



¡Bienvenidas y bienvenidos to El CC, CCLATAM's newsletter!. Every other week you'll find the main events shaking up Latin America, from Ushuaia in the south to Los Algodones in the north. Sign up [here](#) to stay updated on the region. Get [in touch](#) with us, we may feature an excerpt of your response in the next newsletter.

The Venezuela Issue



When election's results are undermined and democratically elected officials are silenced, when the regime is not recognizing irrefutable, evidence-based electoral defeat, when the strongman at the helm, has vowed to "pulverise" any challenge to his rule, declaring his readiness to do "anything" to protect his so-called "revolution, the very essence of democracy is at stake. The Venezuelan crisis serves as a stark warning: if we allow the voices of the Venezuelan people to be crushed, we risk emboldening authoritarian regimes and diminishing the democratic values that unite us.

We stand in unwavering solidarity with the Venezuelan people, who embody resilience and hope in their fight for a future where their voices are heard and respected.

We recognize Venezuelan political leaders who steadfastly believe in democracy and the rule of law. María Corina Machado stands as a beacon for all who cherish democratic values, reminding us that the fight for freedom knows no borders. The CCLatam board has decided to launch a global campaign to support María Corina Machado's candidacy for the Nobel Peace Prize. Regardless of how the crisis unfolds, we believe that María Corina Machado, along with many others, exemplifies how adhering to the Venezuelan constitution and the fundamental principles that guide nations and humanity sends a powerful message of peace. We call on other organisations and key decision-makers to support this call to action. If you wish to join this effort, please [join us](#).

CCLATAM Editorial Board

El State of Affairs

In a powerful display of defiance, thousands rallied in the streets of Caracas this past Saturday, waving the Venezuelan flag and singing the national anthem in support of opposition candidate Edmundo González. This demonstration came in the wake of a controversial presidential election, where President Nicolás Maduro was declared the winner without the release of definitive voting tallies to substantiate the claim.



Maduro had promised free and fair elections, but the process was marred by allegations of foul play. These included the arrest of opposition figures, the banning of key opposition leaders from running, the denial of access to opposition witnesses at the centralized vote count, and the disenfranchisement of overseas Venezuelans. Many young opposition supporters have expressed intentions to leave the country if Maduro is re-elected, pointing to the devastating collapse of Venezuela's economy and violent repression under his rule. An unified opposition movement formed a coalition to challenge Maduro. Its energized campaign stoked hope among a disillusioned populace desperate for change in a country suffering such dire economic straits that some 8 million Venezuelans have fled overseas.

The opposition candidate, former diplomat Edmundo Gonzalez, stepped in after the highly popular, center-right leader Maria Corina Machado was barred from running. The National Electoral Council (CNE) officially declared Maduro the winner late Sunday, with 80% of ballots counted, stating that Maduro had won 51.2% of the votes, while Gonzalez received 44.2%. However, the opposition has rejected the results, claiming their tallies showed Gonzalez had won. They alleged that their witnesses were denied access to the CNE headquarters as votes were being counted, and that the CNE halted data transmission from polling stations to the central body.

The U.S. has recognized Venezuelan opposition leader Edomondo Gonzalez as the winner of the Presidential elections. The Venezuelan elections also have implications and pressure for the U.S. and other allied countries for incoming immigrants. In the U.S. Border Patrol arrests dropped from 87,000 to around 57,000 in July, marking the lowest monthly tally of the Biden administration. However, this trend may only last for a while, since as many as 17 % of Venezuelans intended to leave the country within six months if Maduro took the presidency, according to a poll.

International reactions have been varied, with many regional and world leaders casting doubt on the results. The Organization of American States (OAS) stated that the election results could not be recognized due to a lack of transparency and evidence. The United Nations called for complete transparency and for the electoral body to guarantee the free expression of the electorate's will.

Once the fifth-largest economy in Latin America, Venezuela has experienced the worst economic collapse of a peacetime country in recent history, brought about by a crash in the price of oil, combined with chronic corruption and mismanagement. Now suffering from chronic shortages of vital goods and soaring inflation, Venezuela has seen millions of its citizens flee, including thousands who have trekked north to the U.S.'s southern border.

The U.S. and European Union have imposed sanctions on Maduro's regime for years, which he blames for the crisis, claiming Venezuela is the victim of an "economic war." Despite recent efforts to reduce the cost of living, the outlook remains grim. Venezuela finally curbed hyperinflation that peaked at over 400,000% a year in 2019, with current annual inflation around 50%. Yet, these policies have done little to tackle the economy's underlying structural problems, primarily its historic dependence on oil.



