



**A Global Americans
Explainer**

Colombia- Venezuela Relations Under Gustavo Petro



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Acknowledgments

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Introduction

Gustavo Petro is unlike any other Colombian president in recent history. Elected in July 2022, Petro is described by many news outlets as Colombia's first leftist president—at least since the 1940s.¹ Petro's ascent, from a rebel in the M-19 guerrilla group in the 1980s to the presidency today, marks a turn for the country's domestic policies. It also marks a shift in Colombia's posture toward Venezuela.

Since coming to office, Petro has normalized relations with Venezuela, appointed an ambassador to Caracas, and reopened the border between the two countries. He has also shifted Colombia's voting patterns in multilateral organizations. Under Petro, Colombia has promoted the Mexico negotiations between the Maduro government and the opposition while remaining welcoming of migrants and refugees from Venezuela. With Petro's announcement of an upcoming meeting of foreign ministers and diplomats in Bogota to discuss the situation in Venezuela, it is more important than ever to understand the evolution of Colombia-Venezuela relations.²

This explainer analyzes the evolution of Colombia-Venezuela relations over the last 25 years and then examines Petro's stance toward Venezuela before coming to office. It then covers Petro's stance toward diplomacy and human rights in Venezuela, his Venezuela team, and his position on negotiations. The backgrounder ends by summarizing Petro's policy toward Venezuelan migrants and refugees.

Colombia-Venezuela Relations in Context

Security concerns have largely driven Colombia's foreign policy in recent decades. Since 1964, the country has been embroiled in an armed conflict involving the military, right-wing paramilitaries, and left-wing guerrilla groups (including the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC, and the National Liberation Army, or ELN). Colombia's armed groups have historically gained revenue from narcotics trafficking (especially cocaine), hostage-taking, illicit

¹ See, for example: García, Regina, and Astrid Suarez. "Ex-Rebel Wins Runoff to Be Colombia's 1st Leftist President." *Associated Press*, June 19, 2022, sec. Politics. <https://apnews.com/article/politics-gustavo-petro-colombia-caribbean-presidential-elections-2d1828677b5ab1a2eb5d277c02f1b27c>; AFP. "Colombia's First-Ever Leftist President Sworn In." *France 24*, August 7, 2022. <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20220807-colombia-s-first-ever-leftist-president-sworn-in>; Eaton, Charlotte. "Colombia's First Leftist President? The Election from a Historical Perspective | LSE Latin America and Caribbean." *LSE Latin America and Caribbean Blog* (blog), June 23, 2022. <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/latamcaribbean/2022/06/23/colombias-first-leftist-president-2022-historical-perspective/>.

² Quesada, Juan Diego. "Petro convoca una reunión mundial sobre Venezuela en la que no se descarta a Maduro." *El País*, March 28, 2023, sec. América Colombia. <https://elpais.com/america-colombia/2023-03-28/petro-convoca-una-reunion-mundial-sobre-venezuela-en-la-que-podria-estar-maduro.html>.

gold mining, extortion, and other criminal activities.³ To combat these security challenges, the Colombian government cultivated a strong relationship with the United States. During the administration of Andrés Pastrana (1998-2002), the government negotiated Plan Colombia—a program for U.S. foreign aid and security assistance to combat drug trafficking and terrorism. Plan Colombia expanded under President Álvaro Uribe (2002-2010), who took even more aggressive actions to combat guerrilla groups.⁴

The Colombian conflict during this period had an international dimension beyond just U.S. military assistance, however. Colombian policymakers repeatedly accused Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez (1999-2013) of supporting FARC and ELN rebels, including by providing them material support and safe haven on Venezuelan territory.⁵ Tensions reached a boiling point in 2008 when Uribe authorized a military operation against the FARC in Ecuador. Chávez briefly suspended diplomatic relations with Colombia over the affair.⁶

