

Chinese navy hospital ship docks in Venezuela amid crisis

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The stop by the People's Liberation Army Navy's ship is the latest in an 11-nation "Mission Harmony" tour.

Chinese navy hospital ship "The Peace Ark" arrives at the port in La Guaira, Venezuela, Saturday, Sept. 22, 2018. The stop by the People's Liberation Army Navy's ship is the latest in an 11-nation "Mission Harmony" tour and will provide free medical treatment for Venezuelans. (AP Photo)

La Guaira: A Chinese navy hospital ship has docked near Venezuela's capital as the OPEC nation's deepening economic crisis garners the attention of the US and other world powers.

Venezuelan Defense Minister Vladimir Padrino was on hand Saturday for the arrival of the Peace Ark. The stop by the People's Liberation Army Navy's ship is the latest in an 11-nation "Mission Harmony" tour.

Interest in the goodwill visit has been building since the Pentagon announced in August it was sending its own hospital ship to neighbouring Colombia to provide free medical treatment for Venezuelan migrants fleeing their homes amid widespread food and medicine shortages.

Such goodwill visits have been a mainstay of US diplomacy in Latin America for decades. But the Chinese ship has visited South America only once before.

- AP