

Independent UN rights expert calls for compassion, not sanctions on Venezuela

The crisis in Venezuela will not be solved by sanctions that “can lead to starvation”, a UN-appointed rights expert said on Thursday. Special Rapporteur [Idriss Jazairy](#), who reports to the [Human Rights Council](#), issued the warning against the background of widespread suffering in the South American country, linked to spiralling economic woes and deep political uncertainty.

An estimated three million people have left the oil-rich country since 2015, while supporters of self-appointed interim President Juan Guaidó, continue to demonstrate against the government of the incumbent, Nicolás Maduro, who was re-elected last May amidst allegations of electoral irregularities and a widespread opposition boycott.

“Sanctions which can lead to starvation and medical shortages are not the answer to the crisis in Venezuela,” Mr. Jazairy said in a statement, prompted by the imposition of sanctions on Venezuela’s national oil company by the United States.

Precipitating an economic and humanitarian crisis...is not a foundation for the peaceful settlement of disputes – UN independent rights expert, Idriss Jazairy

“I am especially concerned to hear reports that these sanctions are aimed at changing the government of Venezuela,” he added, while also noting his concern about reports of serious rights violations that include “the growing risk of violence and implicit threats of international violence”.

In a call for “compassion” for the people of Venezuela, Mr. Jazairy, who is UN Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of the unilateral coercive measures, insisted that “precipitating an economic and humanitarian crisis...is not a foundation for the peaceful settlement of disputes”.

Such “coercion” by outside powers “is in violation of all norms of international law”, the rights expert maintained, before calling on the international community to engage in constructive dialogue with Venezuela to find solutions to problems that include hyperinflation and the fall in oil prices.

In a recent [statement](#) issued by the office of [António Guterres](#), the UN Secretary-General urged parties to “lower tensions” in Venezuela and called for all relevant actors to commit to inclusive and credible political dialogue.

Concerned by reports of casualties during demonstrations and unrest in and

around the capital, Caracas, the UN chief also called for a transparent and independent investigation of those incidents.

Last Saturday, the [UN Security Council](#) met to discuss the situation in the country, in which the UN's top political official said that dialogue and cooperation were vital to [ending the crisis](#).

The meeting was requested late last week by US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo following days of political unrest and deadly clashes in Venezuela between protesters and security forces.

The UN human rights office [OHCHR](#) reported on Tuesday, that at least 40 had been killed in the unrest, including 26 shot by pro-Government forces. More than 850 were detained following demonstrations in the past week, including 77 children.

"We must try to help bring about a political solution that will allow the country's citizens to enjoy peace, prosperity and all their human rights," [Rosemary DiCarlo](#), the UN Under Secretary-General of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, urged the 15-member body.

Nearly all 30 million Venezuelans are affected by hyperinflation and a collapse of real salaries, Ms. DiCarlo warned, citing shortages of food, medicine and basic supplies, along with a deterioration of health and education services and basic infrastructure such as water and electricity.

Those comments were echoed by Mr. Jazairy, who urged all countries to avoid applying sanctions unless approved by the Security Council, as required by the [UN Charter](#).