

The Potential of UNASUR as a Possible Mediator of Conflicts: the Venezuelan case

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Abstract: After the death of President Hugo Chavez and the election of his vice-president and successor, Nicolás Maduro, Venezuela faced violent protests organized by civil society questioning his legitimacy. The protests that followed were marked by revolts against the political and economic situation of the country, besides the allegations of human rights violations. Suffering strong domestic and international pressure, and after the withdrawal of Venezuela from the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights of the OAS, the Venezuelan government resorts to UNASUR in order to start mediation dialogues between the government and civil society. In this sense, our aim here is trying to understand how the regional organization was welcomed as a mediator in that case, and how UNASUR responds to the new possibility of being a mediator. We will also discuss if this opportunity of mediation can strengthen or undermine the regional organization's own identity, given its last efforts.

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