



तमसो मा ज्योतिर्गमय।

लेगटो 4.0

THE KURUKSHETRA OF DIPLOMACY

LEGATIO 4.0 / STUDY GUIDE SERIES

SPECPOL

SPECPOL

STUDY GUIDE · AGENDA

SPECPOL

UNGA SPECIAL POLITICAL AND DECOLONIZATION COMMITTEE

AGENDA / FOCUS

Political instability and foreign intervention in Latin America, particularly the situation in Venezuela and its impact on regional security.

31 JUL — 02 AUG 2026

DELHI PUBLIC SCHOOL, SILIGURI

THE KURUKSHETRA OF DIPLOMACY

DELEGATE RESEARCH EDITION

LEGATIO 4.0



LEGATIO'26

UNGA-SPEC POL



**POLITICAL INSTABILITY AND FOREIGN
INTERVENTION IN LATIN AMERICA**

RESEARCH GUIDE

Table of Contents

Table of Contents.....	2
Letter from the Executive Board.....	4
About the Committee.....	5
Mandate of UNGA SPECPOL.....	5
Powers and Limitations.....	5
Relevance of the Agenda.....	5
Foreword to the Agenda.....	6
Scope of Deliberation.....	8
Historical Background.....	9
Political Evolution of Venezuela.....	9
Causes of Political Instability.....	10
Drivers of Political Instability.....	10
Major Drivers of Instability.....	11
Governance and Democratic Challenges.....	11
Key Facts.....	11
Economic Collapse.....	12
Economic Spiral.....	12
Humanitarian Crisis.....	12
Humanitarian Indicators.....	12
Migration and Regional Spillover.....	13
Regional Impact Flowchart.....	13
Economic Crisis and Hyperinflation.....	14
Human Rights Concerns.....	14
Social and Political Polarization.....	14
Foreign Intervention and Geopolitical Dynamics.....	15
Forms of Foreign Intervention.....	15
Contemporary Geopolitical Alignment and Strategic Interests.....	15
Strategic Interests of External Powers.....	17
Economic Sanctions.....	17
Diplomatic Recognition.....	18
International Law Considerations.....	18
Regional Security Implications.....	18
International and Regional Response.....	19
United Nations Initiatives.....	19
United Nations Response Framework.....	20
Major UN Agencies and Their Roles.....	20
Regional Organizations.....	20
Regional Institutional Responses.....	21
International Mediation Efforts.....	21

Humanitarian and Development Assistance.....	21
Key Challenges Facing the International Response.....	21
International Legal Framework and Landmark Docs.....	22
Sovereignty and Non-Intervention.....	22
Responsibility to Protect (R2P).....	22
International Human Rights Law.....	22
Relevant UN Charter Provisions and International Conventions.....	23
Recognition of Governments in International Law.....	23
Case Studies.....	25
Venezuela (Primary Case).....	25
Haiti and External Stabilization Missions.....	25
Nicaragua's Political Crisis.....	25
Colombia–Venezuela Border Tensions.....	25
Lessons from Other Latin American Political Crises.....	25
Key Challenges and Areas of Debate.....	26
Sovereignty vs. Humanitarian Intervention.....	26
Legitimacy of Sanctions.....	26
Democratic Governance.....	26
Regional Cooperation.....	26
Balancing Security and Humanitarian Priorities.....	27
Questions a Resolution Should Address.....	27
Core Policy Questions.....	27
Long-Term Regional Stability.....	27
Implementation and Monitoring Mechanisms.....	27
Further Reading, Glossary, and References.....	27
Key Terms.....	27
UN Documents.....	28
Reports from International Organizations.....	28
Academic Sources.....	28
Suggested Reading.....	29
Referential Links.....	29

Letter from the Executive Board

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the **United Nations General Assembly Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee / SPECPOL)**. It is our pleasure to welcome you to this session, where diplomacy, critical thinking, and international cooperation will take center stage as we deliberate on one of the most pressing geopolitical challenges of our time: **Political Instability and Foreign Intervention in Latin America, particularly the situation in Venezuela and its impact on Regional Security**. As we navigate the evolving geopolitical landscape of **2026**, our attention turns to the Western Hemisphere, where prolonged political instability, economic decline, humanitarian distress, and competing geopolitical interests have transformed Venezuela from a domestic political crisis into an issue with profound regional and global implications. The repercussions extend far beyond national borders, influencing migration patterns, border security, transnational organized crime, economic resilience, democratic governance, and the strategic interests of major world powers. The events of early **2026**, including unprecedented geopolitical shifts, external security interventions, intensifying diplomatic rivalries, and severe natural disasters across parts of Latin America, have fundamentally tested the principles of **international law, state sovereignty, non-intervention**, and the **United Nations Charter**.

As delegates of SPECPOL, your responsibility extends beyond defending your nation's foreign policy. You are expected to critically assess the political, legal, humanitarian, and security dimensions of this agenda while appreciating the diverse perspectives of the international community. Your challenge will be to reconcile two enduring principles of international relations: the sovereign equality of states and the collective responsibility of the international community to preserve peace, stability, and human dignity. This agenda demands a nuanced understanding of historical context, regional dynamics, international law, and the interests of both regional and extra-regional actors. We encourage delegates to move beyond simplified narratives and instead examine the interconnected nature of governance, economic resilience, migration, security, humanitarian protection, and international cooperation.

We urge you to approach these deliberations with rigorous research, diplomatic professionalism, intellectual curiosity, and respect for differing viewpoints. Challenge assumptions, substantiate your arguments with credible evidence, and remain committed to finding balanced multilateral solutions that address both immediate concerns and long-term regional stability. On behalf of the Executive Board, we wish you the very best in your preparations and look forward to witnessing thoughtful debate, meaningful diplomacy, and innovative policymaking throughout the committee.

Good luck, and we look forward to welcoming you to the committee.

Aryan Banerjee (Co-Chairperson)

Aakashdeep Sen (Co-Chairperson)

About the Committee

Mandate of UNGA SPECPOL

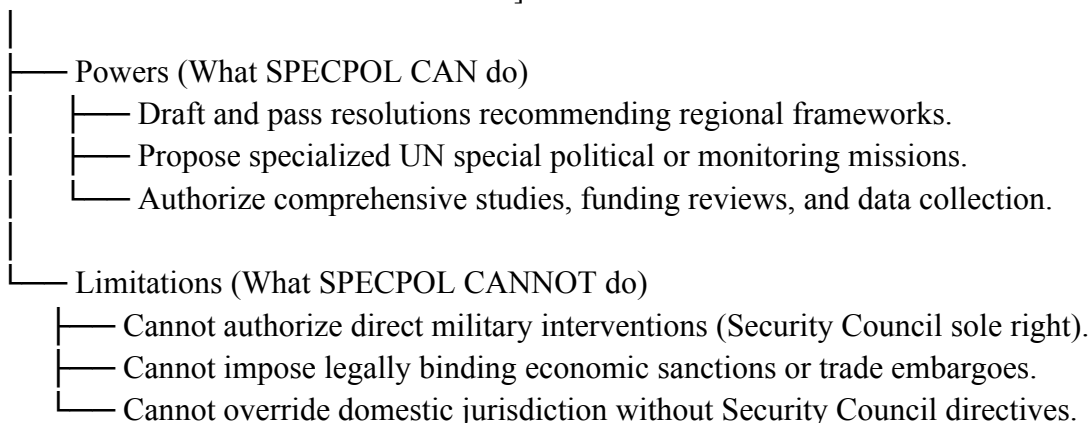
The Fourth Committee of the United Nations General Assembly, known as the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (SPECPOL), handles a broad cluster of political agenda items not covered by the First Committee. While its historical roots are firmly planted in decolonization and the oversight of Non-Self-Governing Territories, SPECPOL's modern mandate covers critical security and political issues. This includes:

- The comprehensive review of peacekeeping operations.
- The regulation of outer space peaceful uses.
- The review of special political missions.
- Addressing asymmetrical security threats, border friction, and political instability that disrupt regional balances but do not yet trigger direct Chapter VII action by the UN Security Council.

