

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
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FACT SHEET

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**Nicolás Maduro: Corruption and Chaos in Venezuela**

The former regime of Nicolás Maduro has consistently violated and abused the human rights and dignity of the country's citizens, plundered its natural resources, and driven a once-prosperous nation into economic ruin with Maduro's authoritarian rule and ruinous economic policies. Maduro's thugs have reportedly engaged in killings and physical abuse, detained political opponents, and severely interfered with the exercise of freedom of expression, all in a brutal effort to retain power.

**MADURO'S CORRUPTION & INCOMPETENCE:**

- On July 25, 2019, the United States sanctioned Maduro's three stepsons (Walter, Yosser, and Yoswal Flores), and seven other individuals, as well as 13 entities, involved in a complex network of bribery and money laundering that has been stealing from the people of Venezuela through a for-fee food distribution program known as the CLAP.
- Maduro and his associates have been responsible for the theft and embezzlement of billions of dollars from the Venezuelan people over many years. Regime insiders have also been involved in drug smuggling, and the illicit removal of gold from the Venezuelan Central bank.
- Maduro has financed himself by "cranking up the central bank printing presses. That has ballooned the supply of the national currency, the bolivar, which has lost more than 99 percent of its value since 2013 and is virtually worthless." (*Bloomberg Businessweek*, March 9, 2019)
- The bolivar's accumulated inflation 2014-2018 was more than twenty-two million, according to the Central Bank of Venezuela. As a result of Maduro's actions, the people of Venezuela can no longer afford to live in their own country.
- Similarly, Venezuela's infrastructure has begun to collapse under Maduro. For example, the electrical system has rapidly deteriorated since March, resulting in nation-wide blackouts and the increasing rationing of electricity in many states. In 2016, Maduro declared approximately 12 percent of the country to be a part of an "Orinoco Mining Arc" and awarded himself broad authorities to oversee the exploitation of resources for personal gain. Maduro ejected foreign companies from Venezuela and replaced

employees with untrained workers who operate under the leadership of senior Venezuelan military officers.

### **VENEZUELA'S MADURO-MADE CRISIS:**

- **Economic Decline:** The International Monetary Fund estimated that the cumulative decline of the Venezuelan economy since 2013 will surpass 60% and is among the deepest five-year contractions the world has seen over the last half century.
- **Decreased Supply of Food & Medicine:** By 2016 – the year before the United States sanctioned former President Maduro – food imports in the country had fallen 71 percent since 2013. Imports of medicines and medical equipment fell by 68 percent 2013-2016. (*Brookings Institute/Harvard research*)
- **Decreased Access to Food:** In December 2018, only 55 percent of Venezuelans ate three meals a day. (*Delphos, a Venezuelan pollster*)
  - Bread consumption in Venezuela decreased by 50 percent and in 2019, only eight ships carrying wheat arrived to Venezuela, according to the President of the Venezuelan Federation of Bakers.
- **Decreased Hospital Services:** In November 2018, 76 percent of hospitals surveyed had deficiencies in laboratory testing, 70 percent saw lapses in radiology services, 67 percent suffered electricity shortages, and 70 percent were experiencing water shortages. (*Doctors for Health*)
- **Increased Infant Deaths:** In 2016, infant deaths increased more than 30 percent while maternal deaths rose nearly 66 percent. (*The former Maduro regime's Ministry of Health*)

### **MADURO'S HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES & VIOLATIONS:**

- The former Maduro regime reportedly engaged in widespread, arbitrary detentions and physical abuse, as well as repression to silence dissent and enforce social controls.
- Maduro has increasingly relied on the Special Action Force of the National Police (FAES) that he created in 2017 to carry out illegal raids and extrajudicial killings.
- The FAES, comprised of 1,300 officers, stands accused of killing more than 100 people in low-income neighborhoods June-December 2018. (NGO Provea report of January 26, 2019)
- On April 5, 2019, human rights NGO PROVEA announced the discovery of several clandestine detention centers, including three allegedly run by *colectivos*, police, state security forces, and intelligence agencies, where the former regime extralegally detained and abused Venezuelan citizens.

- In July 2019, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet concluded that Maduro's security and intelligence apparatus use widespread and arbitrary repression of civil society and the democratic opposition. For example, the July 5 UN OHCHR report noted at least 7,523 instances of extrajudicial killings.