

SUBCHAPTER I—SUPPORT FOR THE INTERIM PRESIDENT OF VENEZUELA AND RECOGNITION OF THE VENEZUELAN NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

§ 9701. Findings; sense of Congress in support of the Interim President of Venezuela

(a) Findings

Congress makes the following findings:

(1) Venezuela's electoral event on May 20, 2018 was characterized by widespread fraud and did not comply with international standards for a free, fair, and transparent electoral process.

(2) Given the fraudulent nature of Venezuela's May 20, 2018 electoral event, Nicolás Maduro's tenure as President of Venezuela ended on January 10, 2019.

(3) The National Assembly of Venezuela approved a resolution on January 15, 2019 that terminated Nicolás Maduro's authority as the President of Venezuela.

(4) On January 23, 2019, the President of the National Assembly of Venezuela was sworn in as the Interim President of Venezuela.

(b) Sense of Congress

It is the sense of Congress—

(1) to support the decisions by the United States Government, more than 50 governments around the world, the Organization of American States, the Inter-American Development Bank, and the European Parliament to recognize National Assembly President Juan Guaidó as the Interim President of Venezuela;

(2) to encourage the Interim President of Venezuela to advance efforts to hold democratic presidential elections in the shortest possible period; and

(3) that the Organization of American States, with support from the United States Government and partner governments, should provide diplomatic, technical, and financial support for a new presidential election in Venezuela that complies with international standards for a free, fair, and transparent electoral process.

(Pub. L. 116–94, div. J, title I, §111, Dec. 20, 2019, 133 Stat. 3030.)

SHORT TITLE

Pub. L. 116–94, div. J, title I, §101, Dec. 20, 2019, 133 Stat. 3030, provided that: “This title [enacting this chapter and amending provisions set out as a note under section 1701 of Title 50, War and National Defense] may be cited as the ‘Venezuela Emergency Relief, Democracy Assistance, and Development Act of 2019’ or the ‘VERDAD Act of 2019.’”

§ 9702. Recognition of Venezuela's democratically elected National Assembly

(a) Findings

Congress finds that Venezuela's unicameral National Assembly convened on January 6, 2016, following democratic elections that were held on December 6, 2015.

(b) Sense of Congress

It is the sense of Congress that Venezuela's democratically elected National Assembly is the only national level democratic institution remaining in the country.

(c) Policy

It is the policy of the United States to recognize the democratically elected National Assembly of Venezuela as the only legitimate national legislative body in Venezuela.

(d) Assistance to Venezuela's National Assembly

The Secretary of State, in coordination with the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development, shall prioritize efforts to provide technical assistance to support the democratically elected National Assembly of Venezuela in accordance with section 9731 of this title.

(Pub. L. 116–94, div. J, title I, §112, Dec. 20, 2019, 133 Stat. 3031.)

§ 9703. Advancing a negotiated solution to Venezuela's crisis

(a) Sense of Congress

It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) direct, credible negotiations led by the Interim President of Venezuela and members of Venezuela's democratically elected National Assembly—

(A) are supported by stakeholders in the international community that have recognized the Interim President of Venezuela;

(B) include the input and interests of Venezuelan civil society; and

(C) represent the best opportunity to reach a solution to the Venezuelan crisis that includes—

(i) holding a new presidential election that complies with international standards for a free, fair, and transparent electoral process;

(ii) ending Nicolás Maduro's usurpation of presidential authorities;

(iii) restoring democracy and the rule of law;

(iv) freeing political prisoners; and

(v) facilitating the delivery of humanitarian aid;

(2) dialogue between the Maduro regime and representatives of the political opposition that commenced in October 2017, and were supported by the Governments of Mexico, of Chile, of Bolivia, and of Nicaragua, did not result in an agreement because the Maduro regime failed to credibly participate in the process; and

(3) negotiations between the Maduro regime and representatives of the political opposition that commenced in October 2016, and were supported by the Vatican, did not result in an agreement because the Maduro regime failed to credibly participate in the process.

(b) Policy

It is the policy of the United States to support diplomatic engagement in order to advance a negotiated and peaceful solution to Venezuela's political, economic, and humanitarian crisis that is described in subsection (a)(1).

(Pub. L. 116–94, div. J, title I, §113, Dec. 20, 2019, 133 Stat. 3031.)