Arria-Formula Meeting of the Security Council: Venezuela as Case Study of Corruption, Peace, and Security

Event: Arria-Formula Meeting on Venezuela as Case Study of Corruption, Peace, and Security

Date: Monday, September 10, 2018

Time: 3:00PM-5:00PM

Location: Conference Room 1

Format: Open to all member states, civil society, and press. Briefers will deliver remarks, followed by interventions from members of the Security Council.

Purpose and Background:

On the morning of September 10, the United States will convene the first-ever meeting of the Security Council on corruption, peace, and security. Building on that discussion, the United States will also host an informal Arria-formula meeting of the Security Council in the afternoon to focus on one country where pervasive corruption has led to instability and a dire humanitarian crisis: Venezuela.

The goal of this discussion will be to examine how the Maduro regime’s widespread theft of state resources and establishment of kleptocratic networks are at the root of Venezuela’s challenges. Elites at the highest levels of the state have enriched themselves with the state’s oil revenue and other official funds, thereby further depriving the Venezuelan people. Venezuela’s top leaders are also involved in other illicit activity, including facilitating narcotics trafficking, which affects the security of the entire Western Hemisphere. After its policies led to a collapse in domestic food production, Venezuela’s leaders tightened their control on food imports and created a new vehicle for corruption through a government-run subsidized food program, the Local Supply and Production Committees (CLAP). As long as this predation continues, Venezuela will remain at risk for further violence and will continue undermining the stability of the region as millions of its people flee the crisis within its borders.

This Arria-formula meeting will feature briefers with two different perspectives on the problem. Assistant Secretary for Terrorist Financing Marshall Billingslea will discuss the challenges of identifying and disrupting networks of corruption, and explain the tools available to member states to respond. From the field, Mercedes de Freitas will discuss the impact of corruption on the everyday lives of the Venezuelan people, and convey the immense challenges facing members of Venezuelan civil society in shining a spotlight on the regime’s behavior.
Briefers:

1) Mercedes de Freitas, Executive Director, Transparencia Venezuela

Venezuela is one of the most corrupt countries in the world – ranked 169/180 in the Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index. As founder and Executive Director of Transparencia Venezuela – the Venezuela chapter of leading global anticorruption organization Transparency International – de Freitas has been a leader in raising awareness of Venezuela’s systemic corruption, as the Maduro regime has looted state resources and captured institutions with impunity. De Freitas can speak to how corruption has exacerbated the Venezuelan crisis, created a dire humanitarian situation, and eroded democracy. She can discuss Venezuelan civil society efforts to curb corruption and hold the regime accountable.

2) Marshall Billingslea, Assistant Secretary for Terrorist Financing, U.S. Department of the Treasury

Since the start of the Venezuelan crisis, the U.S. Department of the Treasury has taken major steps to combat the kleptocracy of the Maduro regime and counter the threat it poses to international security. The Treasury Department has imposed carefully calibrated sanctions on the Maduro regime that have been crafted to avoid harm to the Venezuelan people. Assistant Secretary for Terrorist Financing Marshall Billingslea will discuss how the Treasury Department has identified and taken action against individuals and entities that have contributed to the systematic corruption of the Maduro regime.