



## National Assembly Approves Agreement in Repudiation to Paris Arbitral Award of 1899

By Holland & Knight

Through the *Official Gazette* No. 42,481 of Oct. 11, 2022, the National Assembly of Venezuela issued the Agreement in Repudiation of the Paris Arbitral Award of 1899 (Agreement).

The Agreement seeks mainly to reject recent developments that aim to reestablish the legal validity of the Paris Arbitral Award of 1899 (Award) by which a territorial dispute between Venezuela and British Guyana was resolved. According to the Agreement, the Award is illegal, and violates the principles and norms of public international law, and deprives Venezuela of 159,000 square kilometers (Km<sup>2</sup>) of land.

The Agreement considers that Guyana accepted through the Geneva Agreement of 1966 that the Award is invalid and null. In addition, the Geneva Agreement is the binding tool of international law, since it was subscribed by the parties to find an amicable solution to the controversy, leaving behind what was resolved by means of the Award. It further states that the Geneva Agreement was breached by Guyana due to foreign influences, and that this resulted in a unilateral claim before the International Court of Justice by Guyana, which, according to the Agreement, lacks jurisdiction.

Finally, the Agreement insists on resuming negotiations between the parties within the framework of the Geneva Agreement, and to reject acts considered to be intrusive by foreign powers, such as the declarations of the U.S. government that affirm the Award is valid until a legal body determines otherwise, referring to the anticipated process before the International Court of Justice.

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