

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.)

SUBCHAPTER II—HUMANITARIAN RELIEF
FOR VENEZUELA

§ 9711. Humanitarian relief for the Venezuelan people

(a) Sense of Congress

It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) the United States Government should expand efforts to peacefully address Venezuela's humanitarian crisis; and

(2) humanitarian assistance—

(A) should be targeted toward those most in need and delivered through partners that uphold internationally recognized humanitarian principles; and

(B) should not be passed through the control or distribution mechanisms of the Maduro regime.

(b) Humanitarian relief

(1) In general

The Secretary of State, in coordination with the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development, shall provide—

(A) humanitarian assistance to individuals and communities in Venezuela, including—

(i) public health commodities and services, including medicines and basic medical supplies and equipment;

(ii) basic food commodities and nutritional supplements needed to address growing malnutrition and improve food security for the people of Venezuela, with a specific emphasis on the most vulnerable populations; and

(iii) technical assistance to ensure that health and food commodities are appropriately selected, procured, targeted, and distributed; and

(B) Venezuelans and hosting communities, as appropriate, in neighboring countries with humanitarian aid, such as—

(i) urgently needed health and nutritional assistance, including logistical and technical assistance to hospitals and health centers in affected communities;

(ii) food assistance for vulnerable individuals, including assistance to improve food security for affected communities; and

(iii) hygiene supplies and sanitation services.

(2) Aid to Venezuelans in neighboring countries

The aid described in paragraph (1)(B)—

(A) may be provided—

(i) directly to Venezuelans in neighboring countries, including countries of the Caribbean; or

(ii) indirectly through the communities in which the Venezuelans reside; and

(B) should focus on the most vulnerable Venezuelans in neighboring countries.

(c) Humanitarian assistance strategy update

Not later than 180 days after December 20, 2019, the Secretary of State, in coordination with the Administrator of the United States

Agency for International Development, shall submit, to the appropriate congressional committees, an update to the Venezuela humanitarian assistance strategy described in the conference report accompanying the Consolidated Appropriations Act (Public Law 116-6), to cover a 2-year period and include—

(1) a description of the United States humanitarian assistance provided under this section;

(2) a description of United States diplomatic efforts to ensure support from international donors, including regional partners in Latin America and the Caribbean, for the provision of humanitarian assistance to the people of Venezuela;

(3) the identification of governments that are willing to provide financial and technical assistance for the provision of such humanitarian assistance to the people of Venezuela and a description of such assistance; and

(4) the identification of the financial and technical assistance to be provided by multilateral institutions, including the United Nations humanitarian agencies, the Pan American Health Organization, the Inter-American Development Bank, and the World Bank, and a description of such assistance.

(d) Diplomatic engagement

The Secretary of State, in consultation with the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development, shall work with relevant foreign governments and multilateral organizations to coordinate a donors summit and carry out diplomatic engagement to advance the strategy required under subsection (c).

(e) Authorization of appropriations

There is authorized to be appropriated \$400,000,000 for fiscal year 2020 to carry out the activities set forth in subsection (b).

(f) Defined term

In this section, the term “appropriate congressional committees” means—

(1) the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate;

(2) the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate;

(3) the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives; and

(4) the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives.

(Pub. L. 116-94, div. J, title I, § 121, Dec. 20, 2019, 133 Stat. 3032.)

REFERENCES IN TEXT

The Consolidated Appropriations Act (Public Law 116-6), referred to in subsec. (c), is Pub. L. 116-6, Feb. 15, 2019, 133 Stat. 13, known as the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2019. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see Tables.

§ 9712. Support for efforts at the United Nations on the humanitarian crisis in Venezuela

(a) Sense of Congress

It is the sense of Congress that the United Nations humanitarian agencies should conduct and publish independent assessments of the humanitarian situation in Venezuela, including—