Venezuela's economic crisis, driven by a dependency on oil and compounded by government mismanagement, has left the country in dire straits. Despite Maduro's recent stabilization measures, including the informal dollarization of the economy, the majority of the population continues to struggle with low wages and high inflation. The country's massive foreign debt, estimated at \$150 billion, remains unresolved, further complicating economic recovery efforts.

La Charla

With Eric Farnsworth Vice-President AS/COA



Eric, we have seen your insightful commentary on various USA networks, including CNN, regarding the election results in Venezuela. You are a passionate advocate for the significance of the Western Hemisphere to U.S. economic and security interests and are considered a trusted voice by senior U.S. and foreign officials.

What insights can you share about Venezuela that you haven't told anyone?

Well, anyone who follows me on X (ericfarns) knows I'm pretty open about my views on Venezuela. I just think now is a moment for clarity, both moral and in terms of policy options. A Cuba and Russia-backed regime has baldly stolen an election it did everything to tilt in its favor. But it was not enough to dissuade citizens from voting for change, and now the regime has simply declared itself victorious despite all evidence. The regime will do whatever it takes to remain in power, including harassing and killing its own citizens protesting peacefully. This realization is clarifying in the effort to develop effective policy options.

What is the significance of the post-election situation in Venezuela for the region and for the U.S. electoral race?

If the international community cannot rally to condemn even the basic trappings of democracy by rallying to defend the vote in Venezuela, the implications for regional democracy are profound. It means democracy is not secure anywhere. It also means that the United States must get real about our ability to influence regional developments and unless we prioritize concrete steps to improve our position, such as passage and robust implementation of the Americas Act, the Venezuela reversal will not be the last by any means.

The European Union has faced challenges in reaching a unified stance on Venezuela and has ultimately decided not to recognize the election outcomes. How likely is it that the EU and the USA will align on this issue? Could Venezuela serve as a test for Transatlantic relations?

It seems that a unified European position has been prevented by Hungary, at least in part. It's a curious thing. Hungary has no conceivable interests in Venezuela. But Russia does. And Orbán and Putin are purportedly bros. Has Putin used Orbán to undermine democracy in Venezuela? Who knows. But these are some of the questions we now have to be asking and what makes sustainable solutions so difficult to find. Having said that, a unified US-EU approach to Venezuela, especially in terms of coordinated sanctions and forfeitures of criminals' assets, would be useful.

You've been following the Venezuela crisis closely and are an expert on the subject. Given the current situation, what do you think will be the next move for opposition candidate María Machado, who, along with other courageous Venezuelan citizens like Manuela Bolívar, has been pivotal in maintaining the opposition in Parliament?

Maria Corina Machado is the inspirational, transformational leader who has literally given the people hope for change. She has raised their sights and their aspirations. It's why the regime fears her and disqualified her arbitrarily from running for president. It's also why they are now trying to scare her into exile. They want her gone without creating a martyr. But she is not scared. The reality of repression is palpable. She had been in hiding since Tuesday and still she led a thousands rallying in the streets of Caracas this past Saturday, waving the Venezuelan flag and singing the national anthem in support of opposition candidate Edmundo González. So anything the regime can do to limit her voice and public reach they will attempt to do. Her public profile is her best

protection but it's not a guarantee. Meantime, her efforts to inspire nationwide public protests against the steal, in the face of brutal regime oppression, will pit her ability to keep on mobilizing the street against those who seek to maintain authoritarian control. Can she do it?

Do you believe that the humanitarian crisis, the notion of a stolen democracy, and the presence of organized crime in Venezuela reflect a failure of the international community and the countries of the Western Hemisphere to ensure safety in Latin America?

Yes. It's tragic things have gotten this far out of hand.

If you were to address President Putin regarding the Venezuelan election results, what would your message be? And what would you say to Mr. Maduro?

I don't really have a good response for this question. I mean, please leave Venezuela in peace and give the long suffering Venezuelan citizens some relief? But I'm not sure that would do anything...I wish I had a better response.

What advice would you offer to the U.S. presidential candidates concerning Venezuela?

Venezuela has been on a downward spiral for 25 years, since Hugo Chavez was first elected. For a time, high oil prices obscured reality but the past decade has clearly revealed the worsening damage wrought by chavismo. As they say, when the tide goes out you can see pretty clearly who is wearing a bathing suit and who is not. And chavismo is not. Nor is anyone who has run interference for chavismo internationally. It's a decrepit ideology that has impoverished a nation while enriching a cabal of "corruptos" at the top. So the first advice would be to recognize the true DNA of the regime. Don't be naive or sentimental. This is a brutal gang determined to keep power above all else. Normal diplomatic methods will not be sufficient. Second, it's not just inconvenient to have a criminal regime in the heart of the Americas. It's a strategic risk. Ignore the issues at your—and our—peril. And third, this is what happens when we refuse to contend effectively for the Americas, on a bipartisan basis, for years. Our influence and leverage dissipates if not disappears. We might not like it, or we might continue to believe that many other issues are more important, but it's real and the consequences are significant. Although there's also another approach that could be even more effective: just try it, you'll like it.

