

Venezuela's Supreme Court upholds Maduro's re-election

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On Thursday, Venezuela's Supreme Court of Justice (TSJ) upheld the results of the July 28 presidential election issued by the National Electoral Council (CNE), which handed re-election to President Nicolás Maduro. According to the CNE, Maduro received 52 percent of the vote, against 43 percent for the candidate of the Washington-backed Venezuelan opposition, Edmundo González. The TSJ declared that its decision was "unappealable and of mandatory compliance."

At a rally the same day in the state of La Guaira, Maduro praised the "technical, scientific, professional work" of the TSJ and described its decision as "historic and forceful." He added: "Holy word, let there be peace, absolute respect for the Public Powers!"

Both González and fascist candidate María Corina Machado, who was barred from running, denounced the TSJ's decision on X/Twitter. González said the decision is "null" and "Sovereignty resides untransferably in the people." In a "WORLD ALERT," Machado shared a publication by the United Nations Human Rights Council saying that the TSJ and the CNE "lack impartiality and independence" and denounced Maduro's "coup d'état against the Constitution."

Since the CNE announced Maduro's victory on election day, the Venezuelan opposition has accused the Chavista regime of electoral fraud for not presenting the individual results from all the polling stations. The CNE claimed that a "cyber-terrorist attack" prevented it from publishing them shortly after the election. However, even after the TSJ's count, their publication has still not been forthcoming.

On August 5, González and Machado published a letter claiming that, according to their supposed count of more than 80 percent of the precinct results, González won the election with 67 percent of the votes against 33 percent for Maduro. Citing these alleged results, González repeated the 2019 move by US puppet Juan Guaidó and declared himself president-elect of Venezuela.

In response, the Venezuelan Public Prosecutor's Office launched a criminal investigation against González and Machado for "instigation to disobey the law, instigation to insurrection, criminal association and conspiracy," among other crimes.

The opposing sides of a developing world war, which threatens to turn South America into a future battlefield, are also supporting the opposing factions in the Venezuelan election. China, Russia, and Iran, which have close political, economic, and military ties with Venezuela, recognized and welcomed Maduro's electoral victory from the outset. The US and European powers are also

demanding the release of the individual vote tallies and have recognized González's electoral victory.

In Latin America, Bolivia, Cuba, and Nicaragua recognized Maduro's victory, while the fascist president of Argentina, Javier Milei, and Peru's unelected and dictatorial President Dina Boluarte, along with the pseudo-leftist president of Chile, Gabriel Boric, denounced the electoral process and backed the claims of a González victory.

Boric was one of the first to speak out against the Venezuelan Supreme Court's decision, writing on X/Twitter: "There is no doubt that we are facing a dictatorship that falsifies elections, represses those who think differently, and is indifferent to the world's largest exile [population]."

Despite its full support for the Venezuelan opposition, the US has yet to formally recognize González as president. According to an August 5 statement by US State Department spokesman Matthew Miller, this "is not a step we're taking today. We're in close contact with our partners in the region, especially with Brazil, Mexico and Colombia ... we continue to urge the Venezuelan parties to begin a peaceful transition back to democratic norms."

Indeed, the presidents of the largest countries to see a second wave of the "Pink Tide" in Latin America, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (Workers Party - PT) of Brazil, Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO) of Mexico, and Gustavo Petro of Colombia, are acting as mediators for imperialism to try to defuse the political crisis in Venezuela. While recognizing neither Maduro's nor González's claims to victory, they are vocalizing the Venezuelan opposition's and US imperialism's demands that the authorities in Venezuela "publicly disclose the data aggregated by polling station," as they wrote in a joint note on August 1.

However, this consensus of the three Latin American presidents was broken last week, when Lula and Petro began to advocate new elections. AMLO said that new elections are "reckless" and advocated that the Venezuelan Supreme Court decide the issue.

On August 15, Petro detailed the conditions for a new election, writing on X/Twitter: "Lifting of all sanctions against Venezuela. General national and international amnesty [for members of the Maduro government and the opposition]. Full guarantees for political action. Transitional coalition government." Lula has also advocated the participation of international observers. Both Maduro and Machado have rejected the proposal.

At the advent of "Pink Tide" bourgeois nationalist governments

in Latin America, Lula established a close relationship with Hugo Chávez (president of Venezuela from 1999 until his death in 2013) during his own first two terms in office (2003-2010). Since coming to power for his third term at the beginning of last year, Lula has been trying to rehabilitate the Chavista government and served as one of the mediators in the Barbados agreement between Maduro and the opposition that paved the way for the July 28 presidential election.

