

# Venezuela



BASIC INFORMATION

Population **30,936,000**

Territorial Extension **912,050 km<sup>2</sup>**

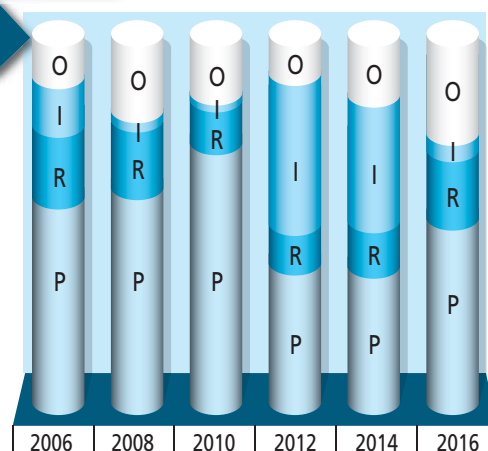
GDP (US\$) **185,611,000,000**

Armed Forces Personnel **365,315**

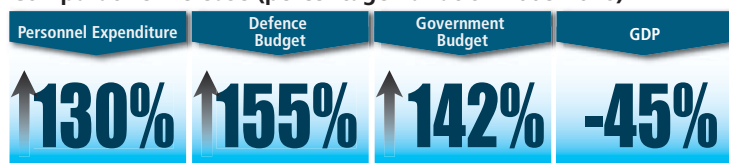
Defence Budget (US\$) **8,549,765,946**

## Defence Budget Breakdown

P: Salaries and other benefits  
R: Retirement and pension funds / I: Investment  
O: Other expenses



## Comparative Increase (percentage variation 2008-2016)



The Ministry of People's Power for Defence (*Ministerio del Poder Popular para la Defensa*) was created in 1946\*, and its incumbent Minister is General Vladimir Padrino Lopez.

\*Year in which the term "defence" was added to the name, although only in January 2007 it was changed to the present name.

## The Legal Framework

### National Legislation

#### Systems and Concepts

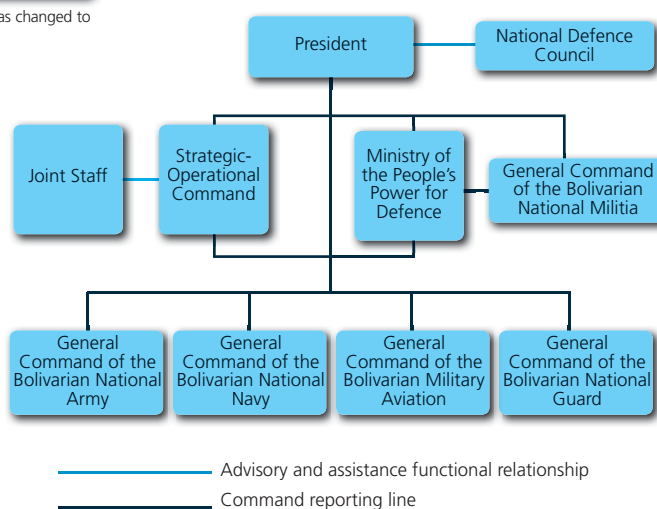
- National Security Organic Act (GO N° 37594 - 2002/12/18).
- Law for disarmament and control of weapons and ammunition (GO N° 40190 - 2013/06/17).

#### Military Organization

- Organic Code of Military Justice (GO N° 5263 - 1998/09/17).
- Organic law against organized crime (GO N° 5789 - 10/26/05. Last amendment: GO N° 39.912 - 2012/01/31).
- Military Service and Enrolment Act (GO N° 5933 - 2009/10/06. Last Amendment: GO N° 39553 - 2010/11/16).
- Organic Act of the Bolivarian National Armed Forces (Extraordinary GO N° 6020 - 2011/03/21).
- Law of control for comprehensive air space defence (GO N° 39935 - 2012/06/01).
- Decreto con fuerza de Ley especial de reincorporación a la carrera militar y al sistema de seguridad social de la Fuerza Armada Nacional Bolivariana* (Special statutory decree of reincorporation to the military career and the social security system of the Bolivarian National Armed Force) (N° 8796 - GO N° 39858 - 2012/06/02).
- Military Discipline Act (GO N° 6207 - 2015/12/28).

Source: Compilation based on the aforementioned legislation.