How do you foresee the situation in Venezuela evolving, and when do you think it might come to a resolution?

I'm not overly optimistic but I still remain hopeful that somehow, people power will prevail in Venezuela. Maduro will not be convinced to depart on his own, either by elections or sanctions. He may face a challenge from protests, or from within chavismo, or Cuba might decide to pull the plug on him if he's proving to be a drag on their interests, but those are all long shots. I hate to say it but if he beats this latest electoral challenge he can likely stay in power indefinitely, especially with continued support from Cuba, Russia, China, and other global disrupters. Meantime, neighbours like Brazil and Colombia and Mexico and Caribbean island nations, which have done so

little to support democracy in Venezuela, should now prepare along with the United States for large new flows of refugees. We would apparently prefer to deal with the symptoms rather than the cancerous cause of migration, even as we watch Maduro successfully steal a country in real time. It remains a challenging situation.

Elsewhere in LATAM

- **Guatemala** won its first-ever gold medal in the Olympics as **Adrianna Ruano Oliva** breaks trap shooting Olympic record. The 29-year-old smashed 45 clays to break the Olympic record of 43 set by Zuzana Rehák-Štefečeková of Slovakia in 2021. Her performance drew worldwide praise, including from Guatemala's president Bernardo Arévalo. Oliva's medal marks the third medal awarded to the country following Jean Pierre Brol's bronze medal in the men's event on the day prior and Érick Barrondo's silver medal in the 2012 London Olympics racewalk event.
- The number of fires in **Brazil's Amazon** rainforest surged to a record high for the month of July in almost two decades, amid a drought in the region exacerbated by climate change. **Data from Brazil's National Institute** for Space Research showed that satellites detected 11,434 fire hotspots in the Amazon in July, the largest number for July since 2005. The Amazon rainforest, which represents the world's largest rainforest, plays a vital role in curbing climate change due to the vast amounts of greenhouse gases it absorbs. Initial indicators of a potentially extreme fire season came weeks ago when hundreds of blazes spread through the Pantanal, the world's largest wetlands, prior to Brazil's traditional fire season.
- As mounting fiscal challenges put pressure on **President Gustavo Petro's** agenda, Colombia's government proposed a **523 trillion peso (\$130 billion) 2025 budget to lawmakers for their consideration**. Petro is about to enter the second half of his presidential term without the backing of a solid majority in Congress to approve his social and economic priorities. Congress must approve the bill by October 20th and could make significant changes to it. Colombia's finance ministry said the budget was consistent with next year's targets of economic growth of 3% and a fiscal deficit of 5.1% of GDP which the government set out in a mid-term framework last month.
- We congratulate **Paraguay** for receiving the investment grade, an excellent milestone for the country for several reasons. First, this achievement reflects confidence in the Paraguayan economy, demonstrating responsible fiscal management and an economy showing signs of growth and stability. Second, with this investment grade, **Paraguay becomes more attractive to international investors, which can attract more foreign investments**. Third, a better credit rating generally allows the country to access international financing at lower interest rates, enabling the government to secure loans at a lower cost to fund infrastructure projects and other development needs. Lastly, having an investment grade enhances the country's reputation on the international stage,

opening doors to new commercial and diplomatic opportunities. While some countries are going in the wrong direction, Paraguay proves that good management of the country brings clear results.

- **Liberty Latin America and Millicom International Cellular** have entered into an agreement to combine the companies' respective operations in **Costa Rica**. Under the terms of the all-stock agreement, Liberty Latin America and its minority partner in Costa Rica will hold an approximate 86 per cent interest and Millicom 14 per cent in the joint operations, with the final ownership percentage confirmed at closing.
- **Trinidad and Tobago and Venezuela** have signed a 20-year agreement to explore and produce **natural gas from the Cocuina-Manakin** field, spanning their maritime boundary. The deal, signed before Venezuela's controversial presidential election, involves bp and Trinidad and Tobago's National Gas Company (NGC). The agreement aims to boost Trinidad and Tobago's gas production with an estimated 1tn cubic feet of gas. It follows Shell's investment in the Manatee LNG project and marks significant diplomatic efforts. However, the deal faces uncertainty due to Venezuela's political unrest and potential U.S. sanctions.

