

January 23, a landmark for the future of Venezuela

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January 23 is a significant date in the collective conscience of Venezuelans. Sixty-one years ago, a civic-military movement -accumulation of oppositions- established democracy in Venezuela, by overthrowing the dictatorship of General Marcos Pérez Jiménez (1953-1958), which forced him to leave power and leave Venezuela for the Dominican Republic because his friend Generalissimo Rafael Leonidas Trujillo governed it. A Governing junta, chaired by Rear Admiral Wolfgang Larrazabal with a provisional cabinet composed of lawyers, businessmen, and executives, was installed to manage the period of transition to democracy that culminated in free elections for the Presidency and Parliament in December 1958.

Last Friday, January 11 - the day after the act that turned Nicolas Maduro into usurper of the Presidency of Venezuela, when he was sworn in before the Supreme Court of Justice - Juan Guaidó, president of the National Assembly (AN), summoned "the Venezuelans to join a great national march on January 23, [because it is] a date of great symbolic value in the country: it is the day when the government of General Marcos Pérez Jiménez fell in 1958".

That same day, Guaidó adhered to articles 233, 333 and 350 of the Venezuelan Constitution. That establishes that in the absolute absence of the President of the Republic, the president of the National Assembly is in charge of the Presidency of Venezuela and that every citizen, invested or not of authority, will have the duty to collaborate in the restoration of the validity of the Constitution.

Also, Guaidó established that the road map to restore the 1999 Constitution is: "The cessation of the usurpation of the presidency, a transitional government and free elections", for which it has turned to the open councils meetings to rebuild the trust between the political leaders of the opposition and the people that reject Maduro.

In the confrontation with Maduro, Guaidó has combined two important references for Venezuelans, which are the independence of Venezuela with the open council's meetings, and the democracy with the celebration of January 23 throughout the country.

Heinz Dieterich, who accompanied Chávez in the implantation of socialism of the 21st century, pointed out in his recent article "Collapse Maduro's socialist dystopia" that "the madurista clique has lost the strategic initiative in this last battle for Caracas and will not recover it again, because it does not have the strength to resist".

On the other hand, the weekly follow-up survey of Meganálisis (January 19-20) indicates that the trend (84.2%) has increased towards a transitional government that immediately replaces the Maduro government. Besides, it determines that 8 out of 10 Venezuelans believe that Guaidó should formally be sworn in as the interim president of the Republic, and start a transitional government with firm actions to get Maduro out of power.

An act [oath] expected by the international community despite the recognition of the AN as “the only legitimate democratic institution in Venezuela”, because at the moment Guaidó assumes the role and responsibilities of the Executive Branch on an interim basis, it allows aligning the structure of the transitional government and removing the usurper.

A week ago, the secretary general of the Organization of American States said the organization is ready to recognize Venezuelan ambassadors if an interim government led by the president of the AN, Juan Guaidó, legally designates them.

“If there was an appointment by the new interim president attached to the constitutional procedure and the National Assembly, we are ready to recognize” a new representative, said Luis Almagro during the conference offered at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

It is just one example of the actions that will be derived once Guaidó is sworn in as interim president of Venezuela. Of course, Guaidó will have to have ready the appointment of the ambassadors to be approved by the AN in the same act of his oath. As well as the members of the provisional cabinet that could be integrated by the presidents or vice-presidents of the different commissions of the National Assembly -it would make the political decision-making process more efficient because it already has the consensus of the opposition political parties.

Of course, Guaidó and his interim government will have to face the onslaught of Maduro and the clique around him. However, Dieterich maintains in his article “Maduro is defeated”. He adds: “If Maduro and his clique were left with a bit of responsibility and patriotism, he would negotiate with the gringos and his Guaidó file on the Sandinista solution of 1989: a transitional government, free elections and the replacement of the corrupt military leadership”.

Today, Guaidó has in his hands the decision to go down in history as the restorer of democracy in Venezuela. If he hesitates, he will be responsible for Maduro remaining in power.

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