Colombia-Venezuela ties improved modestly during the early years of Juan Manuel Santos's administration (2010-2018). Venezuela even served as a facilitator of the Colombian government's 2016 peace agreement with the FARC, though it withdrew before the parties finalized negotiations.⁷ Under Iván Duque (2018-2022), relations once again soured against a backdrop of the Venezuelan opposition establishing an interim government. The Duque administration recognized Juan Guaidó as the interim president of Venezuela in January 2019. Shortly after, Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro (2013-present) cut diplomatic ties with Bogota.⁸ Duque also led the region in accepting Venezuelan migrants, granting them temporary protected status in February 2021.⁹

³ Klobucista, Claire, and Danielle Renwick. "Colombia's Civil Conflict." Council on Foreign Relations, January 11, 2017. <https://www.cfr.org/background/colombias-civil-conflict>.

⁴ Beitel, June S. "Colombia: Background and U.S. Relations." Congressional Research Service, December 16, 2021. <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R43813>.

⁵ Vengoechea, Alejandra de. "Uribe Acusa a Chávez de Dar Cobijo a Los Jefes de Las FARC." *ABC Internacional*, July 16, 2010. https://www.abc.es/internacional/uribe-acusa-chavez-cobijo-201007160000_noticia.html;
Bronstein, Hugh. "Chavez and Uribe: Big Falling-out for 'Odd Couple.'" *Reuters*, March 5, 2008. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-venezuela-colombia-presidents-idUSN0551280320080305>.

⁶ *El País*. "Chávez rompe relaciones diplomáticas con Colombia y pone en alerta la frontera." July 22, 2010. https://elpais.com/internacional/2010/07/22/actualidad/1279749609_850215.html.

⁷ Kraul, Chris. "Venezuela Pulls out as Facilitator of Colombian Peace Talks." *Los Angeles Times*, May 29, 2013. <https://www.latimes.com/world/la-xpm-2013-may-29-la-fg-wn-venezuela-colombia-peace-talks-20130529-story.html>.

⁸ *Reuters*. "Colombia Recognizes Opposition Lawmaker Guaido as Venezuela's President." January 23, 2019. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-venezuela-politics-colombia-idUSKCN1PH2JD>; *BBC News Mundo*. "Venezuela rompe relaciones diplomáticas con Colombia y da 24 horas a sus diplomáticos para que abandonen el país." February 23, 2019. <https://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias-america-latina-47341056>.

⁹ Government of Colombia, Ministry of Foreign Relations. "Presidente Duque Anuncia Decisión Histórica de Crear Estatuto de Protección Temporal Para Migrantes Venezolanos En Colombia," February 8, 2021.

Petro's Relationship with the Venezuelan Government

Gustavo Petro was generally supportive of Hugo Chávez's political career. Both leaders served in far-left guerrilla groups during the 1980s. Both were sent to prison—Petro for his involvement in M-19 and Chávez for an attempted coup in 1992. In 1996, Petro hosted Chávez during his first visit to Bogota.¹⁰ After Chávez entered office in 1999, Petro rarely commented on the Colombia-Venezuela relationship, focusing primarily on Colombian domestic politics. He last met with Chávez in 2006 and grew ambivalent toward the leader by 2008, when he called Chávez a “romantic” with misplaced “goodwill” for his conciliatory attitude toward FARC.¹¹ However, after Chávez's death in 2013, Petro called Chávez a “great Latin American leader.” Likewise, in a 2018 interview, he declined to call Chávez a dictator, repeatedly stating that Chávez was “popularly elected several times.”¹²

Petro's statements about Maduro, on the other hand, have been far more critical. During his 2018 presidential campaign, Petro stated that Venezuela was in a “dictatorial process” involving “growing authoritarianism” and “corruption.”¹³ After Petro's electoral loss, Diosdado Cabello, vice president of Venezuela's ruling party (the United Socialist Party of Venezuela, or PSUV per its Spanish acronym), publicly called him a “wavering ... coward” and told him not to get involved in Venezuela.¹⁴ Petro continued to strongly criticize Maduro during his 2022 campaign, claiming that Maduro “belongs to a politics of death” and calling the Venezuelan president a “coward” who “does not embrace democracy.”¹⁵

<https://www.cancilleria.gov.co/newsroom/news/presidente-duque-anuncia-decision-historica-crear-estatuto-proteccion-temporal>.

