Venezuela Elections: What's Next?

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3 Main Points

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About the Author

Fracia Baeke is pursuing an LLM in European Social Security at KU Leuven (BE). Her research focuses on political economy and security. Driven by a mission to pursue a career in research to support policy- and decision-making, Fracia Baeke aims to draw attention to underrepresented issues in the media and academia within Europe.

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Summary

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Despite claims of stealing the 2024 presidential elections, Maduro was inaugurated in January as Venezuela's president for a third time, effectively extending his time in power to 18 years. As the opposition continues to push back and the international community holds back on recognising Maduro, What is next for Venezuela?

Image

Text

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The 2024 Venezuelan election results were declared with an uproar for supposed fraudulent election results that led to intense confrontations on the streets of Caracas. Nicolás Maduro, who was inaugurated for his third term in January 2025, is believed to have won the election with fraudulent votes, while opposition candidate Edmundo González was the true candidate The move has been described as the further destruction of what was left of Venezuela's democracy. However, there is still hope. This is the most pushback that Maduro has seen from both the Venezuelan population,and the international community, with many countries rejecting the results and refusing to recognise him as the winner of the elections. Despite the brief detention of opposition leaders María Corina Machado and exile of Edmundo Gonzalez, the opposition remains strong, with international support clear. Gonzalez was welcomed as he embarked on an international tour earlier this year and Machado remains an active part of the opposition in Venezuela.

Nevertheless, the Maduro regime has proven to be resilient despite years of sanctions, a peacetime economic crash, and an exodus of nearly 8 million Venezuelans to neighboring countries. Despite many analysts believing that the opposition stood a chance to challenge the regime, this ultimately failed. Maduro secured his third term as president and González is exiled. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that the pushback the regime has received may be a sign of Maduro's power and influence weakening with new challenges ahead. Since the inauguration, several Western countries have imposed sanctions, including the EU, US, and Canada. Neighbouring Argentina, Peru, and Paraguay recognised Gonzalez as the legitimate president. From the broader Latin America region, only Cuba and Nicaragua, both with an authoritarian regime, attended the inauguration. This has

resulted in further political and economic isolation for the rest of the South American region as well as the international stage. Many have also speculated that this further isolation will only strengthen criminal ties with the Maduro regime as the continuing exodus fuels human smuggling and trafficking networks and threatens human rights and freedom.

As Venezuela heads to the election booths once again in April for the legislative and regional branches of government, developments in favour of the opposition are difficult to imagine. These elections may reaffirm Maduro's position against the opposition, further centralising power while the country faces its consequences. The Venezuelan Parliament has been accused of enabling Chavism, the left-wing populist political ideology of former President Hugo Chavez survived by Maduro. So, what's next for Venezuela? The results of the April elections offer a hope for the opposition that remains constrained by the laws that protect the Bolivarian Republic. For now, one promise has been made clear by the president of the National Assembly, "Chavismo will triumph".

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