

Stop crackdown, restore human rights and democracy – JCP statement on the Venezuelan crisis

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In the early days of the Venezuelan government led by the late President Hugo Chavez, the Japanese Communist Party paid close attention to the reform process that his government had promoted by gaining wide public support through elections.

However, due to the ensuing misrule and degradation of the governments of Chavez and his successor Nicolas Maduro, concern over human rights, including citizens' political liberty and their right to life, has been increasing. Under the international order after World War II, the guarantee of human rights has become an international issue. Thus, the current crisis in Venezuela should be considered to be a grave international issue.

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In May 2017, the JCP urged the Venezuelan government to immediately stop its suppressive measures against public protests and implement responsible steps to restore a democratic order. Since then, unfortunately, the situation in Venezuela has significantly worsened.

At this moment, tensions are continuing to grow between mounting public protests and the Maduro government.

The JCP demands that the Maduro government put an immediate end to its crackdown on the protests. We also call on the government to quickly address the current acute shortage of foods and medicines and accept humanitarian aid provided by external organizations such as the United Nations and the International Red Cross.

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The Venezuelan crisis has mainly come from the fact that the Maduro government revoked the authority of the National Assembly which has been controlled by opposition parties since 2015 and that the government attempted to maintain its power in the 2018 presidential election by removing main opposition rivals and oppressing opponents violently.

In light of this process, it is impossible to regard the Maduro regime as a legitimate government based on the will of the Venezuelan people. For a fundamental resolution of

this crisis, we believe it is essential to implement measures to restore democracy, including the holding of another election.

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In order to settle this issue, it is also vital to eliminate external interference, respect the Venezuelans' right to self-determination, and pursue peaceful means without resorting to violence.

The JCP firmly opposes any country's attempt to interfere in the affairs of Venezuela.

In particular, military intervention is absolutely intolerable as it will only worsen the situation by taking a heavy toll. U.S. President Donald Trump's administration repeatedly refers to military intervention as "an option", but no country has the right to do so in violation of international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

The JCP is also strongly opposed to some countries' moves to deem the public protests as hostile and force global movements to show "solidarity" with the Maduro regime.

The Venezuelan crisis should be resolved by the Venezuelan people themselves.