¹⁰ Lozano, Daniel. “Gustavo Petro y el chavismo, una relación de raíces profundas alterada por la irrupción de Nicolás Maduro.” *La Nación* (Argentina), June 21, 2022. <https://www.lanacion.com.ar/el-mundo/gustavo-petro-y-el-chavismo-una-relacion-de-raices-profundas-alterada-por-la-irrupcion-de-nicolas-nid21062022/>.

¹¹ Rico Torres, Alfonso. “Gustavo Petro dice que no le interesa el apoyo de Maduro.” *RCN Radio*, November 15, 2018. <http://www.rcnradio.com/politica/gustavo-petro-dice-que-no-le-interesa-el-apoyo-de-maduro>; Anderson, Jon Lee. “Fidel's Heir.” *The New Yorker*, June 16, 2008. <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2008/06/23/fidels-heir>; *El Universo* (Ecuador). “Izquierda toma distancia de Chávez.” September 19, 2009, sec. Noticias. <https://www.eluniverso.com/2009/09/19/1/1361/izquierda-toma-distancia-chavez.html>.

¹² Petro, Gustavo. ¿Admiraba Gustavo Petro a Hugo Chávez? Esta fue la respuesta del aspirante presidencial colombiano. Interview by Jorge Ramos. Video, March 9, 2018. Univisión. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WWVA3GyV68A>.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Rico Torres 2018.

¹⁵ Petro, Gustavo. Gustavo Petro: “Nicolás Maduro pertenece a las políticas de la muerte.” Interview by Semana. Print, February 2, 2022. <https://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/gustavo-petro-nicolas-maduro-pertenece-a-las-politicas-de-la-muerte/202210/>; *El Heraldo* (Colombia). “Gustavo Petro respondió a Nicolás Maduro por

Petro's Diplomacy with the Maduro Government and Venezuelan Opposition

While Petro has been unequivocal in his criticisms of the Maduro government in Venezuela, he did not accept the legitimacy of the Duque-recognized interim government. For this, Juan Guaidó even went as far as accusing Petro of complicity with the Maduro regime.¹⁶ Petro, for his part, called Juan Guaidó a “nonexistent” president and—three days after winning the 2022 presidential election—contacted the Maduro government to begin discussing the normalization of diplomatic ties between the neighboring countries.¹⁷

Petro has normalized diplomatic relations with Venezuela at a rapid clip. Immediately after taking office on August 7, 2022, Petro reestablished diplomatic relations with Caracas. Within four days, the two countries announced their respective ambassadors.¹⁸ In September, the two countries officially reopened their border, which had been partially opened in June 2021.¹⁹ Petro met personally with Maduro in Caracas in November, returning to the city in January and March.²⁰

Petro's decisions have left an impact on Venezuela's domestic politics. In October 2022, Petro's government voted to withdraw recognition for Guaidó's representative at the Organization of American States.²¹ Though the measure failed, Colombia joined a growing bloc of states declining

llamarlo ‘cobarde.’” February 12, 2022. <https://www.elheraldo.co/colombia/gustavo-petro-respondio-nicolas-maduro-por-llamarlo-cobarde-887144>.

¹⁶ *El Tiempo*. “Petro desestima, porque es cómplice de la dictadura de Maduro: Guaidó.” January 20, 2020, sec. mundo. <https://www.eltiempo.com/mundo/venezuela/juan-guaido-dice-que-gustavo-petro-es-complice-de-nicolas-maduro-453714>.