Powers and Limitations

SPECPOL operates under the broader framework of the General Assembly. Delegates must remain sharply aware of the committee's specific legal tools:

[UNGA SPECPOL Powers & Limitations]



Relevance of the Agenda

The inclusion of Latin American political instability, anchored by the critical situation in Venezuela on the SPECPOL agenda is driven by the transnational spillover of domestic crises. When a state experiences severe institutional breakdown, the resulting effects do not respect borders. Drug trafficking, the rise of armed non-state actors, extreme migration flows, and foreign geopolitical standoff directly threaten regional security. This places the situation squarely within SPECPOL's mandate to maintain regional stability through political and decolonization frameworks.

Foreword to the Agenda

Latin America has long been characterized by its rich political diversity, yet it has also experienced recurring cycles of political instability, democratic backsliding, economic volatility, and external geopolitical influence. In recent years, these challenges have increasingly transcended national boundaries, transforming domestic political crises into matters of regional and international concern. Among these, the situation in Venezuela has emerged as one of the most significant security and humanitarian challenges confronting the international community. What initially began as a domestic political and economic crisis has evolved into a multidimensional issue encompassing governance, migration, humanitarian assistance, transnational crime, regional diplomacy, and the interpretation of international law. Consequently, the crisis now occupies a central position in discussions concerning international peace, state sovereignty, and collective security.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela possesses the world's largest proven oil reserves and was once among Latin America's wealthiest economies. However, a prolonged combination of political polarization, institutional deterioration, economic mismanagement, declining oil revenues, international sanctions, and governance challenges has resulted in one of the region's most severe humanitarian emergencies. According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), millions of Venezuelans continue to require humanitarian assistance, with the 2026 Humanitarian Response Plan seeking over US\$600 million to assist approximately 5.4 million people, prioritizing the country's most vulnerable populations. Simultaneously, the Global Humanitarian Overview 2026 estimates that nearly 7.9 million people remain in need of humanitarian support, underscoring the persistence and scale of the crisis.

The humanitarian consequences of Venezuela's instability extend well beyond its borders. Over the past decade, millions of Venezuelans have migrated to neighboring countries including Colombia, Brazil, Peru, Ecuador, Chile, Trinidad and Tobago, and other parts of Latin America and the Caribbean, creating one of the largest displacement crises in contemporary history. This unprecedented movement of people has placed considerable pressure on host nations' healthcare systems, education infrastructure, labour markets, housing, and border management capacities. It has also intensified concerns regarding irregular migration, human trafficking, organized criminal networks, and cross-border insecurity, thereby transforming what was once perceived as a domestic governance issue into a regional security challenge demanding multilateral cooperation.

The agenda is further complicated by the increasing involvement of external powers in Venezuela's political landscape. The country has become a focal point of geopolitical competition involving global and regional actors pursuing divergent strategic, economic, and ideological interests. Questions surrounding economic sanctions, diplomatic recognition of

governments, military cooperation, intelligence activities, humanitarian intervention, and the legitimacy of external influence have generated profound divisions within the international community. While some states view external pressure as necessary to restore democratic governance and accountability, others argue that such measures violate the principles of sovereignty and non-intervention enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. These competing interpretations continue to shape debates within the General Assembly and other United Nations bodies regarding the permissible limits of international action during domestic political crises.

The relevance of this agenda has become even more pronounced in 2026, following significant developments that have further altered the regional security environment. The United Nations has repeatedly emphasized the importance of respecting international law and the UN Charter amid heightened tensions surrounding Venezuela, while simultaneously calling upon all stakeholders to pursue peaceful dialogue, protect civilians, and facilitate humanitarian assistance. The humanitarian situation has been further exacerbated by devastating earthquakes that struck northern Venezuela in June 2026, compounding existing vulnerabilities by damaging critical infrastructure, displacing thousands of civilians, and increasing the demand for international humanitarian relief. The disaster has highlighted how natural hazards can magnify pre-existing political and humanitarian crises, reinforcing the necessity for coordinated multilateral responses that integrate disaster relief, development, and conflict prevention.

For the United Nations General Assembly Special Political and Decolonization Committee (SPECPOL), this agenda represents far more than a discussion on a single state's internal affairs. It encapsulates broader questions concerning the evolving nature of international peace and security in an increasingly interconnected world. Delegates must consider the delicate balance between respecting national sovereignty and addressing humanitarian imperatives, the legality and effectiveness of foreign intervention and sanctions, the responsibilities of regional organizations, and the role of preventive diplomacy in mitigating regional instability. They must also examine how prolonged political crises can generate transnational consequences affecting migration, organized crime, economic resilience, environmental security, and regional cooperation.

Ultimately, the committee is tasked with exploring solutions that uphold the fundamental principles of the United Nations while responding effectively to the realities of modern geopolitical crises. The challenge before delegates is not merely to assess Venezuela's current circumstances but to develop forward-looking, legally grounded, and politically feasible recommendations that promote sustainable peace, democratic governance, humanitarian protection, and regional stability throughout Latin America. In doing so, delegates will confront one of the defining questions of contemporary international relations: how the international community can reconcile the principles of sovereignty, non-intervention, and self-determination with its collective responsibility to preserve peace, security, and human dignity in the face of complex and interconnected crises.

Scope of Deliberation

Delegates are tasked with addressing the situation through a specialized political lens. The scope of your debate must encompass:

1. Evaluating the legal boundaries of foreign intervention versus state sovereignty under the UN Charter.
2. Formulating political frameworks to manage the cross-border migration of nearly 8 million displaced persons.
3. Developing multilateral strategies to neutralize transnational criminal syndicates taking advantage of the power vacuum.
4. Designing institutional and electoral support mechanisms to restore long-term democratic stability.

Delegates are encouraged to assess the evolving role of **regional organizations** such as the **Organization of American States (OAS)**, **Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC)**, **MERCOSUR**, and **CARICOM** in conflict prevention, diplomatic mediation, election observation, and humanitarian coordination. Consideration should also be given to strengthening cooperation between these regional bodies and the United Nations to ensure complementary and coordinated responses.

The committee should further deliberate on the geopolitical implications of growing involvement by external powers in Latin America. Competing political, economic, and strategic interests have increasingly transformed Venezuela into an arena of global power competition. Delegates should examine how foreign partnerships, sanctions, military cooperation, investment, and diplomatic recognition influence regional stability while remaining consistent with the principles of sovereignty and non-intervention under the UN Charter.

Another important aspect of the debate is the relationship between **humanitarian assistance, economic recovery, and political stabilization**. Delegates should explore mechanisms that facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid, strengthen institutional resilience, support post-crisis economic reconstruction, and enhance disaster preparedness, recognizing that sustainable peace depends upon addressing both immediate humanitarian needs and long-term structural vulnerabilities.

