

IACHR Report on Human Rights Violations in Venezuela in Electoral Context

OAS Permanent Council

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Remarks by Commissioner [Gloria De Mees](#), Rapporteur for Venezuela

It is an honor for me to address the Permanent Council on behalf of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights to present our findings on the report: “Venezuela: Grave Human Rights Violations in the Electoral Context.”

I would like to express my regret concerning the late availability of this report and assure the Council that measures have been put in place not to have a recurrence.

In terms of methodology, the report draws from both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources include testimonies collected through the Special Monitoring Mechanism for Venezuela (MESEVE), as well as information from public hearings, press releases, and the Commission's annual and thematic reports. Secondary sources encompass official acts from the State, including constitutional amendments, laws, decrees, judicial decisions, and official statements, as well as conclusions from other international human rights bodies, such as the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Venezuela.

Before, during, and after the July 28 of 2024 presidential election, the regime implemented a coordinated repressive strategy in three stages to illegitimately perpetuate itself in power. As part of this strategy, state terrorism practices were employed to prevent the political participation of the opposition, hinder the development of a free, fair, competitive, and transparent electoral contest, and instill fear among citizens. These acts were carried out without any oversight due to the co-optation of various state powers over the last two decades.

The first stage occurred during the pre-electoral period, aimed at preventing the opposition's political participation, violating their right to equal opportunity to run and campaign without arbitrary and discriminatory restrictions. The state utilized institutions such as the Office of the Comptroller General of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, the Supreme Court of Justice (TSJ), and the security forces to arbitrarily arrest opposition members, human rights defenders,

and social leaders under vague accusations. Acts of harassment, persecution, and disqualification against opposition figures, or those perceived as such, were recorded, alongside the withdrawal of international electoral observation missions. Moreover, the National Telecommunications Commission (CONATEL) imposed severe restrictions on press freedom, while the National Electoral Council (CNE) established obstacles that denied the right to vote abroad, affecting nearly 5 million Venezuelans.

The second stage unfolded on July 28, during the presidential election. The government implemented a strategy to manipulate the results and declare Nicolás Maduro the winner without transparency. The CNE halted data transmission under the pretext of a cyber-attack and suspended audits of the electoral process, refusing to publish the voting records supporting the announced results. Anticipating electoral fraud, the opposition compiled more than 80% of the tally sheets nationwide to ensure the contest's transparency and credibility. The tally sheet totals indicated a victory for opposition candidate Edmundo Gonzalez Urrutia, with 67% of the votes.

The perception of fraud triggered nearly 300 spontaneous demonstrations, primarily led by poor young men. In response, the regime implemented a third stage of systematic repression, intensifying terror as a tool of social control. Authorities mobilized civilian shock groups against demonstrators and launched "Operation Tun Tun," referring to the sound of agents knocking on doors before arrests. This operation resulted in at least 25 murders, dozens of brief forced disappearances, approximately 2,000 arbitrary detentions—including children and adolescents—torture, cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment, and severe violations of judicial guarantees and freedom of expression. Additionally, tactics such as mass arrests, warrantless searches, marking opposition homes, raids in popular neighborhoods, and abrupt passport cancellations were employed against human rights defenders.

The political and human rights crisis in Venezuela stems from the complete co-optation of state institutions by a regime determined to illegitimately maintain power. The control of institutions meant to promote and protect human rights and democracy, coupled with large-scale corruption for the collection of legal and illegal rents, has ensured the impunity of the security forces. These actions have compromised governance and significantly affected the enjoyment of human rights.

The Inter-American Commission emphasizes that the Venezuelan case clearly illustrates the intrinsic relationship between human rights, democracy, and the rule of law. These three

elements form a triad in which each defines, complements, and gains meaning in relation to the others. The collapse of this triad, caused by the co-optation of public powers by the Executive Branch, facilitated the establishment of a de facto regime.

In its recommendations, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights calls on the current regime in Venezuela to immediately cease political persecution, repression, and arbitrary detentions, as well as to urgently release all individuals who have been arbitrarily detained. It also urges the restoration of constitutional order, the reconstruction of the separation and independence of public powers, the publication of all voting records, and the facilitation of an independent electoral audit with international observation.

Lastly, the IACHR reiterates its call to the international community to activate all diplomatic and institutional channels to secure the release of all individuals arbitrarily detained for political reasons, to prioritize a human rights approach in the hemispheric dialogue on the political and social crisis in Venezuela, and to support the Venezuelan people in their return to democracy.

Thank you!