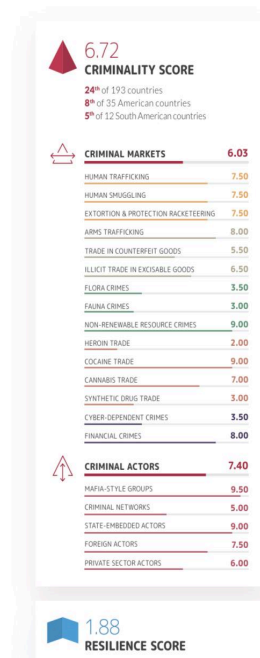
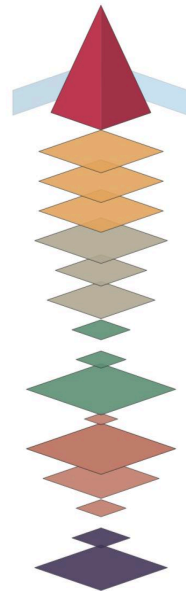
La Cita

"I repeat, fewer chats and more action. We talk a lot and stay at home. What is happening in Venezuela is the beginning of the end of democracy in the region."

Francisco Santos Calderon, Former Vice-President of Colombia and former Amb. Of Colombia to the USA

El Gráfico

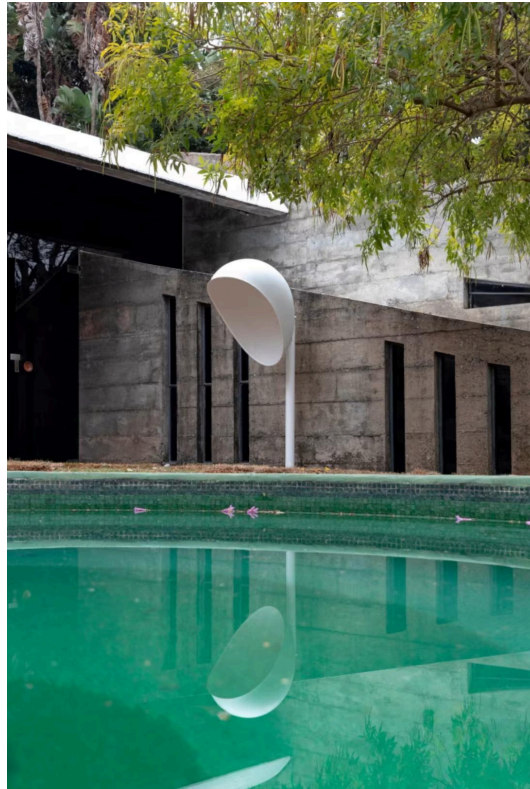
VENEZUELA



Data: [Global Organized Crime Index- Global Initiative against TOC](#)

Venezuela is a major hub for human trafficking, with many victims, especially women, facing exploitation both domestically and abroad. Despite government claims of increasing drug seizures, the reasons remain unclear, while the country continues to be a significant player in cocaine production and trafficking, facilitated by high-ranking officials. The Amazon River serves as a crucial drug trafficking route, with Venezuelans providing cheap labor for drug operations, as criminal networks thrive amid a humanitarian crisis forcing many to flee.

La invitación



For those who plan to be in São Paulo, we suggest to check-out [Aberto](#) ("Open"), established by São Paulo art adviser Filipe Assis. This year's edition focuses on two significant residences linked to São Paulo's Asian diaspora and prominent women in Brazilian culture: the home of renowned artist [Tomie Ohtake](#) and the former residence of the esteemed architect [Chu Ming Silveira](#). Read more [here](#).

La lectura

Ana Martinez, CC-LATAM intern, suggests "**Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking**" by [Malcolm Gladwell](#). The book teaches readers how they can think without thinking and reveals how the choices they seem to make in an instant aren't as simple as they appear to be.

Isabella Delgado, an intern at CC-LATAM, suggests "**21 Lessons for the 21st Century**" by [Yuval Noah Harari](#). This book provides an insightful perspective on how to address the most pressing issues of the century, including rapid technological advancement and ecological catastrophe.



Enjoyed this read? Spread the inspiration by sharing our newsletter with your peers and join us in fostering a vibrant community passionate about the wonders of Latin America.

You can also find us on [X](#) and [LinkedIn](#). Or maybe you want to donate to our cause and help promote the region, you can do that [here](#). Want to stop receiving this newsletter? You can unsubscribe [here](#).

Thank you for reading, nos vemos en la próxima.