The Security Council of the United Nations was established under chapter 5 of the UN Charter. Under this charter, the UNSC has four main tasks: to maintain international peace and security; to develop friendly relations among nations; to cooperate in solving international problems and in promoting respect for human rights; and to be a center for harmonizing the actions of nations. The Council itself is comprised of 15 member states. Five, being the Republic of China, the United States of America, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and France maintain permanent member status. The five permanent members also hold veto power within the council, and may block any potential resolution before the body should they so choose. The other 10 members are elected to two year terms, and may not be immediately re-elected.

Whilst other bodies within the United Nations make recommendations to member states, the Security Council has the sole authority to pass binding resolutions, which all member states are obliged to follow under the UN Charter. The Security council may use several measures to accomplish its tasks, including but not limited to: economic sanctions, travel bans, arms embargoes, peacekeeping missions, issue investigations, sever diplomatic relations, or even take direct military action.

Stated by the United Nations Security Council, the functions and powers of the security council are:

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2 ibid
to maintain international peace and security in accordance with the principles and purposes of the United Nations;

to investigate any dispute or situation which might lead to international friction;

to recommend methods of adjusting such disputes or the terms of settlement;

to formulate plans for the establishment of a system to regulate armaments;

to determine the existence of a threat to the peace or act of aggression and to recommend what action should be taken;

to call on Members to apply economic sanctions and other measures not involving the use of force to prevent or stop aggression;

to take military action against an aggressor;

to recommend the admission of new Members;

to exercise the trusteeship functions of the United Nations in "strategic areas";

to recommend to the General Assembly the appointment of the Secretary-General and, together with the Assembly, to elect the Judges of the International Court of Justice.\(^{3}\)

In this session of the Security Council, member states will be tasked with addressing the current security situation in Venezuela, as well as the growing humanitarian crisis within Myanmar. While both the situations in Venezuela and Myanmar have escalated in recent times, this session provides the Security Council with the opportunity to prevent any further upsurges of violence.

Topic 1: The Situation in Myanmar

General Overview:

Myanmar, previously known as Burma, was considered a pariah state while under the rule of an oppressive military junta from 1962 to 2011. The military generals who controlled Myanmar suppressed almost all disagreement, exemplified by the house arrest of opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi. The government was accused of drastic human rights abuse, prompting international condemnation and sanctions. The dominance of the largest ethnic group, the Burman people, over the minorities in the country has fueled a series of long standing rebellions. A peace process set forth a ceasefire deal in 2015. A gradual liberalization process has been underway since 2010 and Myanmar is expected to see a major political shift after the election in early 2016.4

Beginning of modern Rohingya Oppression:

The Rohingya are an ethnic group that have presided in Myanmar for centuries. A majority of the Rohingya are Muslim and in 1977, when the army launched a national initiative to register citizens, they were labeled as illegal. This resulted in more than 200,000 Rohingya fleeing to neighboring countries like Bangladesh and Thailand. The Citizenship Act of Myanmar was enacted in 1982 which officially denied the group citizenship rights. This law required that a person’s ancestors belong to a national race or group present in Myanmar prior to British rule in 1823, to become a citizen. In many cases, however, their presence actually dates back to the 12th century.

Now, the Rohingya are the single largest group of “stateless” people in the world. Their lack of citizenship means that they are not entitled to any legal protection from the government.

4 “Myanmar country profile.” BBC News, BBC, 11 Jan. 2018,
Without citizenship, they are deprived of basic rights such as access to health services, education and employment. In addition, they have been denied the right to worship freely and face restrictions on the right to marry, move freely and own property. Without legal status, they cannot go to school, travel or buy property and the police can also arrest and imprison them just because of their religious and ethnic identity. Even though Rohingya population growth has decreased, Rohingya couples are allowed no more than two children. Those who break the law risk imprisonment, and the government blacklists their children.\(^5\)

**Interim Governments leading into 1962 Coup:**

Between 1948 and 1962, Burma enjoyed a democratic, parliamentary government, yet it was plagued by widespread conflict and internal struggle. Political and ethnic tensions, alongside constitutional disputes, weakened the Burmese democratic government hold on power. By 1958 the situation had escalated to the point that Prime Minister U Nu was forced to accept a period of military rule to restore political order. The military eventually stepped down after 18 months, but the damage was done: rivals could see the weaknesses in U Nu’s government.