## The Defence System



The President is advised by the National Defence Council, composed of the Vice President, the Presidents of the Assembly, the Supreme Court of Justice and the Republican Moral Council, and the Ministers of Defence, Internal Security, Foreign Affairs, Planning and the Environment. The Strategic Operational Command is directly subordinate to the President and is the highest planning and management organ of the Armed Forces and the Bolivarian Militia. The Joint Staff is its planning and advisory body. The Strategic Operational Command, the Military Components (Army, Navy, Military Aviation and National Guard), the Bolivarian Militia and the Military Regions (as operational organization), are administratively under the Ministry of Popular Power for Defence. The Assembly holds the powers granted by the Constitution and permanently monitors defence related issues through the National Defence and Security Committee.

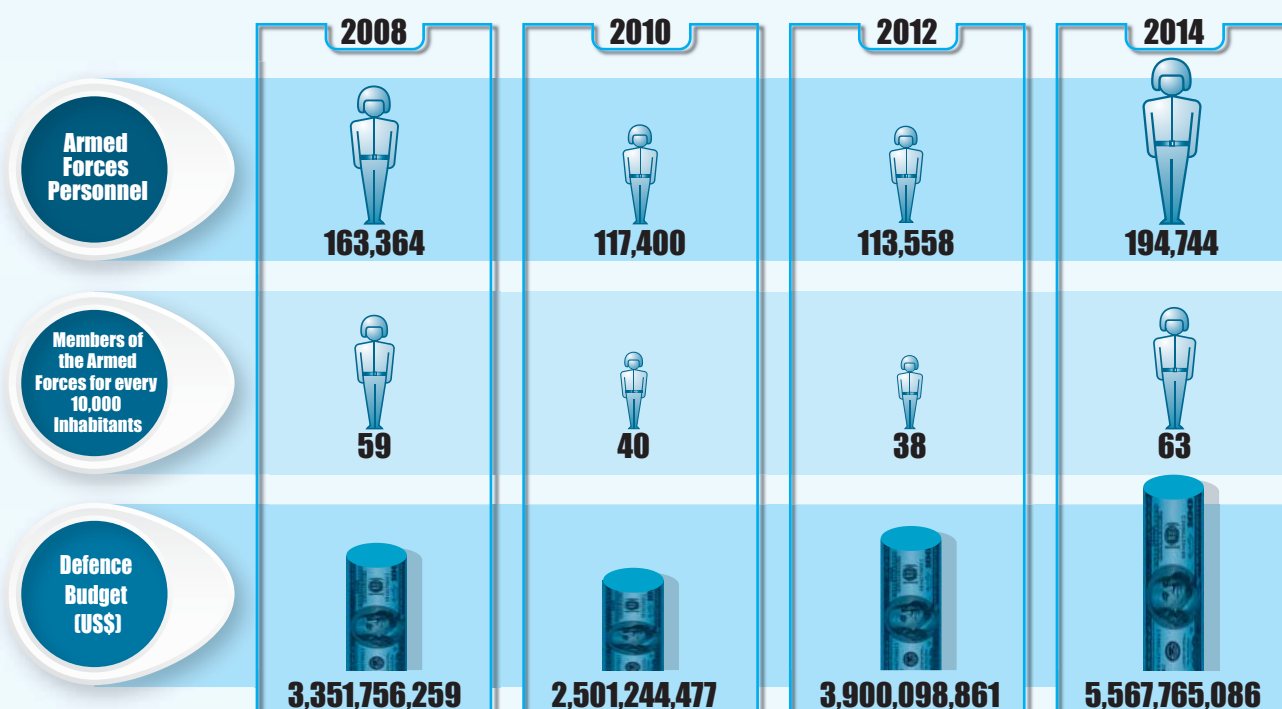
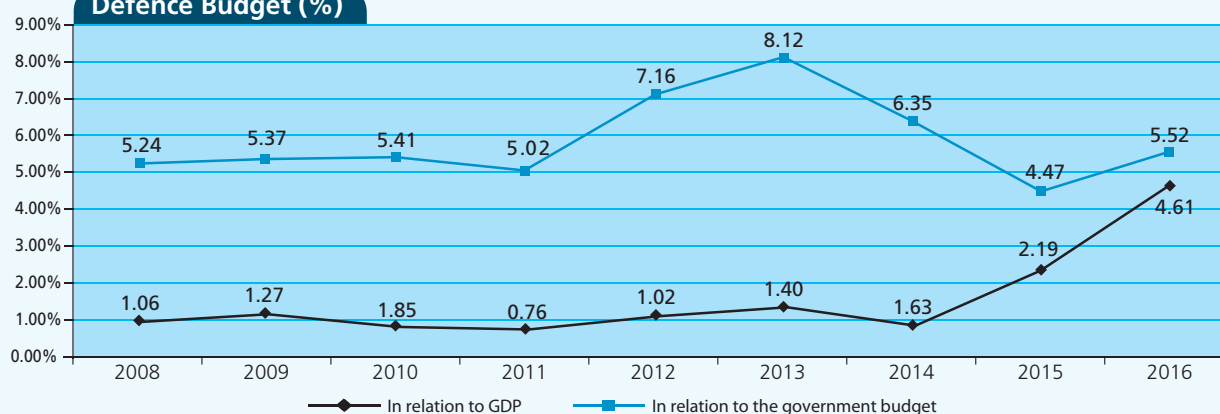
Source: Compilation based on the Political Constitution, *Ley orgánica de seguridad de la Nación* (GO N° 37.594 - 2002/12/18) and *Ley orgánica de la Fuerza Armada Nacional Bolivariana* (Extraordinary GO N° 6.020 - 2011/03/21).