¹⁷ Arn, Europa Press, and AFP. “Guaidó no tiene control en Venezuela: Petro.” *La Jornada*, August 16, 2022. <https://www.jornada.com.mx/notas/2022/08/16/mundo/guaido-no-tiene-control-en-venezuela-petro/>.

¹⁸ International Crisis Group. “The Fragile but Crucial Relations between Venezuela and Colombia since 2019: A Timeline,” December 1, 2022. <https://www.crisisgroup.org/latin-america-caribbean/andes/colombia/fragile-crucial-relations-between-venezuela-and-colombia>.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ International Crisis Group 2019; Pérez, Rafael. “Gustavo Petro sostiene en Caracas una segunda reunión con Nicolás Maduro.” *France 24*, January 7, 2023, sec. america-latina. <https://www.france24.com/es/am%C3%A9rica-latina/20230107-gustavo-petro-sostiene-en-caracas-una-segunda-reuni%C3%B3n-con-nicol%C3%A1s-maduro>; Quesada, Juan Diego. “Petro y Maduro vuelven a verse las caras mientras la mesa de México continúa en suspenso.” *El País*, March 24, 2023, sec. América Colombia. <https://elpais.com/america-colombia/2023-03-24/petro-y-maduro-vuelven-a-verse-las-caras-mientras-la-mesa-de-mexico-continua-en-suspenso.html>.

²¹ Aquino, Marco, and Rochabrun Marcelo. “Latin America's Left Raises Pressure on Venezuela's Guaidó at OAS Summit | Reuters.” *Reuters*, October 6, 2022. <https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/latin-americas-left-raises-pressure-venezuelas-guaido-oas-2022-10-06/>.

to recognize the interim government. Venezuela’s opposition-controlled National Assembly voted to terminate the interim government in December 2022.²²

One key factor may help explain Petro’s restoration of diplomatic ties with Venezuela. As with past Colombian presidents, internal security is a key driver for Petro’s foreign policy goals. Petro campaigned on a platform of “total peace,” seeking negotiations with the ELN and other rebel groups. While Colombia’s Congress approved negotiations under the plan in October 2022, the peace process has faced challenges—including the ELN’s rejection of a ceasefire in January.²³ For better or for worse, Venezuela will play a key role in Petro’s bid to attain peace given the porous border between the two countries.

Trade, migration, and border security issues are also at play in the relationship between Colombia and Venezuela—as is control over Venezuelan assets. One such asset is a major stake in Colombian fertilizer producer Monómeros, held by the Venezuelan state oil company. During the Duque administration, the Guaidó-led interim government had the authority to appoint officials to oversee Monómeros shares. Following Petro’s restoration of diplomatic ties, however, this authority returned to the Maduro government.²⁴

Petro’s Venezuela Team

Beyond Petro himself, several Colombian officials manage the country’s relationship with Venezuela. Foreign Minister Álvaro Leyva—who was active in several rounds of negotiations with the FARC rebel group—has gained the moniker “Canciller de la Paz,” or “Chancellor of Peace.”²⁵ He was particularly involved in incorporating Cuba and Venezuela into the FARC peace talks and is primarily focused on Caracas’ role in the total peace plan.²⁶ He also plays an important role in Colombia’s relationship with the United States. In late March, Leyva assured U.S. Secretary

²² Hurel, Léa. “En Venezuela la oposición aprobó el fin de la ‘presidencia interina’ de Juan Guaidó.” *France 24*, December 31, 2022. <https://www.france24.com/es/am%C3%A9rica-latina/20221231-en-venezuela-la-oposici%C3%B3n-aprob%C3%B3-el-fin-de-la-presidencia-interina-de-juan-guaid%C3%B3>.

²³ Acosta, Luis Jaime. “Colombia Suspends Ceasefire with ELN after Rebel Group Rejects Effort | Reuters.” *Reuters*, January 4, 2023. <https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/colombia-suspends-ceasefire-with-eln-after-rebel-group-rejects-effort-2023-01-04/>.

