

Guyana-Venezuela border dispute

Venezuelans have approved a referendum called by the government of President Nicolás Maduro to claim sovereignty over an oil-rich swathe of neighbouring Guyana called Essequibo

Many analysts see referendum as attempt by Maduro to whip up nationalist fervour ahead of elections in 2024

ESSEQUIBO

Area: 159,500 sq km – representing around two thirds of Guyana

Population: 125,000 of Guyana's 800,000 citizens

Stabroek block: Expected to generate up to 1.2 million barrels of oil and gas per day by 2027



■ **1889:** Venezuela lays claim to Essequibo region

■ **1899:** International arbitral tribunal awards area to Britain – colonial ruler of Guyana (then called British Guiana)

■ **1966:** Britain and Venezuela sign **Geneva Agreement** ahead of Guyana's independence, providing for negotiated settlement on territorial dispute

■ **2015:** U.S. giant **ExxonMobil** discovers oil in waters claimed by Venezuela

■ **2018:** Guyana takes case to **International Court of Justice (ICJ)** in The Hague

■ **Dec 3, 2023:** Venezuelans vote overwhelmingly in referendum to reject ICJ jurisdiction over dispute and to back creation of new state in Essequibo