

## VENEZUELA

At a press conference on Thursday 24 January 2019, you [Minister Payne] responded to a question on Australia's position on the Maduro – Guaidó power struggle, stating that Australia “will consider those matters”.

On 23 January, amid mass protests against Maduro's regime, Juan Guaidó, President of Venezuela's National Assembly, self-declared as the interim president of Venezuela. The Venezuelan constitution has provision for Mr Guaidó's actions. The United States immediately recognised Guaidó as the interim president and encouraged others do the same. s 33(b)  
s 33(b)

In response to statements by the United States, the Maduro regime broke diplomatic relations with the United States, giving its diplomats 72 hours to leave. US Secretary of State Pompeo has said the United States would maintain its diplomatic mission in Venezuela and conduct diplomatic relations through the government of interim president Guaidó.

On 23 January, the Lima Group [without Mexico], recognised Guaidó as interim president and called for new elections. The European Union has called for free and credible elections but has not yet recognised Mr Guaidó as interim president. The United Kingdom tweeted support for the EU statement. The Organization of American States, Ecuador and Uruguay have recognised Guaidó as interim president. Mexico recognises Maduro as President. Russia, China, Turkey, Syria, Cuba and Bolivia have made statements in support of Maduro.

On 10 January 2019, following a flawed election process in May 2018, Maduro was inaugurated as President for a second six-year term. On 9 January 2019, HOM Bogota (accredited to Venezuela) released two tweets outlining Australia's concern and support for the Lima Group's calls for Maduro to transfer executive power to the National Assembly and allow new elections to be held.

On 21 May 2018, Australia joined a statement (with Argentina, Canada, Chile, Mexico, United States) stating the 20 May 2018 Venezuelan Presidential election lacked legitimacy.

**Talking points:**

- Australia is deeply concerned at the deteriorating political, security, economic and humanitarian situation in Venezuela and the significant affects it is having across the Latin America region.
- On 10 January, the Australian Government supported the Lima Group's (Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru) call for Nicolás Maduro to refrain from assuming the presidency
  - we do not recognise Maduro as President
  - we called for new, free and fair presidential elections to be held as soon as possible.
- Australia acknowledges the United States and others have since recognised the President of the National Assembly, Juan Guaidó, as interim President in accordance with the Venezuelan constitution
  - Australia is monitoring the situation and considering these matters.

**Handling note**

s 33(a)(iii)

s 33(a)(iii)

A significant number

of countries have now come out recognising Guaidó as interim President, including the United States, Canada, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Peru, Paraguay, Colombia, Ecuador, Panama, Costa Rica, Honduras and Guatemala. Those supporting Maduro include Russia, Cuba, Bolivia, China and Turkey. s 33(b)

s 33(b)

s 33(b) s 33(a)(iii)

s 33(a)(iii)



Australian Government  
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

**BRIEF FOR MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS**  
**SENATOR THE HON MARISE PAYNE**  
**VISIT TO WASHINGTON DC**  
27 January – 1 February



s 22(a)(iii)



## VENEZUELA

Nicolás Maduro was inaugurated as President of Venezuela on 10 January 2019, following a flawed election process in May 2018. On 21 May 2018, Australia joined a statement (with Argentina, Canada, Chile, Mexico, United States) stating the 20 May 2018 Venezuelan Presidential election lacked legitimacy. On 9 January 2019, Australia's Ambassador in Bogota (accredited to Venezuela) released two tweets outlining Australia's concern and support for the Lima Group's calls for Maduro to transfer executive power to the National Assembly and allow new elections to be held.

On 23 January, amid mass protests against Maduro's regime, Juan Guaidó, President of Venezuela's National Assembly, declared himself the interim president of Venezuela. The Venezuelan Constitution has provision for Mr Guaidó's actions. The United States immediately recognised Guaidó as the interim president and encouraged others to do the same. <sup>s 33(b)</sup>  
s 33(b)

s 33(b) In response to US statements, the Maduro regime broke diplomatic relations with the United States, giving its diplomats 72 hours to leave the country. US Secretary of State Pompeo responded that the United States would maintain its diplomatic mission in Venezuela and conduct diplomatic relations through the government of interim president Guaidó.

On 23 January, the Lima Group [without Mexico], recognised Guaidó as interim president and called for new elections. The European Union has called for free and credible elections but has not yet recognised Mr Guaidó as interim president. The United Kingdom tweeted support for the EU statement. The Organization of American States, Ecuador and Uruguay have recognised Guaidó as interim president. Mexico recognises Maduro as President. Russia, China, Turkey, Syria, Cuba and Bolivia have made statements in support of Maduro.

s 33(a)(iii)

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

s 33(a)(iii) and 47E(d)  
s 22(1)(a)(ii)

s 22(1)(a)(ii)  
s 33(a)(iii) and s 47E(d)  
s 22(1)(a)(ii)

s 33(a)(iii) and s 47E(d)



s 22(1)(a)(ii)

- Australia shares US concern over the flawed election in **Venezuela**.
  - we have supported the Lima Group's call for Nicolas Maduro to refrain from assuming the presidency on 10 January and have recognised the President of the National Assembly, Juan Guaido, in assuming the position of interim president.











## VENEZUELA

s 33(a)(iii) and s 47E(d)

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### Key Messages

Australia remains deeply concerned about the ongoing crisis in Venezuela. We have already taken strong action, following the lead of the Lima Group and the United States. We announced our support for the President of the National Assembly, Juan Guaidó, in becoming interim president until free and fair elections can be held.

I welcome any insights you have on the situation on the ground, and next steps for the Administration's response to the crisis.

The deteriorating humanitarian situation is very concerning. Australia contributes to a range of multilateral humanitarian programs and funds, which assist in meeting immediate needs created by the crisis. We have been a strong voice in support of the people of Venezuela, advocating for their human rights, humanitarian needs and the restoration of democracy and the rule of law. We have made numerous statements in Human Rights Council Sessions, prior to and since taking a seat on the Council in 2018.

s 33(a)(iii)

and we have provided funding to assist refugees. We now look to Venezuela's regional neighbours and its multilateral partners to continue leading support in the transition to democracy and resourcing humanitarian assistance and a future recovery package. We will continue to use our HRC seat and diplomatic channels to urge parties to work towards a peaceful resolution to the situation, including a return to democracy and the rule of law, and upholding of the human rights of Venezuelans.

## Talking Points

- Australia remains deeply concerned about the devastating political, economic, social and humanitarian crisis in Venezuela
  - especially its disproportionate impact on women and children
  - and significant impact across the region.
- Australia contributes to a range of multilateral humanitarian programs and funds, which assist in meeting immediate needs created by the crisis
  - we have been a strong voice in support of the people of Venezuela, advocating for their human rights, humanitarian needs and the restoration of democracy and the rule of law
  - we have made numerous statements in Human Rights Council Sessions, prior to and since taking a seat on the Council in 2018
  - we may resettle some displaced Venezuelans.
- Australia looks to Venezuela's regional neighbours and its multilateral partners to continue leading support in the transition to democracy and resourcing humanitarian assistance and a future recovery package.

## If raised: will Australia impose sanctions?

- Australia has no plans to impose sanctions on Venezuela at this time
  - we keep autonomous sanctions under continuous review
  - Australia will continue to focus its efforts on advocating for the Venezuelan people, who are suffering from a spiralling economic, political and humanitarian crisis.



s 22(1)(a)(ii)

- **Venezuela** looms larger for the United States than for us. s 33(a)(iii)  
s 33(a)(iii)

s 22(1)(a)(ii)