²⁴ For more details on the practical implications of normalized Colombia-Venezuela ties, see: International Crisis Group. “Ties without Strings? Rebuilding Relations between Colombia and Venezuela.” International Crisis Group, December 1, 2022. <https://www.crisisgroup.org/latin-america-caribbean/andes/colombiavenezuela/97-ties-without-strings-rebuilding-relations-between>.

²⁵ Jaramillo Jassir, Mauricio. “Álvaro Leyva, canciller de la paz.” *Infobae*, June 26, 2022. <https://www.infobae.com/américa/colombia/2022/06/26/alvaro-leyva-canciller-de-la-paz/>.

²⁶ *Ibid.*



of State Antony Blinken that there would be “no surprises on our part in our relationship with our permanent ally, which is the United States of America.”²⁷

Shortly after reestablishing diplomatic ties with Venezuela, Petro selected Armando Benedetti as Ambassador to Caracas. Benedetti—a former senator and an early supporter of Petro’s presidential bid—soon sparked controversy after criticizing the Venezuelan opposition, embracing Maduro during his first visit as ambassador, casting doubt on Venezuelan refugee figures, and arguing that U.S. sanctions were to blame for rising poverty.²⁸ Benedetti is the most assertive advocate for closer ties with Venezuela on Petro’s team.

Finally, Colombian Ambassador to the United States Luis Gilberto Murillo is also active in the relationship between Colombia and Venezuela. He recently joined Petro, Leyva, and Benedetti on a January 2023 diplomatic visit to Caracas.²⁹ Murillo, a former presidential candidate and minister of environment and sustainable development, plays an important role in navigating the U.S.-Colombia-Venezuela trilateral relationship. Petro has tapped Murillo, along with Leyva and Benedetti, to manage his planned meeting of foreign ministers to discuss the Venezuelan crisis in Bogota.³⁰

Petro’s Stance Toward Negotiations

The Maduro government has held a series of formal negotiations with the Venezuelan democratic opposition. The latest of these talks took place in August 2021 in Mexico City between Maduro’s representatives and the Unitary Platform, a broad coalition of opposition politicians and civil society actors. While Maduro suspended negotiations shortly thereafter, he resumed the dialogue in November 2022, reaching a partial humanitarian aid framework with the opposition.³¹ The last formal public meeting was in November.

²⁷ Torrado, Santiago. “Colombia promete no darle ‘sorpresas’ a Estados Unidos.” *El País*, March 27, 2023. <https://elpais.com/america-colombia/2023-03-27/colombia-promete-no-darle-sorpresas-a-estados-unidos.html>.

²⁸ International Crisis Group. “Ties without Strings? Rebuilding Relations between Colombia and Venezuela.” International Crisis Group, December 1, 2022. <https://www.crisisgroup.org/latin-america-caribbean/andes/colombiavenezuela/97-ties-without-strings-rebuilding-relations-between>.

²⁹ Associated Press. “Presidentes de Colombia y Venezuela se reúnen en Caracas.” *Los Angeles Times*, January 7, 2023. <https://www.latimes.com/espanol/internacional/articulo/2023-01-07/presidentes-de-colombia-y-venezuela-se-reunen-en-caracas>.

³⁰ Quesada, Juan Diego. “Petro convoca una reunión mundial sobre Venezuela en la que no se descarta a Maduro.” *El País*, March 28, 2023, sec. América Colombia. <https://elpais.com/america-colombia/2023-03-28/petro-convoca-una-reunion-mundial-sobre-venezuela-en-la-que-podria-estar-maduro.html>.

³¹ *Efecto Cocuyo*. “Oposición y Gobierno de Venezuela Acuerdan Liberar Fondos Bloqueados.” November 26, 2022. <https://efectococuyo.com/politica/plataforma-unitaria-y-gobierno-de-maduro-acuerdan-en-mexico-liberar-fondos-bloqueados/>.

