President	Maikel José Moreno Pérez	2017	Sanctioned by the US in 2020 for money laundering ²⁶⁰

Citizen's Power			
Position	Name	Date in Office	Affiliation
Attorney General	Tarek William Saab ²⁶¹	2017	PSUV
Comptroller General	Elvis Eduardo Hidrobo Amoroso	2017	PSUV Sanctioned by the US in 2017 ²⁶²
Ombudsman	Alfredo Ruiz Angulo ²⁶³	2017	Sanctioned by Canada for human rights abuses in 2019 ²⁶⁴

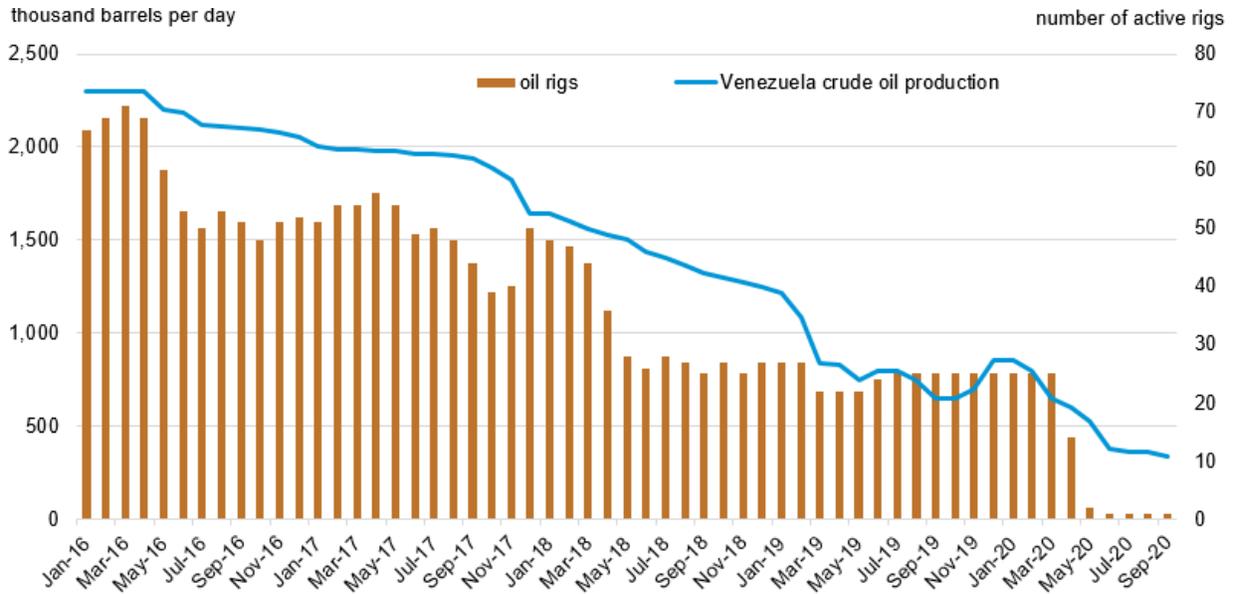
National Electoral Council			
Position	Name	Date in Office	Affiliation
President and Executive Board Member	Pedro Calzadilla ²⁶⁵	2021	PSUV
Executive Board Member	Tania D'Amelio ²⁶⁶	2021	PSUV
Executive Board Member	Alexis Corredor ²⁶⁷	2021	PSUV
Executive Board Member	Enrique Marquez ²⁶⁸	2021	MUD
Executive Board Member	Roberto Picon ²⁶⁹	2021	MUD

State Institutions			
Organization	Name and role	Date in Office	Affiliation
National Revenue Service (SENIAT)	President - José David Cabello Rondón ²⁷⁰	2020	Sanctioned by the US
Central Bank of Venezuela	President - Calixto José Ortega Sánchez ²⁷¹	2018	Unclear, however, he was appointed by the National Constituent Assembly ²⁷²
PDVSA	President - Asdrúbal Chávez ²⁷³	2020	PSUV
National Commission of Telecommunications (CONATEL)	General Commissioner - Jorge Elieser Márquez Monsalve ²⁷⁴	2017	Military; sanctioned by the US for electoral fraud, censorship of media, and corruption in food distribution programs ²⁷⁵ ; also Minister of the Office of the President