On March 2nd, 1962, Ne Win wrested control of Burma in a military coup d’etat. He established a socialist state run by a council of military officers and arrested U Nu and others. Ne Win immediately established himself Chairman of the council as well as Prime Minister. He abolished the constitution and established a xenophobic military government. Though the coup was described as “bloodless” by global media, the first president of Burma was shot dead, and another official disappeared.\(^6\)

**Military Government Leading into Recent Elections:**

In 1988, thousands of people were killed in anti-government riots and the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) was formed. Following shortly after, in 1989, SLORC declared martial law, and arrested thousands of people, including advocates of democracy and human rights. In addition, they rename Burma, 'Myanmar', and the NLD leader Aung San Suu Kyi, the daughter of Aung San, was put under house arrest. A year later, Opposition National League for Democracy (NLD) won a landslide victory in general election, but the result was ignored by the military in charge. In 2015, a draft ceasefire agreement was signed between the government and sixteen rebel groups and the Opposition National League for Democracy won enough seats in parliament to form a government. In March 2017, The United Nations human rights council decided to set up an investigation into the alleged human rights abuses by the army against the Rohingya Muslim minority.\(^7\)

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\(^5\) Engy Abdelkader Rutgers University. “The history of the persecution of Myanmars Rohingya.” The Conversation, 2 Feb. 2018

\(^6\) “Burma Coup D'Etat | History Channel on Foxtel.” History Channel, 8 June 2017

\(^7\) “Myanmar profile - Timeline.” BBC News, BBC, 11 Jan. 2018
New Government’s Stance / Policies vs. What is actually occurring:

President Htin Kyaw was sworn into office in Myanmar, allowing for a transition from military dictatorship to the country’s first civilian-led administration in more than fifty years. President Htin Kyaw is a close ally of Aung San Suu Kyi, the Nobel laureate who led the country’s struggle for democracy and endured years under house arrest before leading the NLD to a comprehensive election victory in November.8

Previous International Action:

The United Nations Security Council called on the Government to “end the use of excessive military force and intercommunal violence in the region” and

“to restore civilian administration and apply the rule of law, and to take immediate steps in accordance with [the Government’s] obligations and commitments to respect human rights, including the rights of women, children, and persons belonging to vulnerable groups, without discrimination and regardless of ethnicity, religion, or citizenship status.”

The Council also urged the Government to implement measures in line with its resolution 2106 (2013) to prevent and respond to incidents of sexual violence, and encouraged it to work with the Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict. The Council expressed concern over severely limited humanitarian access to the affected parts of the region and demanded that the Government ensure immediate, safe and unhindered access to UN and other humanitarian actors, and safety and security of humanitarian personnel. The Security Council also welcomed Myanmar’s decision to establish a “Union Enterprise Mechanism” and urged the Government to ensure that the Mechanism supported such return and allowed United Nations agencies full access. Welcoming the Government’s support for recommendations by the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State and calling for their full implementation, the Security Council stressed the importance of transparent investigations into allegations of human rights abuses and

8 “5 Challenges Facing Burma's New Civilian Government.” Time, Time
violations, including sexual violence and abuse and violence against children, and of holding to account all those responsible for such acts.  

Questions to Consider:

- Should the surrounding countries adopt new immigration policies that support and welcome the Rohingya people?
- At this point in time, should the issue regarding the Rohingya people be considered “genocide”?
- What steps could be taken to ensure that military abuse in Myanmar is decreased?
- Should outside military action be implemented to keep the government and military of Myanmar in check?
- How does the history of the region tie into the events unfolding today?

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9 “UN Security Council calls on Myanmar to end excessive military force in Rakhine state.” UN News Center, United Nations, 6 Nov. 2017
Topic II: The Situation in Venezuela

Long the subject of international scrutiny, Venezuela was pushed more fully into the spotlight than ever before this past year. This small South American nation had, for years, an outsized economy. Bolstered by the high price of oil, Venezuela was one of the wealthiest nations in South America and spent lavishly on government subsidies. These subsidies, implemented at the direction of former president Hugo Chavez, made the Venezuelan government wildly popular with its people, particularly the poor.

The trouble in Venezuela began in 2013 when Chavez died, and the presidency passed to Nicolas Maduro, Chavez’s hand-picked successor. The lavish social spending of the Chavez Administration forced Venezuela to take on massive debt, as their spending scheme became no longer sustainable as the price of oil began to fall. Unable to subsidize the food and medicine that the Venezuelan poor relied on, Maduro quickly became unpopular. In 2015, the National Assembly, the Venezuelan legislature, was swept by an opposition coalition called the Democratic Unity Roundtable. Seeing this as a threat to his power Maduro quickly took control of the Supreme Court by forcing out several members and replacing them with loyalists. The court then stripped the National Assembly of its powers, claiming that they were in contempt. Although it was soon reversed, this move sparked the massive national protests that put Venezuela on the international radar. As protests continued, and became increasingly violent, Maduro acted to further consolidate his power. In July of 2017, Maduro decreed the election of a national constituent assembly, a body that would have the power to rewrite the Venezuelan Constitution and essentially invalidated any authority of the Venezuelan legislature.