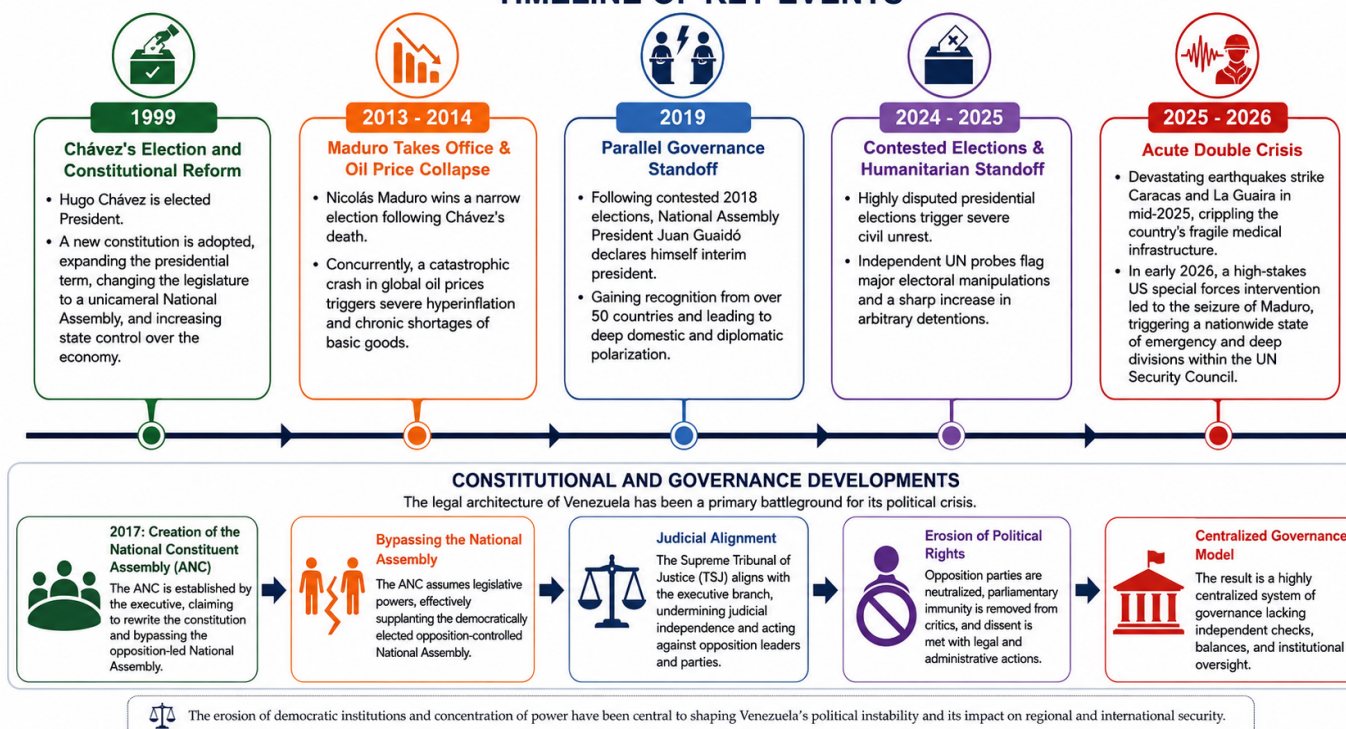
Finally, delegates should focus on developing practical and consensus-driven recommendations that strengthen preventive diplomacy, confidence-building measures, regional security cooperation, and democratic governance. Proposals should be politically feasible, legally grounded, and capable of addressing the interconnected challenges of migration, organized crime, humanitarian protection, institutional reform, and sustainable peace across Latin America.

Historical Background

Political Evolution of Venezuela

Below is a timeline that illustrates the gradual evolution of Venezuela's political crisis from institutional reform to a multidimensional regional security challenge. The election of **Hugo Chávez in 1999** marked the beginning of the Bolivarian Revolution, accompanied by a new constitution that expanded presidential powers, restructured the legislature into a unicameral National Assembly, and increased state control over key sectors of the economy. Following Chávez's death, **Nicolás Maduro assumed office in 2013**, inheriting an economy heavily dependent on oil revenues; the subsequent collapse in global oil prices during **2014** triggered severe hyperinflation, widespread shortages of essential goods, and a deep economic recession. Political divisions intensified in **2019** when **Juan Guaidó**, President of the National Assembly, declared himself interim president after disputing the legitimacy of the 2018 presidential election, resulting in parallel claims to executive authority and a sharp diplomatic divide within the international community. The **2024 presidential election** further deepened the crisis as allegations of electoral irregularities, restrictions on opposition participation, and widespread human rights concerns led to renewed domestic unrest and international criticism. Entering **2025–2026**, Venezuela continued to confront overlapping political, humanitarian, and economic challenges, compounded by natural disasters and heightened geopolitical tensions. Throughout this period, constitutional developments played a central role in shaping the crisis. The establishment of the **National Constituent Assembly (ANC)** in **2017** effectively sidelined the opposition-controlled National Assembly, while the **Supreme Tribunal of Justice (TSJ)** increasingly consolidated executive authority by limiting legislative powers, removing parliamentary immunity from opposition lawmakers, and restricting political participation. Collectively, these developments contributed to the

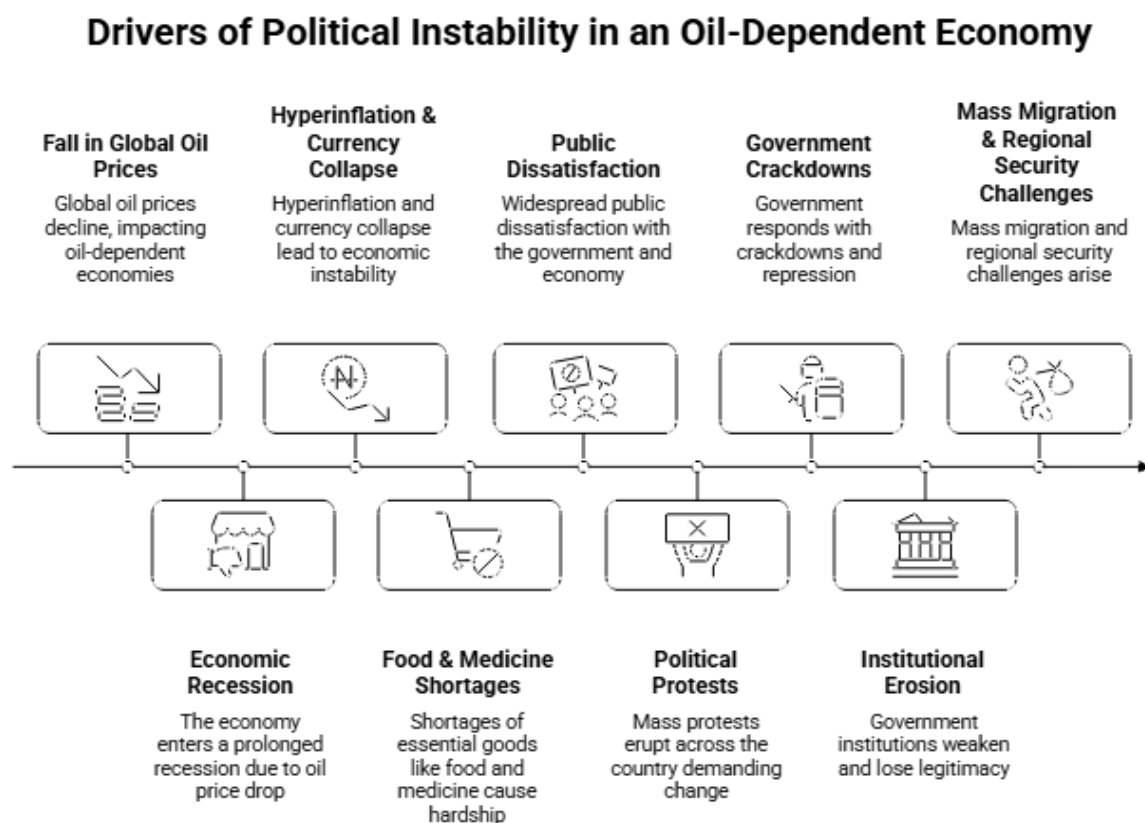
TIMELINE OF KEY EVENTS



Causes of Political Instability

Political instability in Venezuela has emerged from the interaction of political, economic, institutional, social, and geopolitical factors over several decades. Rather than functioning independently, these factors reinforce one another, creating a self-perpetuating cycle that has weakened governance, reduced economic resilience, intensified humanitarian suffering, and increased regional insecurity. According to the **United Nations**, nearly **7.9 million Venezuelans** have left the country, making it one of the world's largest displacement crises, while millions more continue to require humanitarian assistance. The crisis therefore extends beyond domestic governance and increasingly affects migration, border management, organized crime, and regional diplomacy across Latin America.