Source: *Anuario Estadístico de América Latina y el Caribe, 2015*, CEPAL (territory and population: projection 2016), IMF, World Economic Outlook Database, (GDP projection 2016), and *Ley de presupuesto para el ejercicio 2016* (personnel).

## The Budget

Year	Defence Budget (US\$)	Government Budget (US\$)	GDP (US\$)
2008	3,351,756,259	63,984,953,854	334,726,000,000
2009	4,185,502,812	77,894,964,467	353,469,000,000
2010	2,501,244,477	46,204,655,586	301,012,000,000
2011	2,390,330,558	47,600,976,235	309,837,000,000
2012	3,900,098,861	54,449,125,774	337,433,000,000
2013	5,247,976,766	64,666,679,965	373,978,000,000
2014	5,567,765,086	87,719,452,930	342,067,000,000
2015	5,258,351,200	117,731,352,999	239,572,000,000
2016	8,549,765,946	154,857,418,132	185,611,000,000

## Defence Budget (%)



Note: Personnel between 2014 and 2016, see page 212.

**Source:** Compilation based on the *Ley de presupuesto para el ejercicio fiscal* between 2006 and 2016. The Government Budget passed by Congress by means of the above-mentioned Act is considered herein. The concept of investment is that expressed in "Real Assets".  
 GDP: Projection of the World Economic Outlook Database, IMF, for each year considered. This source has been taken for comparative purposes. Each country prepares the budget based on its own GDP estimation.  
 The value of the dollar considered corresponds to the exchange rate determined by the World Economic Outlook Database, IMF, for each year under consideration. For 2014, 2015 and 2016, the benchmark exchange rate was based on data from the Central Bank of Venezuela.

## The Armed Forces

### General Mission

The National Armed Force, organized by the State and regulated by the principles of territorial integrity, cooperation, solidarity, concurrence and co-responsibility, has the mission to guarantee the independence and sovereignty of the Nation, ensure territorial integration, security of the Nation, active participation in national development, cooperation in maintaining internal order, and the defence of the democratic exercise of the people's will embodied in the Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and the laws of the Republic.

The following are its specific functions:

- To ensure the full sovereignty and jurisdiction of the Republic in the continental space, maritime and marine areas, insular, lake, fluvial territories and air space, including their respective resources.
- To defend strategic locations that guarantee the development of activities in different areas: social, political, cultural, geographical, environmental military and economic, and take the measures necessary to prevent any external aggression or improper use.
- To prepare and organize the people for the integral defence of the country, with the purpose of cooperating with the independence, sovereignty and integrity of the geographic space of the Nation.
- To participate in alliances or coalitions in conjunction with the Armed Forces of other countries for integration purposes, as provided for in international treaties, pacts and agreements, following the approval of the National Assembly.
- To take part in peacekeeping missions, according to the provisions of pertinent treaties and agreements duly signed and ratified, following the approval of the National Assembly.
- To support the different levels and branches of the Government in the performance of social, political, cultural, geographic, environmental, economic tasks, and in civil protection operations in the event of disasters within the framework of relevant plans.
- To contribute to the preservation or restoration of the internal order vis-à-vis serious social disturbances, upon the decision of the President of the Republic.
- To organize, plan, conduct and control the military intelligence and counterintelligence system.