The Colombian government participated in the latest round of negotiations as a facilitator. In a November meeting in Paris, Petro joined Argentine President Alberto Fernández, French President Emmanuel Macron, and Norwegian Foreign Minister Anniken Huitfeldt to insist on negotiations as the “only path” for the Venezuelan regime and opposition.³² Petro has also insisted that the United States drop monetary rewards for information that leads to the capture of Maduro and his associates, arguing that these make it impossible for Maduro to accept free and fair elections.³³ He has also floated the idea of a “general amnesty” for all Venezuelan political prisoners.³⁴ In Petro’s view, both of these measures could achieve a *convivencia*, or peaceful coexistence, between the two parties.³⁵

Petro’s vision for negotiations has no place for economic sanctions, which he has labeled a “blockade” that should be lifted.³⁶ He has proposed Venezuela’s return to the Inter-American human rights system which Chávez abandoned in 2012.³⁷ Petro has also advanced Venezuela’s reentry into the Andean Community, from which Chávez withdrew in 2006.³⁸

Most recently, Petro called for an international conference to take place in Bogota with foreign ministers from the Americas and Europe to discuss the situation in Venezuela and encourage both parties to resume talks in Mexico.³⁹ Nicolás Maduro reportedly agreed to the conference reluctantly, at Petro’s insistence, and Antony Blinken has signaled that he will attend.⁴⁰ Additionally, the office of the Colombian president announced its intentions for a dialogue with the Venezuelan opposition.⁴¹

³² Forbes Staff. “Petro, Fernández y Macron insisten en diálogo como ‘única vía’ para Venezuela.” *Forbes Colombia*, November 11, 2022. <https://forbes.co/2022/11/11/actualidad/petro-fernandez-y-macron-insisten-en-dialogo-como-unica-via-para-venezuela/>; EFE. “Petro pide a EE.UU. que ayude a Venezuela con el fin de las recompensas.” Swiss Info, November 11, 2022. https://www.swissinfo.ch/spa/venezuela-di%C3%A1logo_petro-pide-a-ee-uu--que-ayude-a-venezuela-con-el-fin-de-las-recompensas/48051242.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Faúndez Ledesma, Héctor. “Petro, Maduro, y el sistema interamericano de derechos humanos.” *Cambio16*, November 4, 2022. <https://www.cambio16.com/petro-maduro-y-el-sistema-interamericano-de-derechos-humanos/>.

³⁸ Rueda, Jorge, and Astrid Suárez. “Petro pide a Maduro volver al sistema interamericano de DDHH.” *Los Angeles Times*, November 2, 2022. <https://www.latimes.com/espanol/internacional/articulo/2022-11-01/petro-pide-a-maduro-volver-al-sistema-interamericano-de-ddhh>.

³⁹ Quesada, Juan Diego. “Petro convoca una reunión mundial sobre Venezuela en la que no se descarta a Maduro.” *El País*, March 28, 2023, sec. América Colombia. <https://elpais.com/america-colombia/2023-03-28/petro-convoca-una-reunion-mundial-sobre-venezuela-en-la-que-podria-estar-maduro.html>.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

Migrants and Refugees

One core component of the Venezuela crisis has been the unprecedented rise of Venezuelan refugees across the region. Colombia is the largest destination country for Venezuelan migrants and refugees, with nearly 2.5 million Venezuelans living in the country as of December 2022.⁴²

Previous governments in Colombia granted Venezuelans strong legal protections upon their arrival. Juan Manuel Santos created a Special Residency Permit for Venezuelan migrants in 2017, granting them two years of residency, as well as social services and work authorization.⁴³ Iván Duque expanded these provisions in 2021 with temporary protected status, which provides for ten years of residency, healthcare access, and education.⁴⁴ Even with these legal options, some Venezuelans in Colombia continue to face administrative obstacles or lack adequate documents to obtain protected status. They also face high levels of insecurity—particularly in rural areas near the Venezuelan border—and inadequate economic opportunities.⁴⁵

