



# Extraregional Actors and Their Role in the Venezuelan Crisis

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*Translated into English from the original Spanish version*

## Context

- The humanitarian and institutional crisis in Venezuela cannot be separated from the dynamic of geostrategic and geo-economic competition between the major powers of an international system in transition. Within this context, the political dynamics in Venezuela become another component of a global strategic game played at different levels.
- The geopolitical interests of the United States, Russia, China, Turkey, and Iran are affected by the Venezuelan crisis, often in combination with their geo-economic interests.
- For the United States, Venezuela has a crucial geostrategic relevance. This is not only due to Venezuela's oil reserves but also because it is part of a geopolitical space where foreign meddling of extraregional powers threatens hemispheric hegemony in the United States' "backyard," especially under the administration of President Donald Trump
- For the Russian Federation—beyond its growing and important military cooperation with Venezuela and its investments in the energy resource industry (estimated at \$17 billion), including its participation in Petr6leos de Venezuela and Citgo Petroleum Corporation through Rosneft—Venezuela is a key piece of its foreign policy, aimed at reaffirming Russia's status as a world power, distancing conflicts from its borders, and distracting the United States from other regions. In addition, investing in demand for energy resources ensures that investments can be recovered and debts acquired by the Venezuelan state can be repaid to Russia.
- For the People's Republic of China, Venezuela has fundamental geo-economic importance as a provider of energy resources as well as an opportunity for investment, based on its own economic development strategy. However, China—with an estimated investment of \$50 billion in Venezuela—developed a more cautious policy in response to the crisis. China has recovered part of the Venezuelan debt and will continue to recover the rest with payments of oil for the next two decades, assuming this will continue to be guaranteed by the Venezuelan state.
- The dynamics of the relationships among the United States, Russia, and China globally, as well as their interests in Venezuela, have an impact on their positions and the scope of their commitments to opposition leader Juan Guaid6 and the government of Nicol6s Maduro.
- Turkey and Iran also have developed interests in Venezuela. The former has developed them more recently, with less intensity and a geo-economic focus while Iran's interests are more geopolitical.
- Communication channels between the United States and Russia have been reactivated to address Venezuelan crisis, with their respective foreign ministers having met in Sochi, Russia, in May 2019 to discuss the topic as part of the bilateral agenda.
- Meanwhile, the International Contact Group (ICG), promoted by the European Union and some Latin American countries (Costa Rica, Uruguay, and Ecuador), arrived in Caracas in mid-May with the objective of promoting new dialogue between the opposition and Maduro, despite the failure of previous attempts.



- Canada, based on its historical ties, has sent a representative to Havana to negotiate Cuba's participation in a dialogue or negotiation process between the opposition and Maduro, given Cuba's involvement in Venezuela and its dependence on Venezuelan oil assistance.
- Finally, Norway, based on its extensive experience as a mediator and through a series of low-profile initiatives, has advanced meetings between the opposition and Maduro's government, with the most recent one being in May 2019 in Oslo.
- Identify and track ongoing initiatives such as those from Norway, Canada, and the ICG. These must be monitored and eventually supported, as they involve actors with fewer geopolitical interests who are committed to improving the situation in the country.
- Evaluate and monitor other actors—national and multilateral—that can contribute to a solution to the Venezuelan crisis.
- Analyze and observe multilateral cooperation among regional dialogue spaces on the crisis (Lima Group) and extraregional actors.

## Recommendations

- Monitor the international dynamics among the extraregional actors mentioned above as those dynamics may influence their inclination for dialogue on a solution to the Venezuelan crisis. Examples include the impact of the trade war between the United States and China, and the strategic convergence between Russia and China in Eurasia.



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