



High Noon in Venezuela

High Noon wasn't supposed to arrive in Venezuela until Saturday, the deadline announced by the country's interim president for foodstuffs and medical supplies to begin entering his starving and suffering country. But on Friday morning, Venezuelan officials [reported](#) that a woman was killed and a dozen more wounded in a clash between Maduro's military and people from an indigenous community near Cucuta, Colombia.



On Thursday Venezuela's Marxist dictator Nicolas Maduro (shown) closed the three likely entry points for aid: the Tienditas bridge into Cucuta, Colombia; the country's entire southern border with Brazil; and all sea and air links on the northeast coast that serves the island of Curaçao, a staging area for some of that aid.

Maduro's opposition, Juan Guaido, is headed for Cucuta at this writing to drum up support for moving that aid across the border. Also headed for Cucuta is Richard Branson, the founder of Virgin Group, who is planning a massive rally dubbed Venezuela Aid Live for Friday night. It is estimated that some 250,000 people are expected to attend that event, featuring many local and regional stars, performers, and personalities.

If there is going to be a High Noon, it is likely to be there.

This is what is known:

- More than 200 tons of food and supplies have arrived at the three staging areas, mostly from USAID via U.S. cargo planes;

- At least 30 buses are headed for the border from Caracas to help move the aid inland;

- The Branson concert could turn into a recruiting tool for volunteers to move the supplies onto those buses;

- There is a network of aid stations leading into Caracas which will disperse the food and supplies to locals;

- There is enough food to provide for those in critical need for a few weeks;

- Russian President Vladimir Putin says that American troops are already in Colombia, ready to assist if and as needed to get the aid into Venezuela;

- Elliot Abrams, President Trump's Special Representative for Venezuela, is in Bogota, presumably waiting for his marching orders from Washington; and

- Sen. Marco Rubio (R-Fla.) is persuaded that Maduro's military will stand down in the face of Guaido's efforts: "Saturday's the day when we're going to find a lot about the Maduro regime. I have reason to believe that rank-and-file military are not going to violently suppress aid workers";

- Maduro is in daily contact with Putin over the crisis with potential strategies in dealing with the



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on February 22, 2019

crisis remaining unclear;

There are at least 15,000 Cuban “advisers” imbedded in Maduro’s military, many of them responsible for targeting dissidents which has resulted in “a massive purge of Venezuelan military officers over the last two years”, according to Rubio; and

While rejecting the aid from the U.S. Maduro recently accepted some 300 tons of aid from the United Nations. What isn’t known is if Maduro will fold and allow the aid into his country. The confrontation taking place in Cucuta puts him into an untenable position: If he caves and orders his military to stand down and let the aid flow through to his people, he delivers the message that his regime has failed to feed its people after all. If he orders them to stand tall and resist, using deadly force if necessary, he will confirm the opinions of the more than 50 countries already aligned against him and his repressive Marxist regime that he really is a criminal and a thug after all and needs to be removed, with extreme prejudice if required.

The *Wall Street Journal* put the matter well:

The aid showdown puts in stark relief the choice in Venezuela between a dictator who wants to block aid for the people, and the Guaidó government that wants to deliver it.

It’s High Noon in Venezuela.

Image of Nicolas Maduro: [Government of Venezuela](#)

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