Drivers of Political Instability



Major Drivers of Instability

Factor	Key Issues	Regional Consequences
Political	Democratic backsliding, institutional erosion, disputed elections	Diplomatic polarization
Economic	Oil dependency, recession, inflation	Poverty, unemployment
Humanitarian	Food insecurity, healthcare collapse	Refugee crisis
Security	Organized crime, armed groups	Border instability
International	Sanctions, geopolitical rivalry	Divisions within multilateral institutions

Governance and Democratic Challenges

Institutional weakening has been one of the most significant contributors to Venezuela's political instability. Since the early 2000s, growing executive influence over the judiciary, electoral institutions, and public administration has raised persistent concerns regarding the separation of powers and constitutional accountability. The creation of the National Constituent Assembly (ANC) in 2017 effectively bypassed the opposition-controlled National Assembly, while the **OHCHR** has repeatedly documented arbitrary detentions, restrictions on civic space, excessive use of force against protesters, and limitations on political participation. These developments have contributed to declining public trust in democratic institutions and deepened political polarization.

Key Facts

Indicator	Evidence
Opposition-led National Assembly elected	2015
National Constituent Assembly established	2017
Parallel presidential claims	2019

Continuing concerns	Electoral credibility, judicial independence, civic freedoms
---------------------	--

Economic Collapse

Despite possessing the world's largest proven oil reserves, Venezuela remains overwhelmingly dependent on petroleum exports, which historically accounted for around **90–95% of export earnings**. This lack of diversification left the economy highly vulnerable to fluctuations in international oil prices. When oil prices collapsed in 2014, declining government revenues, falling oil production, exchange-rate distortions, and fiscal imbalances triggered one of the most severe peacetime economic contractions in modern history. Hyperinflation, shortages of essential goods, and declining purchasing power significantly worsened living conditions across the country.

Economic Spiral

Oil-dependent Economy



Global Oil Price Collapse (2014)



Reduced Government Revenue



Currency Instability



Hyperinflation



Declining Living Standards



Political Instability

Humanitarian Crisis

Economic decline rapidly evolved into a humanitarian emergency. According to **UNHCR** and humanitarian partners, approximately **7.6–7.9 million people** inside Venezuela require humanitarian assistance, while access to food, healthcare, education, clean water, and essential medicines remains constrained in many regions. Humanitarian organizations continue to support nutrition programmes, healthcare delivery, and protection services, but funding shortfalls have limited the scale of assistance available.

Humanitarian Indicators

Indicator	Latest Available Estimate
Venezuelans displaced internationally	≈7.9 million
Hosted within Latin America & Caribbean	≈6.9 million
People requiring humanitarian assistance	≈7.6 million
Recognized refugees	395,000+
Asylum seekers	1.3 million+

Migration and Regional Spillover

The Venezuelan displacement crisis has become the largest in the modern history of Latin America. Colombia, Peru, Brazil, Ecuador, Chile, and other neighboring states have accommodated millions of refugees and migrants, placing significant pressure on public services, labour markets, housing, and border infrastructure. The United Nations notes that many displaced Venezuelans continue to experience poverty, food insecurity, and difficulties accessing documentation, increasing their vulnerability to exploitation and irregular migration.

Regional Impact Flowchart

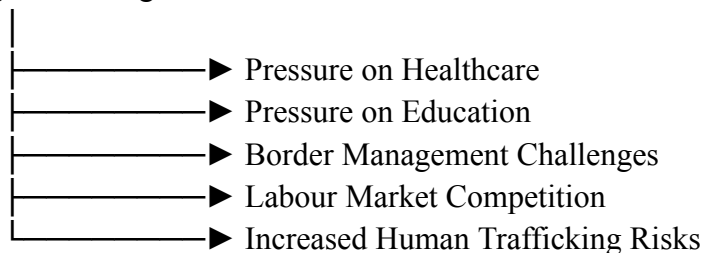
Political Crisis



Humanitarian Emergency



Large-scale Migration



Economic Crisis and Hyperinflation

Economic Driver	Mechanism of Action	Systemic Impact
Monopoly on Oil Exports	Petostate model relying on oil for 95% of export earnings.	Total vulnerability to global price fluctuations; lack of industrial diversification.
Currency Printing	Unbacked monetary expansion to cover massive public deficits.	Triggers systemic hyperinflation, destroying local purchasing power.
Expropriation Policy	State seizure of agricultural, manufacturing, and logistics companies.	Destroys private sector confidence, leading to severe domestic production deficits.

Human Rights Concerns

According to updates from the UN Human Rights Council and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, the human rights situation remains critical. Independent fact-finding missions have detailed patterns of:

- **Arbitrary Detentions:** Systematic arrests of political dissidents, journalists, and human rights defenders.
- **Enforced Disappearances:** Brief or extended periods of unacknowledged detentions by state security organs.
- **Militarized Crackdowns:** The declaration of states of emergency restricting the freedom of movement and assembly, often utilizing specialized security forces to suppress community protests.

Social and Political Polarization

The country remains deeply fractured along socio-political lines. The political discourse has been highly weaponized, framing the situation as a zero-sum conflict between anti-imperialist sovereignty and democratic liberation. This deep polarization has made domestic compromise incredibly difficult, destroying the middle ground required for peaceful political transitions and dividing families, communities, and national institutions.

Foreign Intervention and Geopolitical Dynamics

Forms of Foreign Intervention

Venezuela has become a modern arena for geopolitical competition, experiencing multiple forms of external influence:

- **Economic Intervention:** The imposition of unilateral primary and secondary economic sanctions designed to restrict the state's financial transactions.
- **Covert & Direct Military Actions:** Direct interventions, such as the early 2026 US special forces operation inside Venezuelan territory, which have tested the boundaries of international law.
- **Asymmetric Alliances:** The deployment of foreign private military contractors, intelligence sharing, and defensive military hardware by external allies to protect state infrastructure.

Contemporary Geopolitical Alignment and Strategic Interests

The political crisis in Venezuela has evolved beyond a domestic constitutional dispute into one of the most significant theatres of strategic competition in the Western Hemisphere. Although the immediate drivers of instability originate within Venezuela's internal political, economic, and institutional structures, the persistence and internationalization of the crisis have largely been shaped by the competing geopolitical objectives of both regional and extra-regional powers. Consequently, understanding contemporary foreign involvement requires an examination not only of the actions undertaken by external states but also of the strategic doctrines, economic interests, security calculations, and ideological considerations that inform their foreign policy.

For the United States, Venezuela occupies a uniquely significant position within the Western Hemisphere due to both geographical proximity and long-standing strategic doctrine. Since the articulation of the Monroe Doctrine in 1823, successive American administrations have maintained that the Western Hemisphere constitutes a region of vital national interest where external intervention by rival great powers should be actively discouraged. Although the Monroe Doctrine no longer serves as a formal legal instrument, its strategic principles continue to influence American foreign policy towards Latin America. Washington has consistently framed the Venezuelan crisis as a threat to regional democratic governance, hemispheric security, energy stability, and migration management. Consequently, successive administrations have employed a combination of diplomatic isolation, targeted sanctions, financial restrictions, electoral monitoring initiatives, and humanitarian assistance to encourage political transition while simultaneously limiting the influence of rival powers.

