



VENEZUELA

HUNGER CRIMES

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Kids playing on a football pitch in Mamera, a very dangerous slum in Caracas. The lack of food is also causing an educational crisis, since many mothers refuse to take their children to school with an empty stomach.

- ▶ In Venezuela hunger is forcing more and more people to get food through violence
- ▶ By the end of 2018, inflation will have risen up to the record of one million per cent
- ▶ 89.4 per cent of Venezuelans (source: ENCOVI) do not have the economic resources to buy food
- ▶ The country is one of the most violent in the world: every day 73 Venezuelans are murdered
- ▶ The Maduro government is distributing free boxes of food, but this plan (CLAP) has not proven to be enough to solve the crisis



A woman cries during the funeral of her husband, Keiber Cubero, 25 years old. Father of a little girl and struggling to find food, Keiber went with two other friends to rob a restaurant during the night. They were caught and killed by police officers while fleeing the scene.



A woman stares at her empty fridge at her house in Petare. For many families, even the most basic items such as tomatoes or beans are out of reach: according to ENCOVI, 80% of homes in Venezuela are food insecure.



A police officer registers a car.



Men unload CLAP boxes in Petare. The CLAP box contains basic food supplies and is one of the measures of the socialist government to fight the "economic war". About 87% of households now receive CLAPs subsidized food, yet it is never clear when the next cargo of boxes will arrive. It has been highly criticized by the opposition as a tool for ensuring the votes of the poorest members of society.

Venezuela, the revolution of hunger

For a time the “Saudi Arabia” of South America, today Venezuela is more similar to Syria. A country that has been economically destroyed and is socially unstable fighting an ever more alarming spectre: hunger. In the slum of Petare – as in a large part of the outskirts of Caracas – the refrigerators remain empty for days, the queues grow longer at the supermarkets, and the necessity of procuring something to eat drives young people to violence. Many come together in armed gangs, plunder houses and shops, rob food from simple passers-by along the roads, and are paid in foodstuffs.

Inflation has reached unsustainable levels and this has led prices of products to double week after week: today, nine out of ten Venezuelans (source: ENCOVI) do not feel they have the sufficient economic resources to buy food. Naturally, for some time now the government has been trying to remedy this through the CLAP plan, which sees the distribution of free boxes of food. But this does not seem to be enough, and for the first time in the history of Venezuela the crime of hunger has appeared in the classification of the greatest danger to national security.



A motor-taxi driver shows the scars of the wounds he suffered when he was assaulted and shot two times by motorcycle thieves.



People lining up to withdraw money from an ATM. Behind them, some graffiti reads "hunger".



Roxana Gutierrez, 19 years old, looks after her son. While she and her husband Carlos, 20 years old, had steady jobs, it became harder for them to find food, which in turn pushed Carlos to begin stealing motorcycles. He is now serving a prison sentence, and she is pregnant with their second child.



The neighbourhood of Petare, in Caracas. With a population of over one million people, it is Venezuela's most dangerous slum. A majority of violent crimes occur in the slums, home to the most vulnerable and hardest hit by the crisis.



Children look for food in a garbage dump in the back alley of a large shopping centre. According to Cáritas, 53% of families have had to look for food at unconventional places, often meaning the garbage.



Keiber Cubero's dead body is carried by friends on its way to the cemetery. Over 95% of violent deaths in Venezuela are never solved.



A police officer registers suspects during a raid.



Corpses at the morgue of the Perez Carreño's hospital.

Though official crime figures are not released by the government, according to the non-governmental organization OVV, Venezuela had over 26,616 homicides in 2017, a rate of 89 per 100,000 inhabitants, while in Caracas alone 1,331 people were killed within a year.



A girl walks past a crime scene. A few minutes earlier, a man had stabbed three people with a kitchen knife.



Prisoners crammed into their cells at a police station. Although prison overcrowding has been an issue for decades, currently the Venezuelan prison system is on the edge of collapse.



A family mourns the death of a family member, who was killed violently. Over 95% of cases are never solved.



A policeman confiscates a knife during a night patrol.



A political mural shows the eyes of former President Hugo Chavez.



Maryeling Veloz (34) cries over the death of her nephew, Yoveiker Mendoza (17). Yoveiker was killed by the special police force FAES.



A grandmother feeds her grandchild at a charity kitchen run by volunteers and an NGO. Often, someone in the family ends up offering their meal so that the other members of the family can eat a bit more.



A man waits at the highway in the early morning.



Police during an operation in the neighbourhood of La Cruz. The economic crisis and soaring inflation has led to a rise in crime and insecurity in the country. According to the OVV, Venezuela is now the second most dangerous country in the world.



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