

CARACAS, VENEZUELA, FACTS

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- Demographics and geography
 - Caracas (population 1.9 million) is the capital of Venezuela and the center of Venezuelan industry, commerce, and culture.
 - Situated near the Atlantic Ocean, Caracas is one of the 10 largest cities in Latin America. Caracas is linked to other cities via 3 airports, 2 seaports, and a highway system. Simon Bolivar International Airport provides international connections.¹
- Economic situation and humanitarian crisis
 - A major economic crisis has devastated the city and the country because of economic mismanagement. The country is currently in “economic freefall,” including hyperinflation, falling GDP, and high unemployment rates.
 - The economic situation has led to a humanitarian crisis. “Basic food and medicines . . . are increasingly scarce, and the devastation of the health-care system has spurred outbreaks of treatable diseases and rising death rates.”² This includes understaffed and underequipped hospitals, insufficient hospital beds, lack of potable water, and collapsing infrastructure.
 - Around 500,000 Venezuelans have already fled the country in the past 2 years, while 20% of the country’s medical personnel have fled in the past 4 years.²
- Political crisis
 - Widespread protests broke out in 2017 against the socialist government of President Nicolas Maduro. The UN has criticized Venezuelan security forces for using excessive force against protesters, at least 120 of whom have died.
 - Protesters accuse the government of human rights abuses and economic mismanagement, contributing to hyperinflation, unemployment, and food rationing.³
- Diplomatic relations with the United States
 - Venezuela and the US hold formal diplomatic relations.
 - The US has criticized the Venezuelan government for repression and human rights abuses, while Venezuela has accused the US of meddling in its internal affairs. In addition, since 2017 the US “has sanctioned more than 40 Venezuelan individuals, including President Maduro, associated with repression, corruption, and undermining democracy under Executive Order 13692.”⁴



- The US is Venezuela's largest trading partner, with bilateral trade estimated at US\$16.1 billion in 2016 (the last year of available data).
- Venezuela has not historically accepted US offers of food and humanitarian assistance.⁴

REFERENCES

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