Conversely, the Russian Federation has approached Venezuela primarily through the lens of strategic balancing against Western influence. Russian engagement extends beyond diplomatic support and encompasses military cooperation, defence exports, intelligence

sharing, energy investments, and financial assistance designed to preserve the Maduro administration as a regional strategic partner. Russian foreign policy has consistently emphasized the principles of sovereignty, non-intervention, and opposition to externally imposed regime change, particularly following precedents established in Kosovo, Iraq, Libya, and Syria. Moscow frequently characterizes unilateral sanctions and external intervention as violations of international law and maintains that constitutional disputes should be resolved exclusively through domestic political processes.

China's engagement differs considerably from that of both the United States and Russia. Rather than emphasizing ideological alignment, Beijing has pursued a pragmatic strategy centred upon economic security, long-term investment protection, and resource access. Venezuela possesses one of the world's largest proven crude oil reserves, making it an important component of China's broader strategy to diversify energy imports while simultaneously expanding its economic presence throughout Latin America under the Belt and Road Initiative. Chinese financial institutions have extended substantial loans to Venezuela over the past two decades, frequently secured through future oil deliveries. As a result, Beijing's primary objective has been the preservation of sufficient political stability to ensure debt repayment, protect infrastructure investments, and maintain uninterrupted commercial relations irrespective of domestic political outcomes.

Iran has similarly expanded its strategic partnership with Venezuela as part of a broader effort to counter international isolation imposed through Western sanctions. Cooperation between Caracas and Tehran encompasses energy production, refinery rehabilitation, fuel exports, industrial cooperation, aviation connectivity, and technical assistance. This partnership demonstrates how states experiencing comparable sanctions regimes often develop alternative economic networks designed to reduce dependence upon Western financial institutions. Although considerably smaller than the involvement of Russia or China, Iranian engagement illustrates the emergence of sanctions-resistant partnerships that increasingly characterize contemporary multipolar diplomacy.

Regional actors exhibit considerably greater variation in their approaches. Colombia has traditionally regarded instability within Venezuela as an immediate national security concern due to extensive migration flows, cross-border criminal activity, insurgent sanctuaries, and humanitarian pressures along the shared frontier. Consequently, Colombian governments have frequently advocated stronger multilateral responses while simultaneously balancing humanitarian obligations toward displaced Venezuelan populations. Brazil, by contrast, has historically adopted a more cautious approach, emphasizing dialogue, regional coordination, and the avoidance of direct military confrontation despite growing concerns regarding border security and migration management.

Mexico has consistently defended the principle of non-intervention through the Estrada Doctrine, maintaining that foreign governments should refrain from judging the legitimacy of other sovereign administrations. This doctrine has frequently placed Mexico at odds with states advocating stronger diplomatic pressure against Caracas. Similarly, Bolivia, Cuba, and

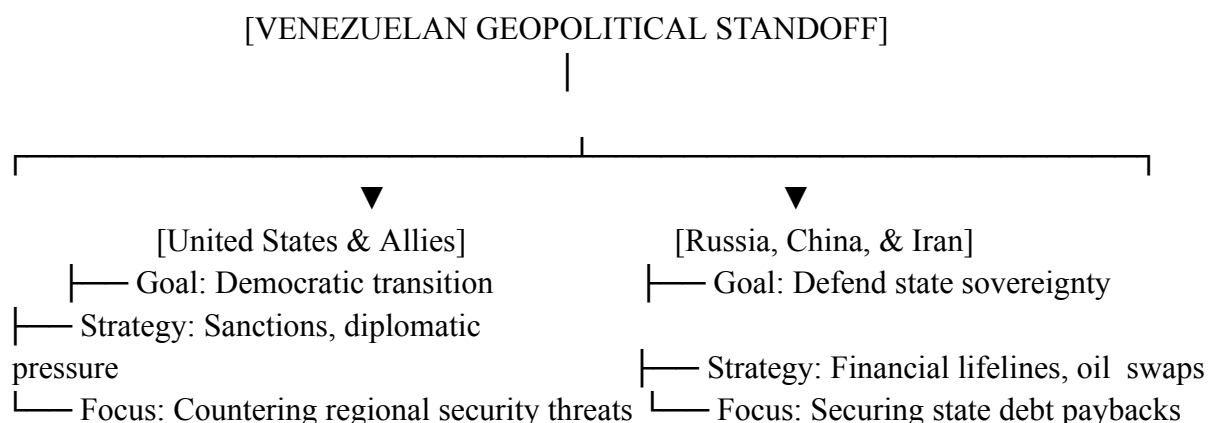
Nicaragua have generally supported the Venezuelan government, emphasizing sovereignty, anti-imperialism, and resistance to unilateral sanctions.

The European Union occupies an intermediate position. While consistently criticizing democratic backsliding, electoral irregularities, and documented human rights violations, the European Union has generally favoured negotiated political settlements supported by targeted sanctions rather than comprehensive economic isolation or military intervention. This reflects the broader European preference for preventive diplomacy, mediation, and institution-building over coercive measures.

The geopolitical fragmentation surrounding Venezuela illustrates a broader transformation within the contemporary international system. Increasing strategic competition among major powers has diminished consensus regarding humanitarian intervention, democratic promotion, sanctions policy, and multilateral conflict resolution. Consequently, debates within the United Nations increasingly reflect not only divergent interpretations of international law but also competing visions regarding the future distribution of global political influence. For delegates within SPECPOL, recognizing these broader geopolitical dynamics is essential, as state positions concerning Venezuela frequently derive less from the specific circumstances of the crisis itself than from long-standing strategic doctrines, alliance structures, and national interests that extend far beyond Latin America.

Strategic Interests of External Powers

The geopolitical alignment over Venezuela divides major global powers along clear strategic lines:



Economic Sanctions

The deployment of economic sanctions has had a profound impact on the country's trajectory. While design frameworks aimed to target individual human rights abusers, broad sectoral sanctions on the state oil company (PDVSA) restricted the country's ability to import spare parts, refine gasoline, and access international financial clearings. UN humanitarian offices note that while economic mismanagement laid the groundwork for the collapse, broad sanctions have exacerbated the humanitarian crisis by limiting the state's capacity to fund and rebuild critical public infrastructure.

Diplomatic Recognition

The phenomenon of parallel diplomatic recognition has created major challenges within international organizations. The split recognition of representation—where some Member States recognize the executive in Caracas while others recognize opposition frameworks—has led to diplomatic standoffs within the UN General Assembly, affecting credentials committees and complicating the delivery of coordinated multilateral aid.

International Law Considerations

The geopolitical actions in Venezuela raise serious questions regarding the UN Charter. The UN Secretary-General has repeatedly emphasized **Article 2(4) of the UN Charter**, which strictly prohibits the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state. The deployment of unilateral military force or state-led renditions without explicit UN Security Council authorization sets a highly controversial precedent in modern international relations.

Regional Security Implications

The Venezuelan crisis has evolved beyond a domestic political emergency into a multidimensional regional security challenge with far-reaching humanitarian, economic, and geopolitical consequences. The prolonged deterioration of governance, combined with economic collapse and institutional weakening, has generated cross-border instability affecting migration, border security, organized crime, illicit economies, and maritime security across Latin America and the Caribbean. As a result, neighboring states have increasingly shifted from viewing the crisis as a humanitarian concern to treating it as a significant regional security issue requiring coordinated multilateral responses.

One of the most visible consequences has been the **refugee and migration crisis**, now regarded as one of the largest displacement emergencies in the world. According to the **United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)** and the **International Organization for Migration (IOM)**, more than **7.9 million Venezuelans** have left the country, with over **6.5 million** residing in Latin America and the Caribbean. Colombia alone hosts nearly three million Venezuelans, while Peru, Brazil, Ecuador, and Chile continue to accommodate substantial migrant populations. This unprecedented movement has placed immense pressure on healthcare systems, education, housing, labour markets, and public finances while increasing the need for regional burden-sharing and coordinated migration policies.

