

Nicolas Maduro Reelected President of Venezuela

By [Stephen Lendman](#)

Global Research, May 21, 2018

Region: [Latin America & Caribbean](#)

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stephenlendman.org

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Contact at lendmanstephen@sbcglobal.net.

Nicolas Maduro won another six-year term overwhelmingly by a two-thirds majority - far greater than polls predicted, turnout disappointing at less than 50%.

His main adversary, Chavista turncoat Henri Falcon, fared much poorer than predicted with around 21% of the vote.

Businessman/evangelical pastor linked to the Panama Papers tax haven scandal got only about 11% support.

Addressing a late Sunday night crowd of supporters, Maduro hailed his triumph as a victory over "imperialism," saying:

"How much have they underestimated our revolutionary people, and how much have they underestimated me. And here we are victorious," adding:

"It has been a heroic, beautiful, popular victory forged in the struggle. I'm the president of all of the Venezuelans. I call for a dialogue process. Permanent dialogue is what Venezuela needs. The revolution is here to stay!"

Scores of international observers from 30 countries monitored Sunday's elections, including former Spanish Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero, saying:

"I do not have any doubt about the voting process. It is an advanced automatic voting system. I come here to keep the peace, coordinate and promote dialogue to improve the democratic mechanism here," adding:

"What I need to do here is to see whether people can cast their ballots at their own discretion. Now we all see how people vote, don't we?"

Other international observers called Sunday's vote open, free and fair, the atmosphere calm, no incidents reported, no irregularities other than minor ones corrected.

Venezuela's democratic process is the world's best by far, polar opposite America's money-

controlled system, one-party rule with two right wings, serving privileged interests exclusively, steadily eroding social justice, heading toward eliminating it altogether - planned demise since the neoliberal 90s.

The Trump administration rejects the result of Venezuela's election, Deputy Secretary of State John Sullivan told reporters, adding sanctions on the country's oil industry may be imposed, saying "(t)hey are under active review."

Falcon rejected his overwhelming defeat, falsely calling the result illegitimate, wanting a new election not forthcoming.

The Trump administration and Western media, notably the NYT, falsely claimed key opposition candidates were barred from running.

Former presidential candidate Henrique Capriles was barred for misconduct. Leopoldo Lopez is a convicted criminal for leading violent anti-government protests - earlier imprisoned, currently under house arrest.

Parties boycotting last December's municipal elections had to re-register with electoral authorities. Eligibility required them to collect signatures from 0.5 percent of the electorate in 12 states.

In late January, Venezuela's Supreme Court ruled against the MUD coalition running a joint ticket - for "double affiliation," holding membership in two parties at the same time, the court explaining:

"In the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, one cannot be a member of two political parties at the same time, because the interests of one and the other could coincide in some aspects, but there will always be distinctions, which make this unethical and inoperative."

In late February, the key opposition undemocratic Dem Unity Roundtable (MUD) coalition announced they'd boycott the presidential election, falsely calling the process "fraudulent and illegitimate."

Founder and former editor of Venezuela Analysis Greg Wilpert called MUD's pullout "puzzling," saying given dire economic conditions (largely from US political and economic war), this year's election was "the best opportunity since 1998 that the opposition ha(d) to defeat the Bolivarian Revolution."

Why didn't MUD participate? Wilpert believes it wanted more than just winning the presidency.

"(I)t wants a radical break from the Bolivarian Revolution, and the only way it can do that is to provoke a political and economic crisis that would lead to a coup or some other form of radical regime change."

Chavistas control Venezuela's "Supreme Court, the National Electoral Council, the Attorney General's office, (and) National Constituent Assembly...in charge of re-writing the constitution."

Since Venezuela became a Bolivarian social democracy under Hugo Chavez, now under Maduro, Washington sought regime change.

Multiple coup attempts to replace Bolivarian social democracy with fascist tyranny failed – in 2002, a late 2002/2003 general strike/management-led oil lockout, a 2004 recall referendum, months of likely CIA-orchestrated street violence to unseat Maduro, a 2014 plot against him, a 2005 plot to kill him, a 2017 helicopter attack on Venezuela’s Supreme Court and Justice Ministry, and a 2017 terrorist attack on Fort Paramacay in Carabobo state two days after Venezuela’s Constituent Assembly was inaugurated last August.

Will another US regime change attempt follow Sunday’s election? Trump administration economic war will surely continue, likely intensify, including imposition of tough new illegal sanctions.

Washington’s rage for control of Venezuela’s vast oil reserves, the world’s largest with its heavy oil, virtually assures continued Trump administration destabilizing activities ahead.

Whether Maduro and Bolivarian social democracy can survive the onslaught remains very much uncertain.

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Stephen Lendman is a Research Associate of the CRG, Correspondent of Global Research based in Chicago.

VISIT MY NEW WEB SITE: stephenlendman.org (*Home - Stephen Lendman*). Contact at lendmanstephen@sbcglobal.net.

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Articles by: [Stephen Lendman](http://StephenLendman.com)

About the author:

Stephen Lendman lives in Chicago. He can be reached at lendmanstephen@sbcglobal.net. His new book as editor and contributor is titled "Flashpoint in Ukraine: US Drive for Hegemony Risks WW III."

<http://www.claritypress.com/LendmanIII.html> Visit his blog site at sjlendman.blogspot.com. Listen to cutting-edge discussions with distinguished guests on the Progressive Radio News Hour on the Progressive Radio Network. It airs three times weekly: live on Sundays at 1PM Central time plus two prerecorded archived programs.

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