### Specific Missions

#### Army

Ensure the defence of the land; contribute to the stability of democratic institutions and respect for the laws of the Republic; support national development and integration; and prepare to take part in international peacekeeping programs.

#### Navy

Ensure naval defence and compliance with the Constitution and laws in effect; cooperate in maintaining internal order and actively participate in national development, in order to guarantee the independence, sovereignty and integrity of national water spaces

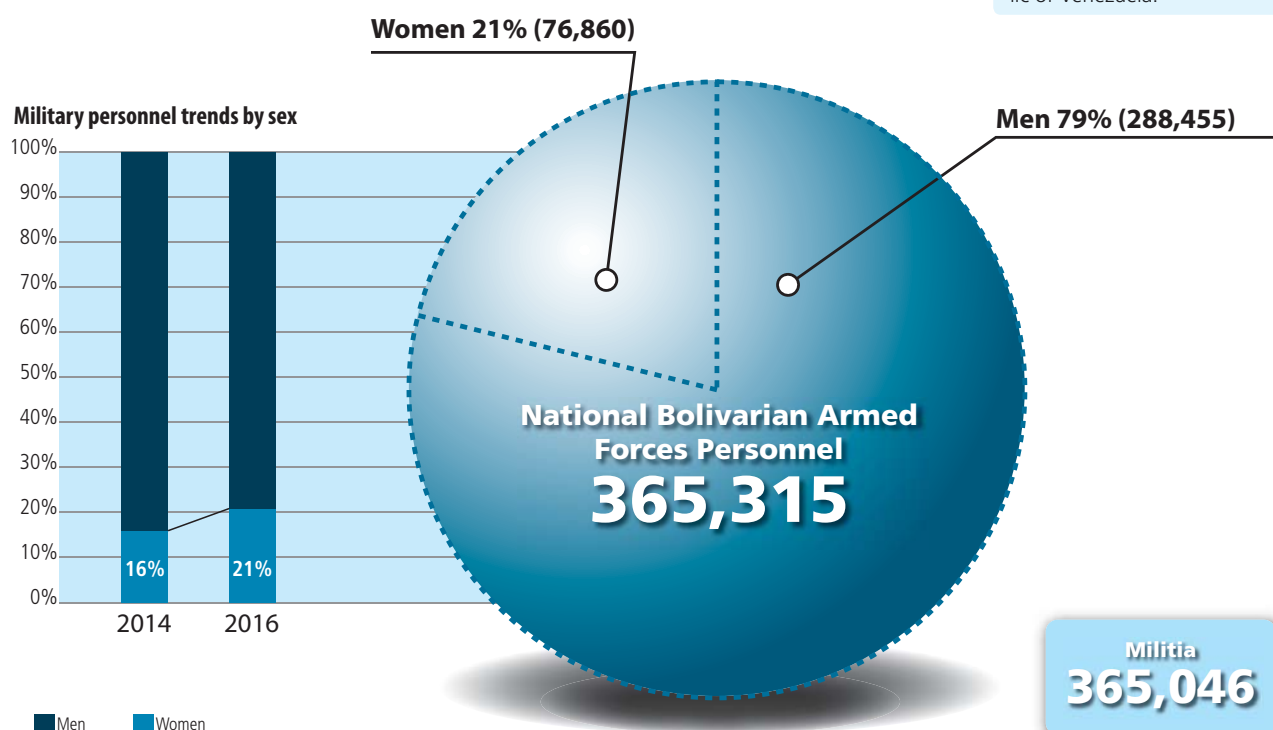
#### Air Force

Ensure national defence by controlling the national air space, contributing to the sustainment of public order and actively participating in the development of the country, employing the national air power to guarantee the territorial integrity, independence and sovereignty of the Nation.

