

Will Nicolás Maduro hand over the presidency to Edmundo González?

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"Power means a confrontation with reality, and totalitarianism in power is constantly concerned with facing this challenge." – Hannah Arendt

In a highly tense political scenario, Venezuela is at a critical juncture, oscillating between fear and hope. The victory of María Corina Machado on October 22 has become a symbol of resistance against a regime that has adopted brutal repression as its primary tool of control. The recent arrest of members of the primary winner's team and other political parties highlights how dangerous the situation has become and Nicolás Maduro's regime's attempt to crush any democratic aspirations.

Despite this, María Corina's experience and focus on coordinating the popular movement instead of relying on the fragile unity of the traditional political parties have charted a viable path towards real and significant change with Edmundo González Urrutia's candidacy.

Recently, open signal television in Venezuela showed a sign of an opening in state control with the interview given to Ambassador González Urrutia on Venevisión. This unprecedented event during Maduro's administration might indicate a modification in the severe censorship that has long dominated and seems to be an effort by the regime to comply with the tenth point of the Barbados agreement, which advocates for the participation of all media in election coverage.

The longing for change is palpable in political rhetoric and in the will of the citizens. With 75% of the population ready to vote on July 28 and an additional 15% considering it, there is no doubt about the strong desire for change within the Venezuelan population. This high anticipated participation suggests that Venezuelans are increasingly determined to express their discontent despite the ruling party's efforts to instill fear.

Although Maduro & Co. continue to resort to repression to intimidate voters, it is clear that these tactics of fear are losing effectiveness. The population seems to be reaching a turning point where the desire for democratic change outweighs the fear of repression. This crucial moment could be decisive in Edmundo González Urrutia's success, as popular pressure and the specific mandate given to María Corina in the primaries to transform the country are and will be fundamental.

However, the transition to effective democracy in Venezuela is far from smooth. The uncertainty about whether Maduro will peacefully hand over power, combined with the possible influence of external actors and criminal groups, further complicates the situation. The impact of countries such as Russia, Cuba, and Iran, as well as the internal division of the Army, could be decisive. Nevertheless, if the PSUV's candidate recognizes the victory of González Urrutia, it would force the Military High Command to comply with the constitutional mandate.

So far, as is natural, Maduro's discourse does not deviate from his continuity in power, rejecting any indication of weakness or willingness to relinquish command. Therefore, it is not surprising that his statements do not suggest accepting an electoral defeat against Edmundo González Urrutia. Behind closed doors in Miraflores, certainly, another story supports the low percentage of support given by all polls.

Chávez's successor could opt for a peaceful transition, especially if faced with the certainty of more severe sanctions and international isolation, even if he says otherwise. However, we should not discount the risk that intensifying repressive tactics to cling to power could trigger a more profound political and social crisis.

In summary, the possibility that the tenant of Miraflores will peacefully hand over the presidency to González Urrutia is far from clear at this time. Factors such as international pressure, internal dynamics of the regime, massive voting, and the defense of the electoral boxes are crucial in this process. The 166 days following the election of the next president of Venezuela (until the inauguration on January 10, 2025) will be vital to establish the foundations of true democracy in the country.

The determination of the Venezuelan people, the alignment of the military sector, and international influence will be decisive in establishing a government with the foundations to rebuild a true democracy. The international community must remain vigilant and committed to supporting a peaceful transition process in which the rights of the people are guaranteed. Venezuela's history is at a turning point, and how actions are taken now could redefine the future for generations.