



## Venezuela:

***“We don’t know what’s happening to us,  
and that is precisely what is happening to us.”***

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If someone had written, three decades ago, about the socio-political hecatomb that Venezuela and Venezuelans would soon suffer, he would have passed for a madman or a novelist. No one could have predicted, or even suspected, that the country of dreams for so many - Venezuelans and foreigners alike - would soon be the protagonist of the largest human migratory movement, and in a short time. They would have never suspected the consequent enormous and grave humanitarian crisis that this has brought on, of which the history of mankind is aware, due to the debacle that the successive Chavista and Madurista governments have meant for the country, continent, and world for the last twenty-five years.

Already, 7.7 million Venezuelans have been forced to emigrate, leaving behind their land and loved ones in recent years. They have not left to do tourism – as Nicolás Maduro and his followers have cynically suggested. Rather, they seek better living conditions and hope for a better future. They seek the same living conditions that Venezuela and foreigners – from all latitudes – sought and found there for decades, looking for a better future and finding in Venezuela a land of promise, protected by its abundance of wealth and natural resources.

These were the conditions of life that ignorant and inept “politicians” belonging to the corrupt Chavista-Maduro regime snatched from the vast majority of Venezuelans for the benefit of the minority, the “enchufados,” as they are called colloquially, those who are “plugged into” the government.

This is a regime that, through the force of arms and the brutal and criminal repressive violence of military and paramilitary bodies, hijacked the institutions of the Venezuelan State and closed the media and free expression, while impoverishing millions of citizens.

This is a country that, before Chavismo, was thriving and economically stable, offering a present and future for its citizens, who were proud to be Venezuelans. All that was

progressively destroyed in its social and political foundations as well as in its social fabric and its productive infrastructure until it became a pariah country, a nation isolated from the international stage, devolving into the property of a handful of abusers of power and human rights that resemble more a mafia cartel than the political leaders of a great nation, once glorious and sovereign.

Venezuela went from having a consolidated economy based on oil income and high levels of foreign investment to an interventionist economy subject to Chavista control and misgovernment, with hyperinflation, scarcity of goods and services, capital flight, limited private investment, and an unforeseen and unprecedented economic crisis. It went from being a representative democratic political system, with the free participation of political parties, to a totalitarian, autocratic, and corrupt regime, with absolute control of the powers of the State (including electoral power), the limitation of civil rights and liberties and persecution and repression, with imprisonment and torture, through a fabricated, deceitful judicial framework that justifies brutality and abuses, increasingly atrocious and cruel, against its opponents.

Venezuela has a dictatorial regime that – to keep alive and mercilessly perpetuate its power – has formed alliances and allowed interference from other similar regimes as undesirable and unrepresentable as Venezuela's. Venezuela went from being a plural and heterogeneous society, with opportunities for mobility and social progress and a relevant middle class, to being a fragmented, polarized society, with an immense gap between the followers of the regime and the rest of the population, in addition to its lack of security and its unceasing, colossal migratory phenomenon.

The swift and violent destruction inflicted on the Venezuelan nation by Maduro's atrocious regime is not and cannot be called "democracy." Democracy – by definition, is the "government of the people." It is the form of government that allows sovereignty to reside in the people and never in a handful of shoddy politicians, ferocious criminals who turn against their fellow citizens. The Bolivarian revolution (or robolution) and socialism of the 21st century have turned out to be a trap, a farce, with headlines proclaiming its resounding failure.

On July 28, the Venezuelan people were robbed and stripped of their sovereignty in the elections in which – by all accounts and by more than 70% – the opposition candidate, Mr. Edmundo González Urrutia, was elected. Today, he is president-elect and a legitimate

asylum-seeker in Spain, together with the powerful and heroic leadership of Mrs. María Corina Machado.

The ruthless Maduro regime allowed, with all their inequities and unfair advantages, elections in Venezuela to disguise itself as a democracy while stealing the elections, hiding non-existent evidence of the dictator's triumph, carrying out a continuous coup d'état and – not satisfied with such an abuse of power – increasing and radicalizing the persecution and repression of the opposition to levels never imaginable because of how unjust and cruel they are.

Maduro's regime inserts itself into power by mocking and violating all ethics, crossing all the limits of decency and justice, and ignoring any national or international treaty, convention, or agreement. It is a regime that murders and persecutes children, young people, the disabled, and the elderly. A regime that generates hunger, violence, and death against millions of Venezuelans.

Democracy, then, as the best system of government invented by man, is in crisis, under threat in the world and Latin America, as it is in Nicaragua. As the Venezuelan analyst Moisés Naim recently said in an interview with Infobae: today, *"democracy is a form of government in danger of extinction,"* and this danger concerns us all. We are all called to preserve, defend, and build democracy. The situation in Venezuela concerns all of us. We must find a solution and remove from power the criminals who kidnapped the state and the sovereignty of Venezuelans. We urgently need a combination of negotiations and factors - internal and external - that produces - forcefully - the end and, as quickly and efficiently as possible, the exit - of the terrifying Chavista-Maduro regime entrenched in Venezuela. The need for the reinstatement and reconstruction of democracy in Venezuela is urgent.

Let us not repeat in our American and Latin American reality the terrible maxim of José Ortega y Gasset: *"We do not know what is happening to us, and that is precisely what is happening to us."* The bad example of what is happening in Venezuela threatens the continent's stability. The international community – led by the United States, as the greatest exponent of the democratic system in the Americas – cannot ignore Venezuela and must innovate and impose personalized sanctions and definitive solutions to address the Venezuelan crisis.

The defenseless Venezuelan people have done their part and have already paid a high price in suffering and death. Statements are no longer enough. The Venezuelan dictatorship mocks, ignores sanctions and statements, harasses, besieges, censors, kidnaps, tortures, and kills in its dungeons.

We urgently need to recognize the results of the last elections and the sovereignty of the Venezuelan people. There is an urgent need to establish a government of national unity in

Venezuela that will implement urgent economic reforms, respect for human rights, and the reconstruction of the social fabric.

Today, the Venezuelan despot and populist and his clique of henchmen are hostages of their own invention. Fear is exorcised with repression and violence. But every minute of the tyrant's stay in Venezuela is another minute of more violence, hunger, death, emigration, suffering, and despair for every Venezuelan, inside and outside Venezuela's borders.

In a civilized world of globalization, participation, and collaboration, human beings, the community of nations, and international organizations are not here to tolerate abuses against human beings and their dignity, such as those that happen daily in Venezuela. They cannot tolerate a criminal regime of terror, of political hucksters who interpret "democracy" at their whim and accommodation. The international community must be stronger than the personalism and brutal and illegitimate authoritarianism of a tyrant, a puppet of a kakistocracy.

Remembering the national anthem of Venezuela, we must all stand in solidarity with this great nation and its citizens, making it possible for *"the brave people to soon throw off the yoke, out of respect for the law, virtue, and honor"* to rebuild the dreams of sovereignty and freedom of the Venezuelan Liberator Simón Bolívar and so that other peoples and nations can *"follow the example that Caracas gave."*

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