#### National Guard

Conduct the operations necessary for maintaining the country's internal order, cooperate in the development of military operations to ensure the defence of the Nation, exert administrative law enforcement and criminal investigation activities assigned by law, and actively participate in national development within the territory and other geographic spaces of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

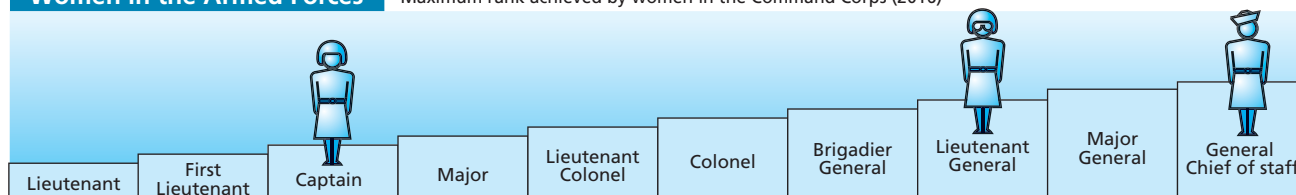
## Armed Forces Personnel 2016



**Source:** Website of the Armed Forces (missions), *Ley de presupuesto para el ejercicio fiscal 2016* (personnel) and the *Memoria del Ministerio del Poder Popular para la Defensa* (2015).

## Women in the Armed Forces

Maximum rank achieved by women in the Command Corps (2016)



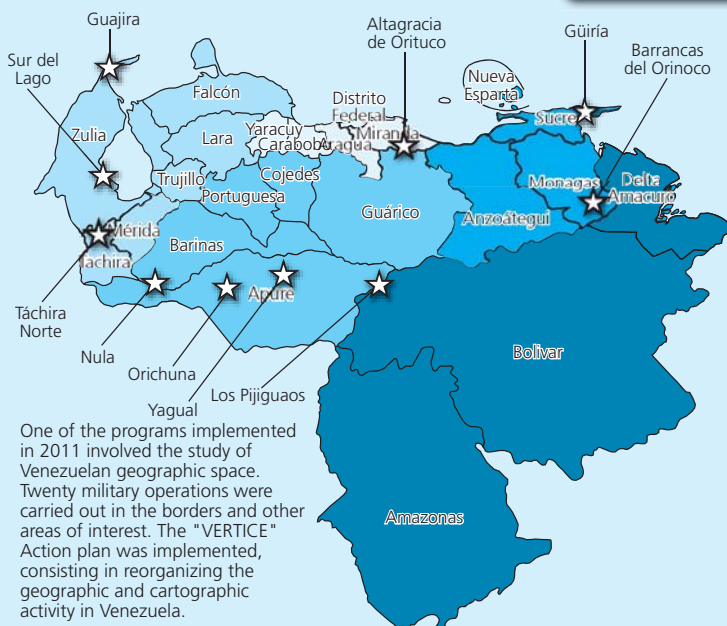
**Note:** These ranks correspond to the Army as an example. The rank of Major General is equivalent to Admiral (Navy), while in the Air Force Lieutenant General has the same denomination. The Command corps includes officers who have been educated at military academies from the beginning of their careers, different to those who develop a career in the civilian sphere and are then incorporated to the military.

## Territorial Order

Of total Armed Forces personnel, 21% (76,860) are women.

### The Development Plan of the National Bolivarian Armed Force for the Integral Defence of the Nation (2007-2013) (Sucre Plan)

establishes the need to restructure the Bolivarian National Armed Force and to maintain a permanent operational preparation in the border municipalities, fostering the presence of other State institutions.



**Integral Defence Regions:** these are defined as a space of the national territory with geostrategic characteristics, based on the defensive strategic concept, to plan, conduct and carry out integral defence operations.

- **Central Region:** it encompasses the States of Vargas, Gran Caracas, Miranda, Aragua, Carabobo and Yaracuy, including the Capital District.
- **Western Region:** it encompasses the States of Falcón, Lara, Trujillo, Mérida, Táchira and Zulia.
- **Los Llanos Region:** It encompasses the States of Apure, Portuguesa, Barinas, Cojedes and Guárico.
- **Eastern Region:** it encompasses the States of Anzoátegui, Monagas, Sucre and Nueva Esparta.
- **Guyana Region:** it encompasses the States of Bolívar, Delta Amacuro and Amazonas.

### Integral Defence Operation Zones:

Space within a region that may comprise one or several States.

### Integral Defence Areas:

Geographic spaces contained within a defence operation zone that may comprise one or several municipalities.

**The Military Districts:** these were developed mainly from 2010 onwards. Their duty is to safeguard the territorial integrity, sovereignty, security, defence and national identity; to carry out operational plans; to safeguard communication systems; to take part in emergency situations, catastrophes and public calamities; to detect and neutralize espionage and the presence of foreign irregular groups; to contribute to the eradication of narcotics, fuel and other natural resources trafficking; to fight organized crime.

