

# Venezuelan Opposition Fails to Win a Two Thirds Majority. Constitutional Changes Cannot be Enacted

By [Stephen Lendman](#)

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*In Sunday National Assembly elections, Chavismo suffered a humbling defeat - short of disaster. Democratic Unity Roundtable (MUD) fell short of their goal.*

On its [web site](#), Venezuela's National Electoral Council (CNE) said MUD won 107 seats to the ruling socialist coalition Great Patriotic Pole's (GPP) 55 - a 64.07% to 32.93 majority. Indigenous seats comprise another 1.80% of the 167 legislative body, its representatives elected solely by members of their communities.

Results for two remaining seats remain unreported as this is written - likely too close to call so perhaps recounts are being conducted before winning candidates are announced.

A super-majority 112 or more seats would let MUD dismiss Supreme Court judges and enact constitutional changes, ending or greatly compromising social justice provisions.

Regardless of their number of seats, they can call for a national referendum to recall elected officials, including President Maduro, with enough popular support perhaps to prevail, as authorized under the Constitution's Article 72, stating:

"All magistrates and other offices filled by popular vote are subject to revocation (including Venezuela's president). Once half of the term of office to which an official has been elected has elapsed, a number of voters constituting at least 20% of the voters registered in the pertinent circumscription may extend a petition for the calling of a referendum to revoke such official's mandate."

In August 2004, Hugo Chavez overwhelmingly won an opposition called recall election with a 59% majority. He was extremely popular throughout his tenure. Maduro is vulnerable to recall with an approval rating in the 20 - 25% range.

In the wake of Sunday's legislative loss, he called on Bolivarian officials to discuss ways to strengthen the movement, saying:

"We got 43 percent of the votes... The counterrevolution triumphed yesterday, for now. They have come for the neoliberal restoration of the far right."

It's crucial to defend the revolution. "(T)he Venezuelan right wing has just one program" - destroying 16 years of social justice progress, replacing it with neoliberal harshness, Maduro explained.

“Unity should be the main aim. Nobody should be confused by an adverse situation.” He stressed the importance of drafting a “central document for the Bolivarian revolution,” including creating a National Assembly commission to defend hard-won social gains.

On national television, he stressed “(t)his oligarchy will never represent” Bolivarian fairness, what most Venezuelans support.

Sunday elections showed popular discontent about hard economic times above all other issues. Venezuelans are suffering under severe recessionary conditions combined with high inflation and shortages of basic commodities.

The elections also displayed why Venezuela has the world’s most vibrant democracy, even recognized by MUD candidates.

Sunday’s open, free and fair process was conducted smoothly and efficiently with no significant disruptions. Polls were open as long as voters remained in line.

What happens going forward is crucial. Chavismo suffered its first major defeat. Social justice gains achieved since 1999 years are crucial to preserve. Defending the revolution is top priority.

*Stephen Lendman lives in Chicago. He can be reached at [lendmanstephen@sbcglobal.net](mailto:lendmanstephen@sbcglobal.net).*

*His new book as editor and contributor is titled “Flashpoint in Ukraine: US Drive for Hegemony Risks WW III.”*

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About the author:

Stephen Lendman lives in Chicago. He can be reached at [lendmanstephen@sbcglobal.net](mailto:lendmanstephen@sbcglobal.net). His new book as editor and contributor is titled "Flashpoint in Ukraine:

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