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World Wednesday: Violence in Venezuela

June 7, 2017

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In the past months, violence has spread through Venezuela. Violence is a daily occurrence in the wake of an instable government and a failing economy. Current Venezuelan president Nicolas Maduro is attempting to rewrite the constitution and many fear he is seeking a dictatorship. The Supreme Court and the National Assembly are at odds with each other, dividing the country. The Supreme Court chose to side with Maduro and even went so far as to declare decisions made by the National Assembly to be null. This aggressive opposition incited violence, which has continued throughout the streets of Venezuela.

Not only has the oppression of the opposition that sparks violence, so has the general state of the country's economy. The inflation rate has skyrocketed and the economy is unstable at best. Venezuela relies on oil as their primary marketable good. Since 2014, the oil prices have been falling, plunging the country into a serious debt. Furthermore, The government is no longer able to pay their subsidies or fund necessary public programs. In particular, the health care system has been hit particularly hard and many people no longer have access to the health care they need.

Along with lack of cash to pay subsidies and fund programs, the government cannot import as many goods as they could before, spiraling the country into a food shortage. When it stopped becoming profitable for Venezuelans to produce their own food, the government started importing. However, deep in economic crisis, the imports are harder to come by and food is more and more expensive.

Due to food shortage, many Venezuelans are migrating to Columbia. Immigration services in Colombia report that there are roughly 200,000 Venezuelans currently inside the country. Venezuelan citizens have not received help from the government and cannot get documentation or sustainable jobs. While their living condition in Colombia is vastly improved from Venezuela, they still do not have many opportunities. Venezuelans are thankful for a place to migrate to, but with the rapid influx, Colombia is having difficulty accommodating and funding so many additional

civilians. The political and economic instability in Venezuela has leached across the border and this crisis no longer belongs solely to Venezuela.

Photo Courtesy of AlJazeera