Public Security Institutions (also see Annex J for evidence of increase militarization)			
Organization	Name and role	Date in Office	Affiliation
FAES	Chief Commissioner - Jose Miguel Dominguez	2019	Leader of <i>Colectivo</i> “revolucionario” ²⁷⁶
Universidad Nacional Experimental de la Seguridad (Experimental Security University)	Dean - Giuseppe Cacioppo ²⁷⁷	2018	Military - Chavista
Bolivarian National Police	General Commandant - Elio Estrada Paredes ²⁷⁸	2019	Military
Minister of Interiors	Carmen Meléndez ²⁷⁹	2020	Military

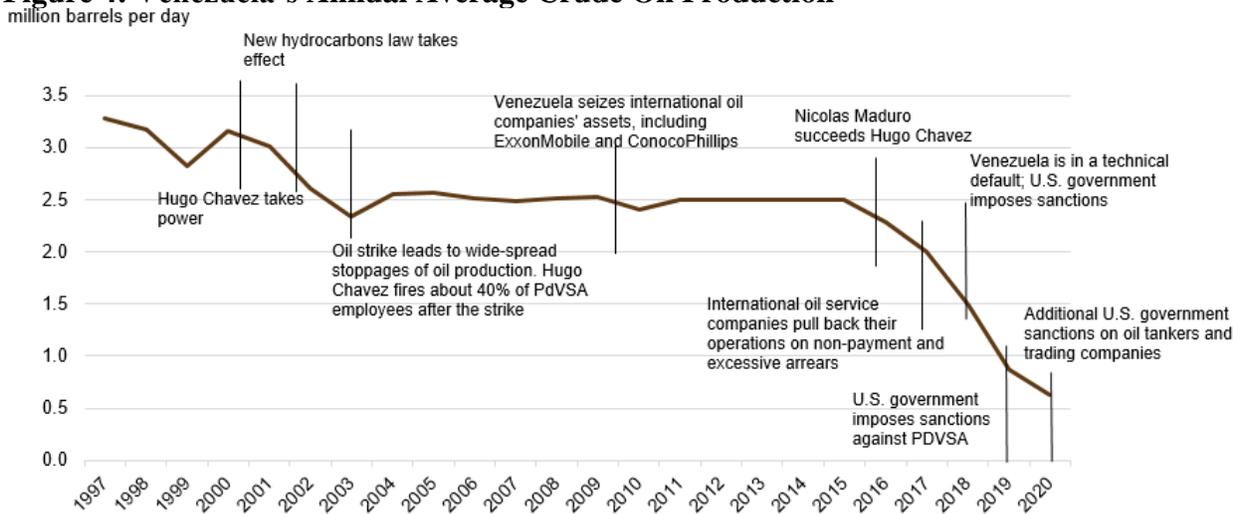
Annex H: Declining Production Capacity of PDVSA

Figure 3: Venezuela’s Crude Oil Production and Total Rig Count²⁸⁰



Source: Venezuela's crude oil production: U.S. Energy Information Administration, Short-Term Energy Outlook October 2020; Rig count: Baker Hughes
 Note: Reported data available through September 2020.

Figure 4: Venezuela’s Annual Average Crude Oil Production²⁸¹



Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration, *International Energy Statistics* and the *October 2020 Short-Term Energy Outlook*. Note: Data for 2020 is calculated as the first six months average of 2020.