12 “Venezuela: Supreme Court Backtracks on Powers Bid.” BBC News, BBC, 1 Apr. 2017
13 Aleem, Zeeshan. “Venezuela Just Moved One Step Closer to Authoritarianism.” Vox, Vox, 31 July 2017
The political issues in Venezuela stem from the economic catastrophe that is unfolding in that nation at the moment. The collapse of the once prosperous Venezuelan economy spurred the election of the Democratic Unity Roundtable opposition party. As of late last year, inflation was over 800% and is projected to rise to as much as 2,300% this year. Runaway inflation is only exacerbated by the near decimated value of the Venezuelan Bolivar. While the nation has set its official exchange rate at 10 Bolivar per US dollar; the reality is that for much of the Venezuelan public the currency is functionally worthless. According to the Cato Institute and Reporting done by Vox, the Government rate of 10 to 1 is only available to Maduro and his allies while the vast majority of Venezuelans are left to a black market where Bolivar can be worth as little as 12000 per US dollar (graphic above).

The economic problems in Venezuela have resulted in an explosion of Food and Drug costs, which can no longer be subsidized by the Venezuelan government. The end of the subsidies disproportionately affect the poorest Venezuelans. Increasing inflation and the absence of government subsidies food and medicine are increasingly beyond the reach of Venezuelans. In many cases, the people are forced to choose between the two. The cost of food, in particular, has been adversely affected by drastically decreased imports. (graphic above). This had led to a lot of empty shelves at markets across the nation.

The exploding inflation, imploding economy, and desperation of the Venezuelan people seeking food and Medicine have seriously damage the reputation and popularity of Nicolas

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17 “Venezuela Food Crisis Deepens as Shipments Plummet.” CNNMoney, Cable News Network
Maduro. In a recent poll 80% of the Venezuelan public want to see Maduro removed from Power.\textsuperscript{18} This despite the fact that there seems to be broad public support for Chavismo, the movement began by Hugo Chavez in the 1990s. They were able to use Maduro's decimated popularity to gain their majority in the Venezuelan legislature. They did this by making the case that the Venezuelan economy has become markedly worse since Maduro's election, a charge that is not totally baseless (graphic below\textsuperscript{19}). Despite these sweeping opposition victories Nicolas Maduro looks to be in a position to retain his new found pseudo authoritarian power using the courts and the newly impaneled National Constituent Assembly. This creates a domestic atmosphere where “there are no independent institutions left to act as a check on executive power in Venezuela.”\textsuperscript{20}

![Graph showing economic data](image_url)

The International Community has expressed deep concern about the situation in Venezuela. Despite this, no official you and response has been issued. The United States called informal meetings of the Security Council in May and November of 2017. No actions or resolutions came of these meetings.\textsuperscript{21} The November meeting was boycotted by several Security Council Members including Russia, China, and Egypt. These delegations were upset that the UN appear to be attempting to metal in the private fares of a sovereign nation.\textsuperscript{22}

\textsuperscript{18} Ellis, Sam. “The Collapse of Venezuela, Explained.” Vox, Vox, 29 Aug. 2017
\textsuperscript{19} Ellis, Sam. “The Collapse of Venezuela, Explained.” Vox, Vox, 29 Aug. 2017
\textsuperscript{20} “It's Time for UN Security Council to Send Strong Message on Venezuela.” Human Rights Watch, Human Rights Watch, 13 Nov. 2017
\textsuperscript{22} Nichols, Michelle. “Russia, China, Others Boycott U.S. Meeting at U.N. on Venezuela.” Reuters, Thomson Reuters, 13 Nov. 2017
Despite the lack of UN action there has still been some International pressure on the Venezuelan government. The United States and the European Union have both imposed sanctions on the Venezuelan government and several of maduro's top officials. There is some disagreement, however, about the effectiveness and advisability of sanctions. Specifically there is a fear that an overly strict sanctions regime could lead to a further isolation of the Venezuelan government and an escalation of violence against the Venezuelan people.23

*Questions to Consider:*

- What, if any, role should the international community and the UN play in the Venezuelan Crisis?
- Is it more important to ensure the security of the region or to protect the human rights of the Venezuelan people? Can there be a balance between the two?
- With mounting evidence of election fraud and keeping in mind the presidential elections that are supposed to take place in fall of 2018 what, if anything, can the UNSC do to ensure fair elections going forward?
- Should the UNSC impose sanctions on Venezuela?

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23 “Venezuela Food Crisis Deepens as Shipments Plummet.” CNNMoney, Cable News Network