The crisis has also significantly undermined **border security**, particularly along the **2,200-kilometre Colombia–Venezuela border** and the frontier with Brazil. Weak state presence, porous borders, and limited bilateral security cooperation have enabled armed groups and criminal organizations to expand their influence within border regions. These areas have become hubs for irregular migration, weapons trafficking, fuel smuggling, and cross-border violence, complicating efforts by national governments to maintain territorial control and safeguard civilian populations.

Institutional fragility has further facilitated the expansion of **transnational organized crime**, making criminal governance a growing regional concern. Organizations such as **Tren de Aragua** have established extensive cross-border operations involving human trafficking, migrant smuggling, extortion, cyber-enabled crime, identity document forgery, and money laundering. The exploitation of vulnerable migrants along irregular routes, including the **Darién Gap**, has intensified humanitarian risks while challenging the law enforcement capacities of host countries. Simultaneously, illegal gold mining in the **Orinoco Mining Arc** has become closely linked with narcotics trafficking and illicit financial networks, allowing criminal groups to diversify revenue sources beyond the traditional drug trade.

The presence of **armed non-state actors**, including dissident factions of the **Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC)** and the **National Liberation Army (ELN)**, has further destabilized border regions. These groups exploit weak governance by controlling illicit mining sites, trafficking corridors, and smuggling networks, frequently engaging in violent competition with rival criminal organizations. Their activities undermine the sovereignty of both Venezuela and its neighbors while contributing to broader regional insecurity. Beyond land borders, the crisis has increasingly affected **maritime security** across the Caribbean, with rising incidents of migrant smuggling, narcotics trafficking, illegal fishing, and piracy compelling states such as **Trinidad and Tobago, Aruba, Curaçao, and Bonaire** to strengthen maritime surveillance and border enforcement. Collectively, these interconnected challenges demonstrate that the Venezuelan crisis is no longer solely a national political issue but a comprehensive regional security concern demanding sustained multilateral cooperation, intelligence sharing, humanitarian coordination, and strengthened regional governance mechanisms.

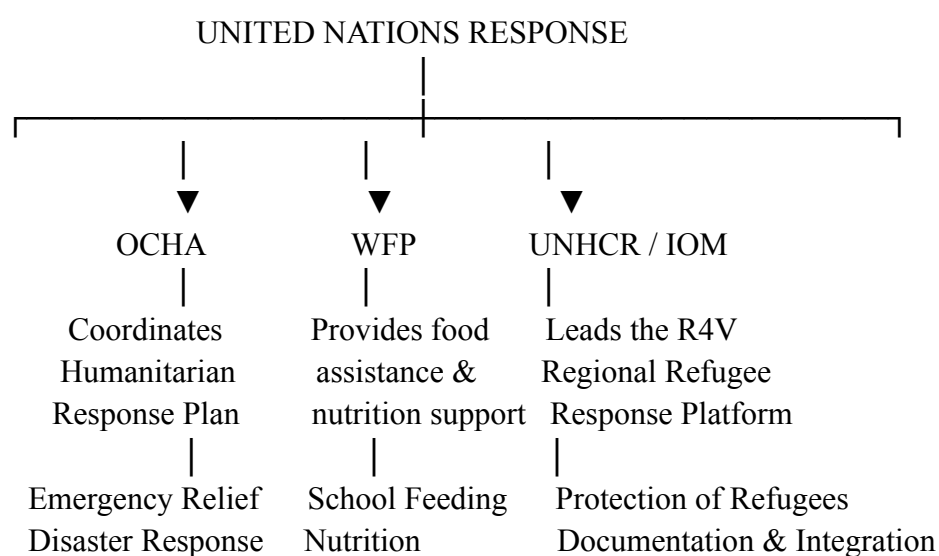
International and Regional Response

The Venezuelan crisis has prompted one of the most extensive multilateral responses in Latin America, involving the United Nations, regional organizations, humanitarian agencies, and international mediators. Despite significant humanitarian and diplomatic engagement, responses have often been fragmented due to differing interpretations of sovereignty, democratic legitimacy, and the appropriate role of external actors. Consequently, while humanitarian assistance has expanded considerably, achieving a unified political solution has remained a persistent challenge.

United Nations Initiatives

The United Nations maintains a comprehensive, multi-agency presence in Venezuela and across neighbouring countries, focusing on humanitarian relief, refugee protection, migration management, and disaster response. Through coordinated action, UN agencies continue to provide food assistance, healthcare, education, protection services, and support for displaced populations while advocating for peaceful political dialogue and respect for international humanitarian law.

United Nations Response Framework



Major UN Agencies and Their Roles

Agency	Primary Responsibility	Key Contributions
OCHA	Humanitarian coordination	Leads the Humanitarian Response Plan and emergency coordination
UNHCR	Refugee protection	Supports refugee registration, legal protection and resettlement
IOM	Migration management	Assists migrant integration and voluntary return programmes
WFP	Food security	School feeding, emergency food assistance and nutrition programmes
UNICEF	Child protection	Education, immunization and child welfare programmes
WHO / PAHO	Public health	Healthcare support, disease surveillance and medical supplies

Regional Organizations

Regional organizations have adopted markedly different approaches, reflecting broader political divisions within Latin America. While some organizations have prioritized democratic accountability and electoral legitimacy, others have emphasized state sovereignty, non-intervention, and political dialogue. These differing approaches have limited the emergence of a unified regional strategy.

Regional Institutional Responses

Organization	Position on Venezuela	Primary Focus
OAS	Critical of the Maduro government	Democratic governance and constitutional order
CELAC	Neutral and dialogue-oriented	Sovereignty, regional cooperation and non-intervention
MERCOSUR	Suspended Venezuela	Enforcement of the bloc's democratic clause
CARICOM	Balanced approach	Peaceful dialogue, humanitarian concerns and international law

International Mediation Efforts

Since 2016, multiple mediation initiatives have sought to facilitate negotiations between the Venezuelan government and opposition groups. The **Norway-facilitated Mexico City Dialogue** and subsequent **Barbados Agreement (2023)** established frameworks addressing electoral guarantees, humanitarian cooperation, sanctions relief, and political participation. While these initiatives have produced limited confidence-building measures, implementation has remained inconsistent due to political mistrust, disagreements over sanctions, and differing interpretations of previous commitments. Consequently, mediation efforts continue to face significant challenges despite sustained international support.

Humanitarian and Development Assistance

Humanitarian assistance remains essential for addressing Venezuela's prolonged socio-economic crisis. According to the **United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)**, millions continue to require support in healthcare, food security, water and sanitation, education, and protection services. However, humanitarian operations remain significantly underfunded, with recent response plans receiving only a fraction of the required financial resources. Funding shortfalls have constrained the delivery of essential services, reduced operational capacity for humanitarian agencies, and increased pressure on neighbouring countries hosting displaced Venezuelans. These limitations highlight the growing need for sustained international financing, stronger regional cooperation, and long-term development strategies that complement immediate humanitarian relief.

Key Challenges Facing the International Response

Political Polarization



Fragmented International Consensus



International Legal Framework and Landmark Docs

Sovereignty and Non-Intervention

The foundational legal defense of the Venezuelan state rests on the principle of state sovereignty, anchored in **Article 2(7) of the UN Charter**, which strictly prohibits the United Nations from intervening in matters that are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state. This is supported by the landmark **UN General Assembly Resolution 2131 (XX)** (*Declaration on the Inadmissibility of Intervention in the Domestic Affairs of States*), which asserts that no state has the right to intervene, directly or indirectly, in the internal or external affairs of any other state.

