

## **On May 20, Maduro's future will depend on 6 million votes**

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In three weeks, on May 20, Venezuelans will decide the future of the country, in what seems like an "election drill". That day, the regime of Nicolas Maduro will try to demonstrate that there was a presidential election in Venezuela with the standards of democratic countries, beforehand a questionable fact by the international community and multilateral organizations, which pointed that in Venezuela there are no conditions to choose a new president fairly, competitively and freely.

Maduro's regime is characterized as authoritarian-pragmatic, and also for being a mafia state that "controls and uses criminal networks to promote and defend their national interests and the particular interests of the elite".

David Runciman, professor of politics at the University of Cambridge, presented in his latest book *How Democracy Ends* that the triumph of the liberal democracy over the soviet model in 1989 was about "prosperity, the standards of living of the majority of citizens, respect and dignity".

However, Runciman adds that currently "western democracy is facing a form of authoritarianism that is much more pragmatic than its communist predecessors". The two systems offer "results and respect", but in this case, the authoritarian-pragmatic "comes in a non-democratic way". Furthermore, the dignity "is conceived as the dignity of the national collective, a self-affirmation of the nation, not the individual" and this allows them to develop nationalism as an ideology.

In this context, the Maduro regime materialize its course of action for May 20.

In practice, they aim to secure a high turnout in the elections, because it is one of the pillars of democracy which allows to legitimize the results.

In the presidential election of April 14, 2013, the turnout was of 79.69 percent, this is, 8 out of 10 Venezuelans in the voting registry exercised their right to vote. Today, March-April polls show that number in 5 out of 10 Venezuelans, 3 votes less than the previous presidential election (Maduro-Capriles).

Additionally, polls show that for May 20 the maximum turnout –those certain about going to vote- will be around 10 million Venezuelans, from which Maduro will obtain 6 million votes, 1.5 million votes less than in 2013.

In the face of the economic and social crisis because of the implementation of Plan de la Patria, -an economic model abandoned by China and Russia 30 years ago because it did not generate prosperity, but all the contrary, poverty- the Maduro regime uses coercion to vote through the

Carnet de la Patria (a card given by the government to their alleged supporters), financial assistance and food bags CLAP. It is the classic mechanism for social control of the regimes from the Soviet era, which is still working in Cuba.

In this sense, polls show that 69 per cent of voters have the Carnet de la Patria, equivalent to 14 million voters. Likewise, 41 per cent consider it useful to have. That is how the Maduro regime would possibly coerce to 5.740.000 voters.

Regarding the financial assistances, the regime has been increasing the number of beneficiaries, reaching 52 per cent of voters, especially in cash, corresponding 30 percent.

For this reason, this Monday Maduro increases, for the third time in four months, the minimum wage and the food stamp 154 and 70 percent, respectively. They did the same with the financial assistances on the Carnet de la Patria: Hogares de la Patria, Jose Gregorio Hernandez, humanized birth and working class.

Housing deliveries has been paralyzed, and the delivery of food bags, named CLAP, fell 16 percent in the first quarter of this year.

### Turnout on May 20, according to the polls

	%	Turnout
Voting registry 20-May	100	20,374,829
Willing to vote on 20-May	49	9,983,666
- Willing to vote for Nicolás Maduro	60	5,990,200
With Carnet de la Patria	69	14,058,632
- Thinks Carnet de la Patria is useful	41	5,764,039
Receiving some kind of assistance from the gov.	52	10,594,911
Receiving cash	30	6,112,449
Receiving CLAP food bags	16	3,259,973

**Source:** Voting registry: CNE (Amelia Alter) | (%): Consultores 21, Datincorp, Hercon, Datanalisis pollster | Tournout: Inter-American Trends

Therefore, Maduro's announcement 3 days ago aimed at winning the "election drill" with 10 million votes is a wishful thinking because numbers don't add up. The 10 million votes are the universe of voters that will participate in the drill if voting coercion works.

As a result, the opposition must avoid the manipulation of the data from the "presidential election drill", by the Maduro regime. So they must have their own results with an exit poll. It will be a way to demonstrate the fraud of the regime in the "electoral drill" of May 20.



It is enough to remember that during the election of the Constituent Assembly in July 2017, the National Electoral Council (Consejo Nacional Electoral, CNE) informed that 8,089,320 Venezuelans casted their vote (41.53 per cent of the voting registry). However, the director of Smartmatic, Antono Múgica, said that "there were 1 million votes less" in those elections, meaning that the CNE tampered with the results in 5%.

Because of this, Maduro's future on May 20 depends on 6 million votes.