Petro campaigned on a promise to grant asylum for Venezuelans. However, he sparked some controversy to his stated goal of a voluntary return for the majority of migrants.⁴⁶ So far, Petro has made no changes to Colombian migration policy, instead prioritizing other aspects of the Colombia-Venezuela relationship.⁴⁷

⁴² R4V: Interagency Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants in Venezuela. “R4V Latin America and the Caribbean, Venezuelan Refugees and Migrants in the Region - Dec 2022.” R4V: Interagency Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants in Venezuela, February 13, 2023. <https://www.r4v.info/en/document/r4v-latin-america-and-caribbean-venezuelan-refugees-and-migrants-region-dec-2022-0>.

⁴³ *Al Jazeera*. “Colombia: Santos Grants 440,000 Venezuela Refugees Two-Year Help.” August 2, 2018. <https://www.aljazeera.com/economy/2018/8/2/colombia-santos-grants-440000-venezuela-refugees-two-year-help>.

⁴⁴ López Villamil, Stephanie, and Helen Dempster. “Why Colombia Granted Full Rights to Its 1.7 Million Venezuelans, and What Comes Next | Center For Global Development | Ideas to Action.” *Center for Global Development* (blog), January 26, 2021. <https://www.cgdev.org/blog/why-colombia-granted-full-rights-its-17-million-venezuelans-and-what-comes-next>.

⁴⁵ For more on the challenges facing Venezuela migrants in Colombia and options for policymakers, see: International Crisis Group. “Hard Times in a Safe Haven: Protecting Venezuelan Migrants in Colombia.” International Crisis Group, August 9, 2022. <https://www.crisisgroup.org/latin-america-caribbean/andes/colombia-venezuela/hard-times-safe-haven-protecting-venezuelan>.

⁴⁶ Casas, Sebastián. “Gobierno de Gustavo Petro Buscará Retorno de Migrantes.” *RCN Radio*, July 14, 2022. <https://www.rcnradio.com/politica/gobierno-de-gustavo-petro-buscará-retorno-voluntario-de-migrantes-y-refugiados-venezolanos>; *Reuters*. “Colombia Will Guarantee Asylum, Petro Says, after Venezuela Urges Extradition.” August 23, 2022. <https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/colombia-will-guarantee-asylum-petro-says-after-venezuela-urges-extradition-2022-08-23/>.

⁴⁷ *Semana*. “Crítico balance de las acciones del Gobierno Petro frente a los migrantes venezolanos; estudio dice que en Colombia ya son casi 2,5 millones.” January 5, 2023. <https://www.semana.com/politica/articulo/critico-balance-de-las-acciones-del-gobierno-petro-frente-a-los-migrantes-venezolanos-estudio-dice-que-en-colombia-ya-son-casi-25-millones/202302/>.

Conclusion

In many ways, Colombia's foreign policy toward Venezuela has shifted sharply since Gustavo Petro's inauguration. Colombia now recognizes the Maduro government as legitimate and has normalized diplomatic relations with its neighbor. Petro has proposed a summit of foreign ministers and diplomats to discuss the Venezuelan crisis in Bogota. And with total peace on Petro's agenda, Venezuela now plays an even more important role in Colombian domestic policy.

In other ways, Colombia's policy toward Venezuela has remained constant. Despite Petro's early friendship with Hugo Chávez, he distanced himself from his Venezuelan counterpart in the late 2000s, and he has been a fierce critic of Maduro's repression. Petro, like Duque, remains supportive of the Mexico City negotiations. Finally, Petro has made no significant changes to Duque's refugee and migrant policies. It remains to be seen how Petro will navigate these issues over the remainder of his time in office, but so far, he has combined elements of continuity and change.