Annex I: Illicit Activities in “Ungoverned” Spaces within Venezuela

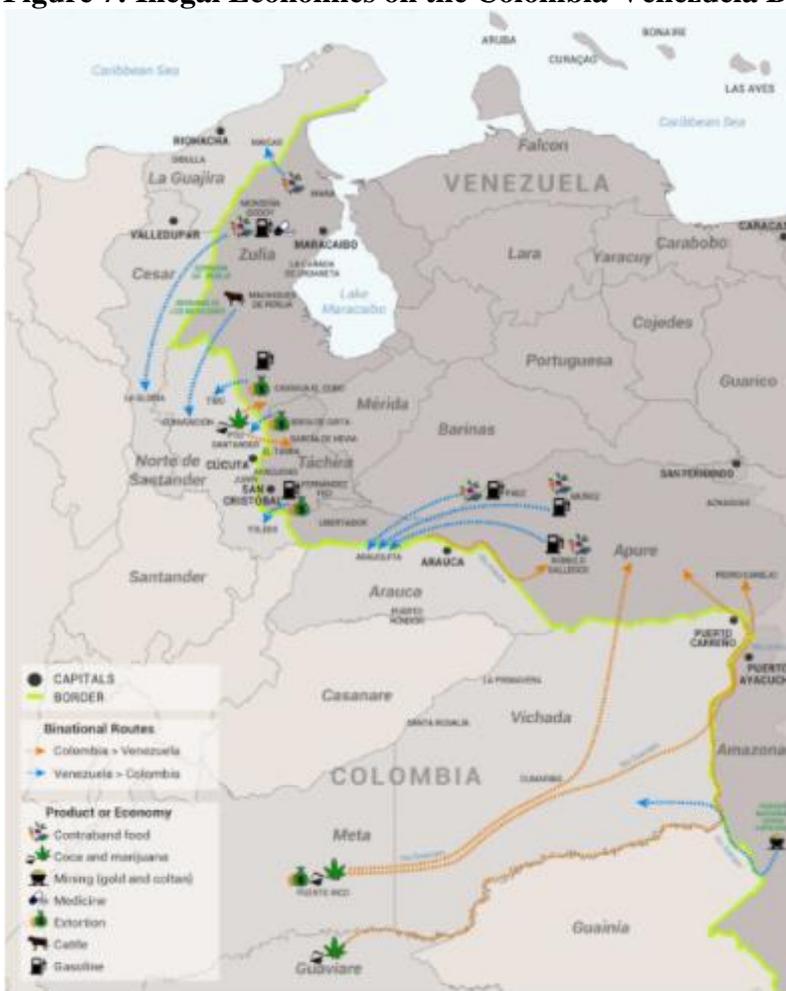
Figure 5: Presence of Armed Groups at the Colombia-Venezuela Border²⁸²



Figure 6: Illegal Mining in the Arco Minero²⁸³



Figure 7: Illegal Economies on the Colombia-Venezuela Border and Their Routes²⁸⁴



Annex J: Heads of the Venezuelan Citizen Security Institution, 1999–2021²⁸⁵

Ministers of Interior

Term	Name	Background	Occupation
1999	Luis Miquilena	Civilian	Businessman
2000	Ignacio Arcaya	Civilian	Lawyer
2000	Luis Alfonso Dávila	Military	Commanding Officer (retired), Army
2001–2002	Luis Miquilena	Civilian	(twice in office)
2002	Ramón Rodríguez Chacín	Military	Ship Captain (discharged), Navy
2002	Diosdado Cabello	Military	Lieutenant (discharged), Army
2003–2004	Lucas Rincón	Military	General in Chief, Army
2004–2007	Jesse Chacón	Military	Lieutenant (discharged), Army
2007	Pedro Carreño	Military	Captain (discharged), Army
2007–2008	Ramón Rodríguez Chacín	Military	(twice in office)
2008–2012	Tarek El Aissami	Civilian	Lawyer
2012–2013	Néstor Reverol	Military	General in Chief, GNB
2013–2014	Miguel Rodríguez Torres	Military	Lieutenant General, Army
2014–2015	Carmen Meléndez	Military	Admiral, Navy
2015–2016	Gustavo González López	Military	General in Chief, Army
2016–2020	Néstor Reverol	Military	(twice in office)
2020–today	Carmen Meléndez	Military	(twice in office)

Deputy Ministers of the Integrated Police System

Term	Name	Background	Occupation
2010–2012	Edgar Barrientos	Police	Police Superintendent, Criminal Investigative Police
2012–2013	Luis Fernández	Police	Chief Superintendent, Criminal Investigative Police
2013–2014	Marcos Rojas Figueroa	Military	Major General, GNB
2014–2016	Giuseppe Cacioppo	Military	Major General, GNB
2016–2020	Edylberto Molina	Military	Major General, GNB
2020–today	José Rojas Eugenio	Military	Major General, GNB