However, this process has suffered a setback since the election results were announced. Last week, Lula explained in an interview with Radio T FM that his relationship with the Chavista regime “has deteriorated because the political situation there is deteriorating.” In another interview with Rádio Gaúcha, also last week, he said, “Venezuela is experiencing a very unpleasant regime. I don’t think it’s a dictatorship ... It’s a government with an authoritarian bias.”

Another move that has pitted Brazil against Venezuela is the Maduro government’s revival of Venezuela’s claim to the Essequibo region held by Guyana, which dates back to British and Spanish colonialism at the beginning of the 19th century. When, in the face of Guyana’s move toward exploitation of offshore oil deposits, Maduro held a popular referendum on Venezuela’s claims last December and mobilized troops near its borders with Guyana, the Lula government responded by militarizing the border region between Brazil and Venezuela, through which a possible invasion of Guyana would likely pass.

As with the Venezuelan election, the Lula government has been working closely with the Biden administration to mediate the crisis between Venezuela and Guyana, even as the Pentagon has stepped up US military exercises in Guyana and its disputed waters.

The Essequibo claim—much like that of Argentina’s junta to the British-held Malvinas Islands in 1982—is part of an effort by the Maduro government to deflect outward Venezuela’s enormous social and economic crisis. The predominant factor in this process is the pressure imposed by US imperialism, which seeks unrestricted access to the Venezuela’s rich natural resources, including the world’s largest known oil reserves.

To this end, Washington has imposed draconian sanctions to force regime change, resulting in the drastic impoverishment of the Venezuelan masses and an estimated 100,000 deaths due to the cutoff of medical supplies and other vital necessities. Maduro’s bourgeois-nationalist government has been unable to offer a progressive way out of this crisis, even as it seeks a better negotiating position with the US.

Unable to appeal to the working class, which has increasingly turned against the Chavista regime, Maduro has reinforced his alleged “military-police-popular alliance” and increased its repressive nature. According to the government itself, some 2,400 Venezuelans have been arrested in protests that erupted after the election. And, since August 8, X/Twitter has been blocked as part of the Maduro government’s crusade against “hate campaigns” on social media.

In the Chavista-controlled National Assembly, a bill is being discussed to regulate social networks and another against “fascism, neo-fascism, and similar expressions” that could lead to the banning of parties that “incite fascism.” As happens all over the

world, bills like these can be utilized to attack the working class fighting against capitalism, with the Chavista regime painting all opposition as fascistic.

The allegations of political repression and persecution go beyond the US-backed opposition and include militant workers and sectors that have broken with Chavismo, such as the Stalinist Communist Party of Venezuela (PCV). In August of last year, the Chavista regime virtually outlawed the PCV and prevented it from running candidates in this year’s presidential election.

On August 13, the PCV and its Popular Democratic Front drew attention in a statement to the “massive, popular and spontaneous mobilization of indignation over the announced results” that gave Maduro the victory and charged that “The massive violence against the popular sectors is accompanied by permanent threats, incitement to hatred and the execution of practices of selective violence against different sectors of the political opposition.”

The crisis in Venezuela will undoubtedly escalate in the coming weeks and months. There are more and more warnings that country could confront civil war or even a “pro-democracy” foreign military intervention.

Whatever happens, the Lula and Petro governments are already exposed as key players in the efforts of US imperialism and the right-wing Venezuelan opposition that it sponsors to remove Chavismo from power. The illusion promoted by these governments that the crisis in Venezuela can be resolved at the negotiating table represent a cover for the decades-long regime change operations of the Venezuelan opposition and US imperialism as they buy time to discredit the Maduro government and advance their strategy.

As the WSWS wrote in its August 2 Perspective, the July 28 election “was illegitimate from the outset, the product not of any demand by the Venezuelan people, but of closed-door talks between Caracas and Washington’s lackeys in Barbados.” Therefore, the demand that the local polling results be made public, made by the imperialist powers, the governments of the “Pink Tide,” and much of the international pseudo-left, offers no real alternative and will serve only the interests of Washington and Venezuela’s far-right opposition.

The only alternative for Venezuela’s working class against the threat of war and fascism is to mobilize its own strength independently from all factions of the Venezuelan bourgeoisie, including *chavismo* and its satellites, and to forge its unity with the Latin American and world working class in the struggle for international socialism.



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