## Military Service

Military service is a duty for all citizens, though mandatory recruitment is forbidden. Every man and woman of military age (18 to 60), born and naturalized in the country, are bound to register in the Permanent Military Registry as they are eligible and subject to registration for the service. Minimum term is 12 months, but may be extended.

Registered members may be included in the following categories:

- **Active duty:** they are already providing services in any of the branches of the Bolivarian Armed Force, the Bolivarian National Militia or other units attached to the Ministry of the People's Power for Defence. They should be aged between 18 and 30. They are subject to the military jurisdiction.
- **Redundancy:** they are not enlisted as they have been deferred from military service.

It offers two modalities:

- **Full-time:** regular service performed in a continuous and uninterrupted way at operational and administrative military units established by the Bolivarian National Armed Force.
- **Part-time:** they stay in the barracks for a specific time, enabling them to study or have a job, thus ensuring their professional growth and economic and social stability for themselves and their families.

**In 2015**  
93.878 persons  
were enlisted.

## Sucre Plan

It is a strategic development plan of the Bolivarian National Armed Forces for the Comprehensive Defence of the Nation, which establishes the existence of a threat to the security and comprehensive defence of the State emanating from United States and its allies in non-conventional terms, and consequently proposes making the Armed Forces adequate in order to combat this threat.

### Strategic Pillars

#### Educational

Reform the educational system of the Bolivarian National Armed Forces, the Bolivarian Militia, and the rest of the population, in order to facilitate response to the new internal and external threats.

#### Legal

Promote the development of a Bolivarian National Armed Force and of the Bolivarian Militia, and make the current legal framework adequate to the new understanding of comprehensive defence of the Nation.

#### Doctrinal

Construction of a new Bolivarian Military Doctrine to successfully lead a prolonged people's war in case of a hypothetical war

#### Leadership

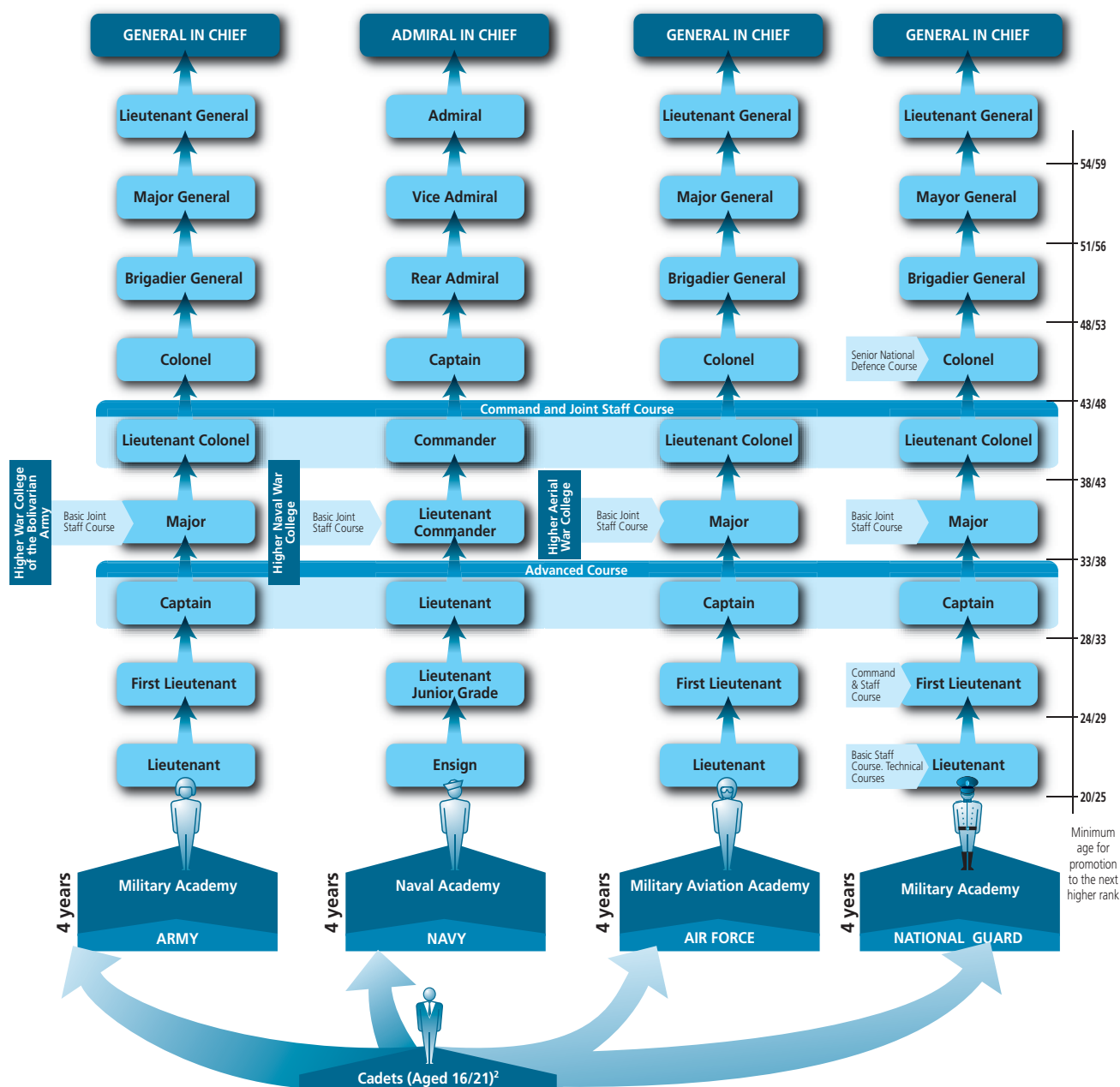
Through the inclusion of operational plans for military defence, cooperation in maintaining internal order and active participation in national development and strategic development plans.

