



Refugee Documentation Centre (Ireland)
LEGAL AID BOARD

Venezuela - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on Wednesday 6 September 2017

Information on politically related violence and risks of further conflict/civil war

In September 2017 the *Washington Post* states that:

"More than 120 people were killed in four months of protests in Venezuela, with the majority of the deaths caused by security forces and pro-government groups, according to the United Nations" (Washington Post (2 September 2017) *Venezuela bars opposition activist from traveling to Europe*).

Voice of America in August 2017 states that:

"Growing insecurity has prompted countless Venezuelans to flee the country" (Voice of America (31 August 2017) *Venezuela's Government Reports Nearly 10,000 Homicides in 2017*).

In August 2017 a report published by the *United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights* notes the:

"...mounting levels of repression of political dissent by national security forces, and increasing stigmatization and persecution of people perceived as opposing the Government of President Maduro" (United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (30 August 2017) *Human rights violations and abuses in the context of protests in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela from 1 April to 31 July 2017*, p.ii).

In August 2017 *BBC News* points out that:

"President Maduro convened the constituent assembly amid daily anti-government protests with the stated aim of fostering dialogue with the opposition. However, with the assembly being made up only of government supporters that aim has not materialised. The government does point to the fact that street protests have become much less frequent since the constituent assembly was elected, which they say is down to the pacifying influence the assembly is wielding. The opposition, on the other hand, says that repression of people critical of the government has increased in that time" (BBC News (30 August 2017) *What has Venezuela's constituent assembly achieved?*).

A report issued in September 2017 by the *Wall Street Journal* points out that:

"Five months of violent antigovernment demonstrations have dissipated and the epicenter in Caracas, Plaza Altamira, sits eerily quiet. The barricades that opponents once set up to slow government armored vehicles are gone. Rumors of a military uprising are gone. And life has returned to normal, with people struggling to find enough to eat in a country stricken by shortages. Despite an 80% disapproval rating, Mr. Maduro seemingly faces few short-term challenges to his rule just a month after he drew international condemnation by installing his allies into a new rubber-stamp assembly. The government's crackdown on protesters -- including widespread

arrests and torture, human-rights groups and victims say -- has broken the once-potent protest movement. The protests claimed more than 125 lives and nearly 2,000 wounded, including scores with permanent injuries. Some of the government's leading political adversaries have fled the country and left the opposition coalition in disarray. The new so-called constituent assembly, stacked with Mr. Maduro's supporters, has in recent weeks declared the opposition-run congress void of power, replaced a dissident attorney general with one supportive of Mr. Maduro, and is now investigating opposition leaders for alleged treason" (Wall Street Journal (1 September 2017) *World News: Venezuela Opposition Grows Silent*).

A document issued in September 2017 by *Reuters* states that:

"Venezuela's opposition is shifting its focus to forthcoming state elections as protests aimed at ousting President Nicolas Maduro have subsided following the installation of an all-powerful, pro-government legislative body. Four months of violent demonstrations in which at least 125 people were killed have all but stopped due to fatigue among protesters and disillusionment at seeing the ruling Socialist Party cement vast powers despite the concerted opposition push" (Reuters (5 September 2017) *Venezuelan opposition pins hopes on elections as protests falter*).

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This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

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