

The end of the democratic electoral game in Venezuela

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The election to renew the National Assembly in Venezuela was called by the new National Electoral Council (CNE in Spanish) for December 6 2020. On January 5, 2021, the five-year term will end of the only branch recognized by the international community as legal and legitimate, which emerged from the 2015 election that gave a parliamentary majority to the opposition. A setback that Chavismo could not tolerate any more and since 2017 has managed to prevent a repetition itself.

On this occasion, the electoral referee in charge of the next parliamentary election was disqualified by the [Organization of American States](#) (OAS): Three out of five countries considered -21 state members were in favor, six were absent, and seven abstained. The Supreme Court of Justice considered its appointment “illegal”. The OAS recalled that impartial arbitrators are needed to hold a “fair, free and transparent” contest.

The OAS’s decision on June 26 accompanied the [European Union](#), the International Contact Group, [the Lima Group](#), the [Inter-American Commission on Human Rights](#) (IACHR), and the [United States](#) to reject the recent decisions by the [Supreme Court of Justice](#) that coerce the democratic order to the “[detriment of fundamental freedoms and human rights](#)”. This Supreme Court, controlled by the Maduro regime, took away the legitimate Parliament’s functions and appointed new leaders close to the usurping team to convene and arbitrate parliamentary elections. The unilateral appointment of CNE’s members, which is neither balanced nor independent, damages the possibility of a way out through a consensual and democratic electoral game of the most severe social, economic, and political crisis in Venezuela’s history.

The other facilitator of the competition, the Minister of National Defense General [Vladimir Padrino López](#), set out his electoral process position. At the celebration of the 209th anniversary of Venezuela’s Declaration of Independence, he announced that the opposition would never win an election. “They will not pass. They will never be a political power in life as long as there is a Bolivarian National Armed Force (FANB in Spanish) like the one we have today, an anti-imperialist, revolutionary, and Bolivarian armed force”. Padrino’s testimony, a piece of evidence. Hence, the FANB would be disqualified from executing the Plan República—a national military deployment during the electoral process—because the vote’s order and security would be at risk.

Five years ago, the situation was different. In the previous parliamentary election on December 6, 2015, General Padrino López himself opposed “the intentions of Diosdado Cabello [president

of the NA at the time] to take to the streets using paramilitaries to break up the electoral process given the impossibility of winning it,” according to the Spanish daily [ABC](#). This fact led “Cabello to ask for the Defense Department head for opposing the fraud”. Likewise, *The [Nuevo Herald's](#)* sources said, “Padrino insisted to Cabello and Maduro that the FANB would only respect an announcement that reflected the polls’ result, which ended up forcing Chavismo to recognize the opposition’s victory”.

The alignment of the governing body (CNE) and the electoral custodians (FANB) to favor the government’s result will lead the 59 countries to recognize Juan Guaidó as Venezuela’s acting constitutional president, just as a [high court](#) in the United Kingdom did. Under the doctrine of ‘One Voice’, the judge accepts the statement as unequivocal.

Everything indicates that the facto president Nicolás Maduro wants a confrontation with the international community to continue maintaining the country’s de facto control. He believes the external threat of imperialism allows him to strengthen internal unity. He also seeks to pit the opposition’s democratic factors against each other by placing them in the dilemma of whether to go to the electoral game, which is where he performs best.

If Maduro maintains the strategy of confrontation with 59 countries and multilateral organizations by using the advantage of the chief referee (CNE) and the line judges (FANB) to win the party, he will pressure democratic forces to boycott the game by calling it fraudulent.

To participate under such conditions would legitimize the 2018 presidential election and those to come, as well as the end of Venezuela’s [democratic electoral game](#).