#### Logistical

Create a Territorial Logistical Support System that permits the conservation and adequate repair of war material in preparation for a potential war of a one-year duration, as well as increasing security measures for the country's protection.

**Source:** Compilation based on *Ley de conscripción y alistamiento militar* (GO N° 5933 – 2009/10/06. Last amendment: GO N° 39553 – 2010/11/16), *Ley orgánica de la Fuerza Armada Nacional Bolivariana* (Extraordinary GO N° 6020 – 2011/03/21), *Ley de presupuesto para el ejercicio fiscal 2014 and 2016*, *Memoria del Ministerio del Poder Popular para la Defensa Nacional* (2015); *Decreto mediante el cual se crean diez (10) Distritos Militares según la distribución que en él se menciona* (N° 7938 – 2010), and websites of the Ministry of People's Power for Defence.

## Education and the Military Career

Career Path for Officers in Command Bodies<sup>1</sup>

2015 Graduates: 335 new officers.

1,447 cadets joined the military academies of the Venezuelan National Bolivarian Armed Force components in 2015.

Initial officer training in Venezuela is conducted in the different academies that collectively form the **Bolivarian Military University of Venezuela (UMBV)**. It was created in 2010 in order to train and educate professional military personnel for the National Armed Forces, Bolivarian Militia, and civilians.

<sup>1</sup> Command corps includes officers who have been educated at military academies from the beginning of their professional careers. The graph makes a theoretical reconstruction of officers' promotion through the completion of mandatory courses. Further requirements for promotion have not been considered.

<sup>2</sup> The age of 16-21 has been considered for comparative purposes. Entry age varies depending on the services: Army: 16-21, Navy: 18-23, Air Force: 16-21. The minimum age for promotion will depend on the age of graduation from the appropriate military education institution.

**Source:** Compilation based on the *Ley orgánica de la Fuerza Armada Nacional Bolivariana* (GO N° 6239 – 2009/08/13. Last amendment: Act N° 6239 - 2009/10/21), the website of the Bolivarian Military University of Venezuela and *Memoria del Ministerio del Poder Popular para la Defensa Nacional* (2015).