Responsibility to Protect (R2P)

In contrast, advocates for international action point to the **Responsibility to Protect (R2P)** principle, adopted at the 2005 UN World Summit. This framework asserts that when a sovereign state fails to protect its population from mass atrocities—specifically genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity—the international community inherits a collective responsibility to step in through timely and decisive action under Chapter VII of the UN Charter.

SPECPOL Legal Friction: The central debate within this committee revolves around whether institutional breakdown, systemic human rights violations, and state-induced economic collapse meet the legal threshold of "crimes against humanity" to justify overriding Article 2(7) without explicit Security Council consensus.

International Human Rights Law

The situation is heavily governed by international legal instruments to which Venezuela is a signatory, including the **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)**

and the **American Convention on Human Rights** (though its status under the latter remains contested domestically). These treaties mandate the absolute protection of non-derogable rights—such as protection from torture, arbitrary deprivation of life, and the right to a fair trial—which cannot be suspended even during states of emergency.

Relevant UN Charter Provisions and International Conventions

Delegates must anchor their resolutions in specific international legal provisions:

- **UN Charter Article 1(2):** Developing friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples.
- **UN Charter Article 2(4):** Refraining from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state.
- **The 1951 Refugee Convention & 1984 Cartagena Declaration:** The latter expands the definition of a refugee to include persons who have fled their country because their lives, safety, or freedom have been threatened by generalized violence, foreign aggression, or internal conflicts.

Recognition of Governments in International Law

The Venezuelan political crisis presents one of the most significant contemporary examples of contested governmental legitimacy within the international legal order. Unlike disputes concerning the existence of a state itself, the Venezuelan crisis concerns competing claims regarding the legitimate government authorized to represent an already recognized sovereign state. This distinction carries profound implications for diplomatic relations, treaty implementation, international representation, sovereign immunity, financial assets, and participation within international organizations. Consequently, an understanding of governmental recognition constitutes an essential component of any comprehensive analysis of this agenda.

International law traditionally distinguishes between the recognition of states and the recognition of governments. Recognition of a state acknowledges the existence of an international legal personality satisfying the traditional requirements articulated by the Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States (1933), namely a permanent population, defined territory, effective government, and the capacity to enter into relations with other states. Recognition of governments, however, concerns identifying the authority legitimately empowered to exercise sovereign powers on behalf of that already recognized state. Whereas statehood generally remains permanent, governments may change through elections, revolutions, constitutional succession, military coups, or civil conflict, thereby creating uncertainty regarding legitimate representation.

Historically, two principal theories have emerged regarding governmental recognition. The Constitutive Theory argues that governments derive international legitimacy through formal

recognition by other states. Under this approach, diplomatic recognition effectively determines whether an authority acquires full international legal standing. Conversely, the Declaratory Theory maintains that recognition merely acknowledges an existing factual situation and does not itself create legal legitimacy. Contemporary international practice generally favours the declaratory approach, although elements of both theories continue to influence state behaviour.

Modern diplomatic practice frequently employs the doctrine of effective control. According to this principle, governments exercising stable administrative authority over the majority of a state's territory, institutions, and population generally receive recognition irrespective of questions concerning democratic legitimacy or constitutional legality. Effective control promotes stability within international relations by ensuring that treaties, diplomatic communications, and international obligations remain capable of implementation. However, strict reliance upon effective control has increasingly been challenged by the growing emphasis placed upon democratic governance, constitutional succession, and respect for human rights.

The Venezuelan crisis illustrates this tension. Following the disputed presidential elections of 2018, Juan Guaidó declared himself Interim President in January 2019 on the basis of Articles 233, 333, and 350 of the Venezuelan Constitution, arguing that the presidency had become constitutionally vacant due to electoral irregularities. More than fifty Member States subsequently recognized Guaidó as the legitimate representative of Venezuela. Nevertheless, Nicolás Maduro retained effective control over the armed forces, executive institutions, judiciary, state-owned enterprises, and territorial administration. This unprecedented situation produced a division between constitutional legitimacy as interpreted by certain states and factual governmental authority exercised within Venezuelan territory.

The consequences of contested recognition extended beyond bilateral diplomacy. Questions emerged concerning which representatives possessed authority to occupy Venezuela's seat within international organizations, administer overseas financial assets, appoint ambassadors, conclude treaties, and exercise sovereign immunities before foreign courts. Similar disputes arose regarding control over state-owned enterprises, including *Petróleos de Venezuela S.A.* (PDVSA) and its international subsidiaries, where competing administrations asserted ownership rights over strategic national assets.

Within the United Nations, questions concerning governmental legitimacy are generally addressed through the Credentials Committee rather than through explicit political recognition. The Committee examines whether representatives have been properly appointed by their respective governments but traditionally avoids making definitive determinations regarding constitutional legitimacy. Consequently, the United Nations has historically demonstrated considerable institutional caution when confronted with competing governmental claims, preferring political neutrality unless clear consensus emerges among Member States.

Recognition disputes have arisen repeatedly throughout international history, including Cambodia during the Khmer Rouge period, Afghanistan following the Taliban's return to power, Libya during the 2011 civil conflict, and more recently Myanmar following the 2021 military coup. Each case illustrates that governmental recognition remains fundamentally influenced by the interaction of legal doctrine, diplomatic practice, geopolitical interests, and institutional pragmatism rather than by any single universally accepted legal standard.

Case Studies

Venezuela (Primary Case)

As the primary subject of this agenda, Venezuela illustrates how a domestic institutional conflict can evolve into a transnational security crisis. The coexistence of parallel governing entities, a severe economic collapse, and an ongoing geopolitical standoff have turned the nation into a complex challenge for multilateral diplomacy. This case forces SPECPOL to address how the UN can deliver effective humanitarian aid and maintain regional security when access to a sovereign territory is heavily restricted or politically contested.

Haiti and External Stabilization Missions

Haiti offers a key comparative study on the limits of external stabilization. Following severe institutional breakdown and gang dominance, the UN authorized various configurations of stabilization missions, including MINUSTAH and recent multinational security support deployments.

The lesson for SPECPOL is clear: external security interventions that lack deep domestic institutional reform, local buy-in, and sustained economic development risk creating long-term dependence and unintended human rights issues, rather than establishing durable stability.

Nicaragua's Political Crisis

Since 2018, Nicaragua has faced a severe political crisis characterized by the concentration of executive power, the closure of hundreds of non-governmental organizations, and the stripping of citizenship from political dissidents. This case shows how early, unaddressed institutional centralization can lead to entrenched governance models that systematically bypass regional human rights frameworks like the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR).

Colombia–Venezuela Border Tensions

The dynamic along the Colombia-Venezuela border highlights how domestic political instability can lead to direct interstate security friction. The presence of overlapping insurgent groups and criminal syndicates has led to frequent border closures, disrupted bilateral trade, and created sudden spikes in localized displacement. It demonstrates that regional stability cannot be achieved without functional, direct communication channels between the defense and intelligence architectures of neighboring sovereign states.

Lessons from Other Latin American Political Crises

Historical transitions in Latin America—such as the peace processes in Central America during the 1980s (the Esquipulas Peace Agreement)—show that lasting stability is achieved when regional actors take ownership of mediation. These historical precedents demonstrate that sustainable solutions require comprehensive electoral guarantees, simultaneous disarmament or containment of irregular armed factions, and international economic assistance tied directly to measurable governance reforms.