Chiefs of the PNB

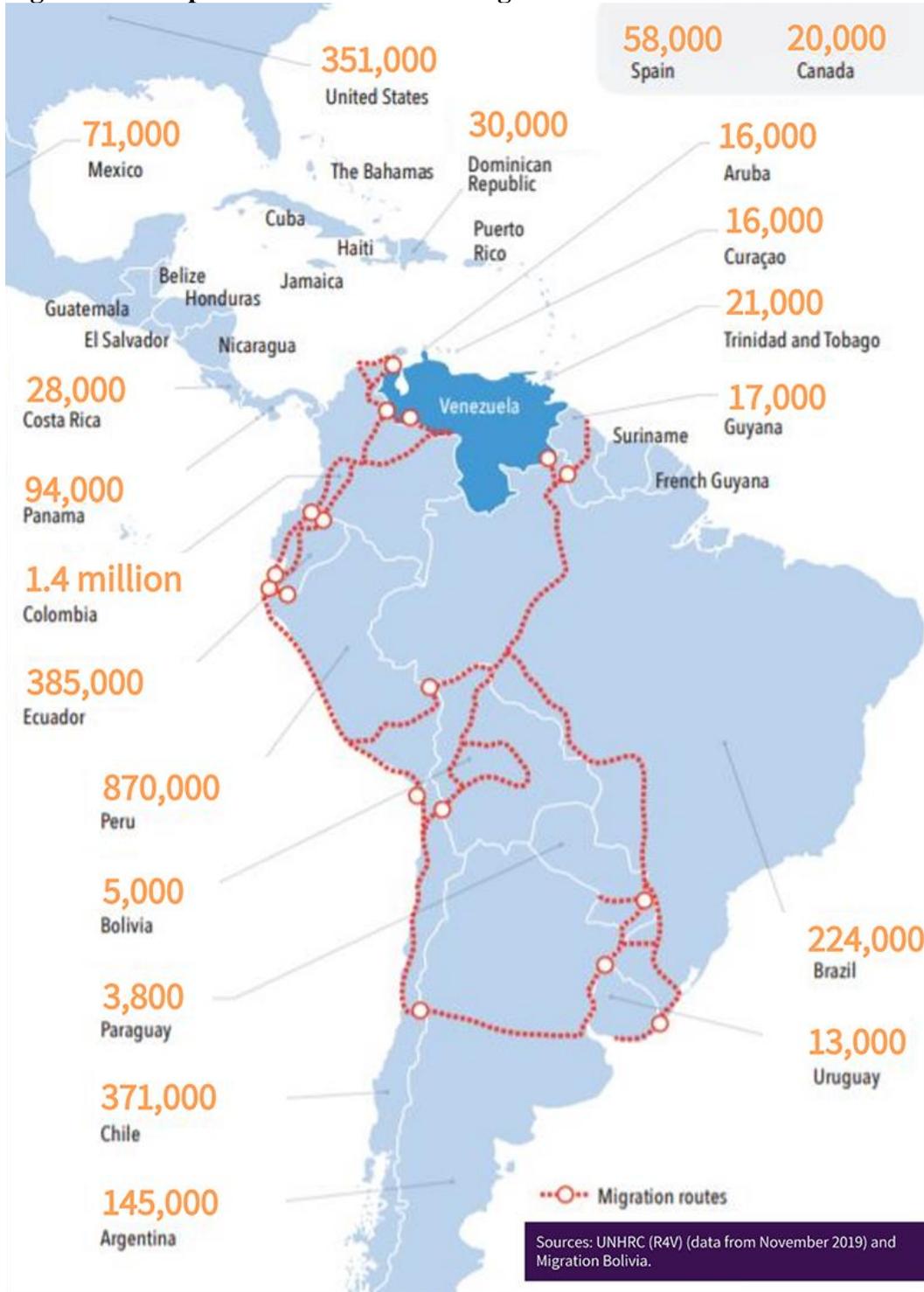
Term	Name	Background	Occupation
2009–2013	Luis Fernández	Police	Chief Superintendent, Criminal Investigative Police
2013–2014	Luis Karabín	Police	Chief Superintendent, Criminal Investigative Police
2014–2015	Manuel Pérez Urdaneta	Military	Brigadier General, Army
2015–2016	Juan Romero Figueroa	Military	Lieutenant General, GNB
2016–2017	Franklin García Duque	Military	Lieutenant General, Army
2017–2019	Carlos Pérez Ampurera	Military	Major General, GNB
2019–today	Elio Estrada Paredes	Military	Brigadier General, GNB