## Defence and the National and International Community

Activities in which  
defence is related to:

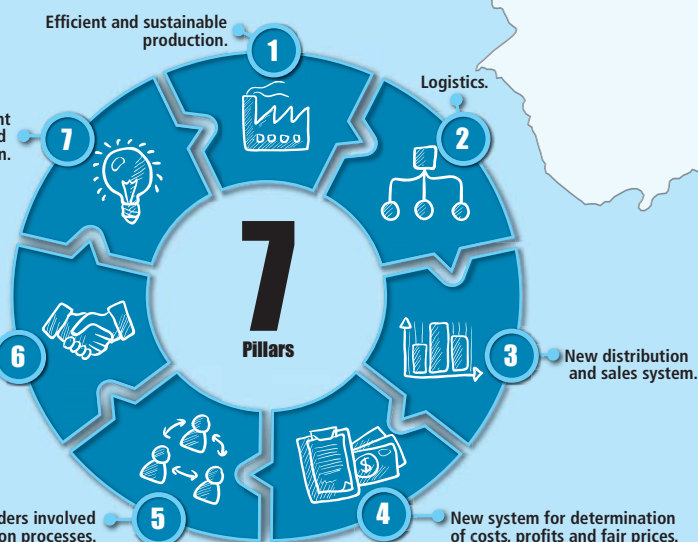
- Social Action
- Security
- Drug Trafficking

## Support in Public Security

The “Plan and Execute Military Operations for the Security, Defence and Comprehensive Development of the Nation” project includes specific, joint and combined military operations.

## Grand Supply Mission

In July 2016, the Government launched the so-called Gran Misión de Abastecimiento (Grand Supply Mission), which includes the logistic and operating support by the armed forces for food distribution. Its provisions establish that the “Civic-military union calls for the utilization of the National Bolivarian Armed Force's operational capacity in the entire territory of the country, its organization and discipline in national support activities for strategic goods supply, so as to ensure the Venezuelan people's rights to food and health, as well as the protection and safeguarding of goods and services related to those activities.”

Efficient and sustainable  
production.Research and development  
applied to processes and  
import substitution.Security, defence  
and comprehensive  
development.Organization of stakeholders involved  
in production processes.Municipalities with the highest rates  
of homicides in the country.

The Armed Force and the Militia participate in the “Great Mission for All of Venezuela” program, especially as part of the Secure Homeland Plan (Plan Patria Segura). As part of this program, personnel are deployed to priority zones: 79 municipalities where the majority of the country's homicides are concentrated.

## Bolivarian National Militia

Special corps integrated by the territorial militia and the combat corps.

The militia member category may be granted to men and women of age who, though not exercising the military profession, may enter the Bolivarian Militia and, as mobilized, fulfill the Nation's security and integral defence functions.

It reports directly to the President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and Commander in Chief of the Bolivarian National Armed Force in all matters relating to operational aspects; as for administrative affairs, it shall report to the Minister of People's Power for Defence.

**Mission:** to train, prepare and organize the people for the integral defence of the country, in order to supplement the operational readiness of the Bolivarian National Armed Force, contribute to maintaining internal order, security, defence and overall development of the Nation, with the purpose of contributing to the independence, sovereignty and integrity of the Nation's geographic spaces.

## Some of their roles include:

- Prepare, organize, equip, instruct, train and retrain the Bolivarian National Militia established.
- Create ongoing links between the National Armed Force and the Venezuelan people, so as to contribute to ensuring the overall defence of the Nation.
- Organize and train the Territorial Militia, to carry out the overall defence operations aimed at guaranteeing national sovereignty and independence.
- Participate and contribute to the development of military technology and industry.
- Guide, coordinate and provide support in its areas of competence to the Community Councils (Consejos Comunales) in order to contribute to the attainment of public policies.
- Contribute to, and advice on, the creation and consolidation of Integral Defence Committees of Community Councils, in order to strengthen civil-military relations.
- Collect, process and disseminate information from the Community Councils, public and private sector institutions, necessary for the elaboration of integral development plans, programs and projects for the Nation as well as national mobilization efforts.
- Coordinate with public and private sector bodies, entities and offices, the establishment and organization of the Reserve Combat Corps (Cuerpos Combatientes de Reserva).
- Oversee and train such combat corps, which shall operationally fall under the National General Command of the Bolivarian National Militia.

## 2015 Highlights

- 99 Areas of Integral Defence in 335 cities.
- 499 Militia Battalions (local, general and territorial).
- 678,217 new candidates in the militia
- 145,874 graduates from the Course on Territorial Militia Battalion Chief.

**Bolivarian National  
Militia Personnel (2016):**  
**365,046**

**Source:** Decree N° 2367, 2016/07/07. *Plan de la Patria, Segundo Plan Socialista de Desarrollo Económico y Social de la Nación 2013-2019*, Extraordinary GO N° 6118 – 2013/12/04. *Memoria del Ministerio del Poder Popular para la Defensa* (2015).