

Venezuela: The time for negotiation and change

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"The task ahead of us is both beautiful and manifold: to reestablish a climate of respect and trust in the coexistence among Chileans, regardless of their beliefs, ideas, activities, or social status. Whether civilians or military. The faults of individuals must not implicate everyone; we must be capable of rebuilding the unity of the Chilean family." – Patricio Aylwin

Venezuela is at a critical point as it faces political turmoil that will significantly impact the nation's future. The upcoming presidential elections that are set to take place on July 28 have raised questions about the electoral process's viability and the Maduro regime's willingness to accept defeat in the event of losing. Despite the uncertainties surrounding the election, one clear thing is that the Venezuelan people are eager for change after enduring 25 years under Hugo Chavez and Nicolas Maduro government.

Poll analysis in a semi-competitive scenario suggests that Edmundo González Urrutia, the candidate of the Democratic Unitary Platform, enjoys broad popular support and significantly outperforms Nicolás Maduro. It signals the decline of an era dominated by Chavismo-Madurismo, which controlled the executive and other government branches—legislative, judicial, and administrative—resulting in severe mismanagement and weakening Venezuela's economy. As a result, the country has gone from one of Latin America's top economies to one of the lowest on regional social and economic indicators. Additionally, UN data shows that Maduro's government has caused the largest peacetime migration in history, with nearly 25% of the population leaving the country.

The massive support for María Corina Machado, who champions freedom, democracy, and the rule of law as the foundations of a new, prosperous Venezuela, reflects the people's renewed hope. However, faced with the prospect of electoral defeat, Maduro's regimen has once again resorted to repression and intimidation to cling to power through fear.

Last week, María Corina Machado led massive rallies in the Venezuelan cities of Coro and Maracaibo, despite the regime's attempts to limit opposition participation. These rallies demonstrate widespread support for an alternative to Maduro. On the other hand, the ruling party's precarious mobilizations suggest its declining electoral position, highlighting the fact that elections are often won before voting.

In this context, it is imperative to negotiate a peaceful exit and ensure a smooth transition of power. Maduro and his inner circle must respect the Venezuelan people's will and accept the election results. Moreover, they must agree to coexist with a National Assembly dominated by the opposition starting in 2025. This arrangement would facilitate discussions on Venezuela's external debt, access to capital markets, and financing from multilateral banks, essential for revitalizing the nation's economy.

Without a peaceful resolution, Venezuela risks a more profound political confrontation, which could exacerbate the country's economic and social stagnation. Society would remain fractured, divided, and disintegrated both socially and geographically. It is vital to put aside differences and unite for the common good. "Chavismo is not an enemy; it is a political adversary", declared González Urrutia. With popular support, opposition forces stand a chance of success in future elections, as Brazilian President Lula da Silva advised.

Negotiation and dialogue are crucial for building a democratic and prosperous future for all Venezuelans. Now is the time to act decisively and responsibly for the country's and its people's welfare and to achieve the political stability many long for.

Venezuela is at a critical juncture with the opportunity for substantial transformation. The July 28 presidential elections present a chance to move towards a democratic and prosperous future. However, achieving this requires all stakeholders, including the Maduro regime and the opposition, to commit to negotiation and constructive dialogue.

The people's desire for change—to end years of economic decline, political repression, and widespread suffering—is clear. Now is the time to set aside divisions and collaborate toward the common goal of rebuilding Venezuela.

The international community also plays a vital role in this process by supporting negotiation efforts and contributing to the country's economic revitalization. A better future for Venezuela can only be built through the collaboration and commitment of all parties involved.

Let's be clear: Negotiation leads to victory for Venezuela. It is time to act with determination and a vision for the future to overcome current challenges and pave the way toward a new era of democracy, freedom, and prosperity for all Venezuelan citizens.