Rectors of the UNES

Term	Name	Background	Occupation
2009–2014	Soraya El Achkar	Civilian	Tenured Professor, Central University of Venezuela
2014–2017	Ronald Blanco La Cruz	Military	Major, Army
2017–2018	José Pinto Gutiérrez	Military	Major General, GNB
2018–today	Giuseppe Cacioppo	Military	Major General, GNB

Annex K: Venezuelan Emigration Destinations

Figure 8: A Map of the Inter-America Migration of Venezuelans in 2019²⁸⁶



Annex L: Definitions of Authority, Legitimacy, and Capacity as per Carment and Samy (2019)²⁸⁷

Authority is defined as the extent to which a state possesses the ability to enact binding legislation over its population, to exercise coercive force over its sovereign territory, to provide core public goods, and to provide a stable and secure environment to its citizens and communities. The definition of authority thus derives in part from Max Weber's definition of the state as having a monopoly on violence.

Legitimacy refers to the extent to which a particular state commands public loyalty to the governing regime and generates domestic support for that government's legislation and policy. Such support must be created through a voluntary and reciprocal arrangement of effective governance and citizenship founded upon broadly accepted principles of government selection and succession that is recognized both locally and internationally.

Capacity considers the extent to which a state can mobilize and employ resources toward productive ends. States that are lacking in capacity are generally unable to provide services to their citizens and cannot respond effectively to sudden shocks such as natural disasters, epidemics, food shortages, or refugee flows.

Annex M: Evidence of Government Prioritization of its Supporters

Evidence of government prioritization is primarily seen in the Security and Crime and Human Development clusters. For instance, in 2017, Maduro used his presidential prerogative to bypass the opposition-led National Assembly and approve a new budget for the military.²⁸⁸ In the same year, he placed the military in charge of the country's national food distribution programs. This allowed the military to import food at an advantageous exchange rate and sell it on the illicit market for hundreds of times the set government price.²⁸⁹ As mentioned in the Human Development cluster, the Ministry of Defense also receives the largest budgetary allocation than any other ministry or institution.²⁹⁰

More recently, while the government negotiated an agreement with the WFP to bring food into the country in 2020, anecdotal evidence suggests that Maduro required food distribution be controlled by the militia, rather than through the UN agency itself.²⁹¹ This is problematic as the militia is known for prioritizing its own members and other government supporters over the most vulnerable.²⁹² In addition, accounts suggest that COVID-19 vaccinations are being limited to supporters of the Maduro administration.²⁹³ This has meant that the government is able to ban its opponents from receiving the vaccine. Thus, beneficiaries are chosen from a loyalty registry that tracks voter allegiance and determines state subsidies.²⁹⁴

Annex N: History of US Intervention in Latin America

Historically, the US has either intervened or been heavily involved in regime changes in several Latin American countries, such as Mexico²⁹⁵, Argentina²⁹⁶, Brazil²⁹⁷, Chile²⁹⁸, Cuba²⁹⁹, Colombia³⁰⁰, Nicaragua³⁰¹, Guatemala³⁰², Panama³⁰³, Dominican Republic³⁰⁴, Grenada³⁰⁵, Haiti³⁰⁶, and other interventions³⁰⁷. Further, President Obama has threatened to strike Syria in 2013 following allegations of the use of chemical weapons.³⁰⁸ In 2018, the Trump Administration, in alliance with the UK and France, ordered a strike on Syria, executing over 100 missiles to attack three government sites.³⁰⁹ While both Republican and Democrat US presidents have previously demonstrated the same way of behaviour, and given the well-documented history of American interventions in regime changes in Latin America, it's not unlikely that Biden would do the same.

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