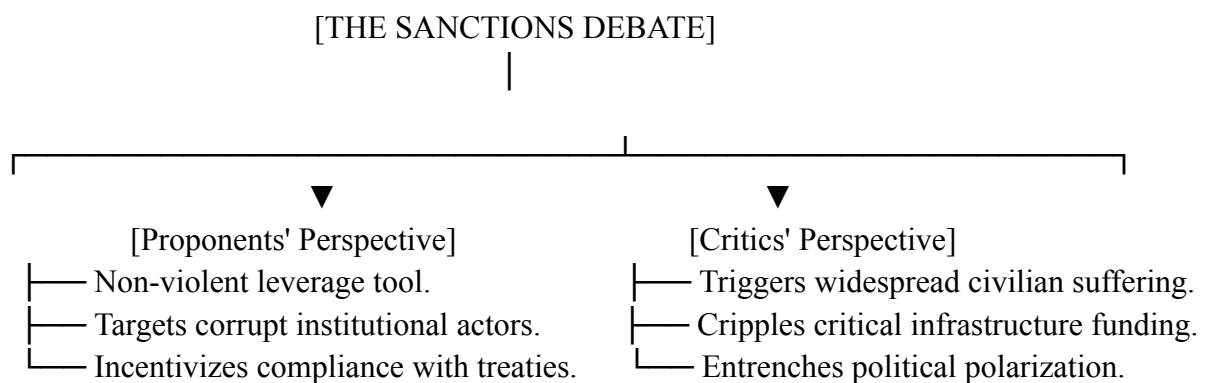
Key Challenges and Areas of Debate

Sovereignty vs. Humanitarian Intervention

This remains the core legal impasse within SPECPOL. Member States must balance the imperative to protect vulnerable civilian populations with the foundational requirement to protect weaker states from arbitrary foreign military or political intervention by more powerful nations.

Legitimacy of Sanctions

Delegates are deeply divided on the utility of economic sanctions.



Democratic Governance

Defining the boundaries of international oversight in domestic elections is a key challenge. While some states argue that the UN has a duty to verify electoral standards to ensure international legitimacy, others contend that the certification of an election is an exclusive right of domestic constitutional institutions, and that external monitoring should occur only upon direct invitation by the host government.

Regional Cooperation

The lack of a unified regional platform poses a significant challenge. The polarization of Latin American states has paralyzed traditional multilateral bodies, leaving the continent without a consensus-based mechanism to address transnational crime and migration, and allowing external global powers to fill the diplomatic vacuum.

Balancing Security and Humanitarian Priorities

Delegates face a difficult policy trade-off: prioritizing immediate security measures can sometimes hinder humanitarian access. Hard security actions—such as shutting down irregular border crossings to intercept drug trafficking networks—can cut off vital escape routes for vulnerable refugees and disrupt informal trade lifelines that local communities rely on for basic survival.

Questions a Resolution Should Address

Core Policy Questions

- How can the UN General Assembly support a peaceful political transition while respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Latin American states under Article 2(7)?
- What legal thresholds must be met to implement international monitoring frameworks when a host state restricts access to independent human rights observers?
- How can the international community reform the design of sectoral sanctions to ensure they do not worsen the living conditions of civilian populations?

Long-Term Regional Stability

- What multilateral mechanisms should be established to ensure the regularized, dignified integration of nearly 8 million displaced persons into regional labor markets and social safety nets?
- How can neighboring states build sustainable border security frameworks to counter transnational organized crime without relying on permanent militarization?
- What steps must be taken to dismantle illicit commodity supply chains, such as illegal gold mining, that fund non-state armed groups in the region?

Implementation and Monitoring Mechanisms

- How will a SPECPOL-recommended special political or monitoring mission report its findings back to the General Assembly without duplicating the mandate of the Human Rights Council?
- What benchmarks will be used to measure progress in restoring judicial independence and electoral transparency?
- How can the UN verify that humanitarian funds channeled through international trusts are distributed equitably based solely on need, free from local political influence?

Further Reading, Glossary, and References

Key Terms

- **De Jure vs. De Facto Recognition:** *De jure* refers to the formal, legal recognition of a government by international law, whereas *de facto* refers to recognizing the entity that exercises effective physical control over a territory, regardless of its legal status.

- **Hyperinflation:** An extreme, out-of-control economic condition where prices rise rapidly and uncontrollably, typically exceeding 50% per month, which erodes the real value of the local currency.
- **Non-Derogable Rights:** Human rights that cannot be suspended or restricted under any circumstances, even during states of war, public disaster, or national emergencies (e.g., freedom from torture, right to life).
- **Porous Borders:** Geographic borders that lack physical barriers, formal checkpoints, or consistent security patrols, making them highly susceptible to undocumented crossings and illicit trafficking.
- **Asymmetric Warfare:** Conflict where the resources and capabilities of two or more belligerents differ significantly, often forcing weaker actors to rely on unconventional tactics, insurgent strategies, or transnational criminal networks.

UN Documents

- **United Nations Charter:** Specifically Article 1 (Purposes and Principles), Article 2(4) (Prohibition of the use of force), and Article 2(7) (Domestic jurisdiction limitation).
- **UNGA Resolution 2131 (XX):** *Declaration on the Inadmissibility of Intervention in the Domestic Affairs of States and the Protection of Their Independence and Sovereignty.*
- **OHCHR Reports on Venezuela (2024–2026):** Sequential updates presented by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to the Human Rights Council regarding civic space and arbitrary detentions.
- **UNHCR Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan (R4V):** The comprehensive joint strategic framework deployed across 17 Latin American nations to manage Venezuelan displacement.

Reports from International Organizations

- **International Organization for Migration (IOM) Displacement Tracking Matrix Updates:** Tracking migration flows through the Darién Gap and across South American transit corridors.
- **Center for Preventive Action (CPA) Global Briefings:** Assessing the regional security spillover of the Venezuelan institutional crisis on neighboring Andean nations.
- **Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) Emergency Structural Assessments (2025/2026):** Evaluating the baseline capacity of Latin American public healthcare networks following regional economic shocks and natural disasters.

Academic Sources

- *The Rise and Fall of the Venezuelan Petro-State*, Journal of International Affairs. Analyzing the long-term structural vulnerabilities of oil-dependent governance models.

- *Sovereignty vs. Human Rights in the 21st Century Inter-American System*, Harvard International Law Journal. Evaluating the legal tension between the OAS Democratic Charter and the UN Charter.
- *Transnational Crime and Border Governance in South America*, Latin American Security Studies. An in-depth review of how criminal syndicates exploit political friction between neighboring states.

Suggested Reading

- **"Dragon in the Tropics: Venezuela and the Legacy of Hugo Chávez"** by Javier Corrales and Michael Penfold. Offers a detailed analysis of the institutional changes that shaped modern Venezuela.
- **"The Darién Gap: Geopolitics of Modern Displacement"** (UNU-CRIS Working Papers). A study on the intersection of human smuggling, organized crime, and regional border controls.
- **"UN Special Political Missions: The Quiet Diplomacy Tool"** (International Peace Institute Briefs). Provides practical insights into how SPECPOL-backed observation frameworks operate in volatile regional contexts.

Referential Links

1. <https://digitallibrary.un.org/>
2. <https://news.un.org/en/tags/venezuela>
3. <https://www.unocha.org/venezuela>
4. <https://www.unhcr.org/venezuela-emergency.html>
5. <https://www.r4v.info/>
6. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/countries/venezuela>
7. <https://www.undp.org/venezuela>
8. <https://www.wfp.org/countries/venezuela>
9. <https://www.iom.int/venezuela>
10. <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/>
11. <https://www.oas.org/>
12. <https://www.oas.org/en/iachr/>
13. <https://celacinternational.org/>
14. <https://www.mercosur.int/>
15. <https://caricom.org/>
16. <https://www.icj-cij.org/>
17. <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter>
18. https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/intam03.asp
19. <https://www.worldbank.org/>
20. <https://www.imf.org/>
21. <https://www.cepal.org/en>
22. <https://www.crisisgroup.org/latin-america-caribbean/andes/venezuela>
23. <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/political-crisis-venezuela>
24. <https://www.brookings.edu/topic/latin-america/>
25. <https://www.chathamhouse.org/topics/latin-americas>