

¡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.



María Corina Machado's arrival in Oslo a few hours after the end of the Nobel Peace Prize ceremony put Venezuela under the spotlight. The prize however comes within a familiar Venezuelan cycle: disputed elections prompt statements from Washington, Brussels, and regional capitals; pressure briefly intensifies; negotiations are announced; and momentum fades while power remains unchanged.

For more than a decade, this pattern has repeated. The United States recalibrates sanctions, the European Union issues declarations and targeted measures, Norway facilitates dialogue, and Latin American governments alternate between mediation and disengagement. Each phase creates the appearance of movement without restoring democratic guarantees. Repression adapts, institutions hollow out, and time works in favor of those already in control.

The Nobel Prize matters because it reframes Venezuela not as a chronic crisis to be managed, but as a democratic breakdown that demands resolution. By honoring Machado, the prize centers belief in democracy itself – free elections, political rights, civilian leadership – as the non-negotiable outcome, not one option among many.

That recognition creates obligations. The United States and the European Union must move beyond episodic sanctions relief and tie engagement to verifiable electoral and institutional benchmarks. Norway’s role as facilitator must be backed by consequences when agreements fail. Regional governments, particularly in Latin America, must stop treating Venezuela as an inconvenience and start treating democratic restoration as a shared responsibility.

The question now is whether this moment breaks the cycle or reinforces it. Venezuela does not need another round of concern. It needs sustained, coordinated policy rooted in the conviction that democratic outcomes matter – and that a peaceful transition remains possible only if pressure is consistent, credible, and collective.

CCLATAM Editorial Board

La Charla



*This week we talked to **Eric Farnsworth** a leading expert on Venezuela and international affairs currently senior associate with the [Center for Strategic and International Studies](#) and a partner at [Continental Strategy](#). He also serves as an **advisory board member of CCLATAM**. Eric was among the first to publicly propose María Corina Machado as a candidate for the Nobel Peace Prize. We spoke with him about the significance of Machado being in Oslo in connection with the prize – despite arriving after the official ceremony – and what her presence represents for Venezuela’s democratic struggle.*

Having followed Venezuela for years, do you see this moment as a genuine inflection point—not only domestically, but in the broader geopolitical balance of the region?

I really do. The undeniable moral and economic bankruptcy of the Maduro regime after the stolen July 2024 elections, the buildup of US forces off the Venezuelan coast and apparent willingness to use them, and award of the Nobel Peace Prize to Maria Corina Machado, among other developments, suggest to me that this time is different. Maduro is on his heels, and he knows it. But seeing him off will nonetheless require an active push. It is clear he is using every tool available to delay and deny any effort to dislodge him. Among these are activation of pro-regime networks and individuals promoting all kinds of wild theories why removal of the regime, which Venezuelans clearly desire based on election results, would be worse for the country than what currently exists. If he can wait out the Trump administration or even the US midterm elections in November, he may be able to muddle through. The window for his departure has opened, but it will not remain open forever.

Do you see shifts in global power dynamics—U.S. policy, Latin American alignments, or extra-regional actors like China, Russia, and Iran—changing the regime's room to maneuver?

I don't think China, Russia, or Iran have any particular love for Maduro or commitment to his cause. For them, Maduro is a stooge who can be played and manipulated to get what they want, whether access to resources, political support and sanctions busting, export of their own political activities into the Western Hemisphere, and visceral animus toward Washington. They can disrupt, but they will not be counted on if push comes to shove. Cuba is different, because the survival of the regime in Havana depends on largesse from Caracas. For their part, others across Latin America have largely remained on the sidelines, with the exception of Trinidad and Tobago and the Dominican Republic, which are allowing the use of their respective territories for security activities. It's also interesting to note that the Maduro regime continues to lose support as new governments are elected, most recently Bolivia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Honduras (pending final results), which are all moving away from strong support for Maduro, joining Argentina and, presumably, Chile and others in 2026. All of this, plus the continued US military buildup, suggests that Maduro now has more restricted space within which to maneuver.

When you look at today's opposition, do you see a level of internal coherence that makes it geopolitically credible, not just morally compelling?

The democratic forces in Venezuela have coalesced around an undisputed leader, Maria Corina Machado, which they had previously failed to do. The primary election results from 2023, which Machado won overwhelmingly, gave her a clear mandate from the people to lead the opposition. Maduro's clumsy efforts to keep her off the ballot in 2024 and subsequently force her into hiding only served to enhance her reputation, which she used to support president-elect Edmundo Gonzalez, while the Peace Prize solidified her worldwide as the face and voice of democratic forces in Venezuela. This is one reason why the awarding of the Peace Prize was so crucial.

So were an early advocate for international engagement in support of María Corina Machado. From your perspective, what geopolitical risks did the world face if her leadership was ignored or sidelined?

Without her clear, uncompromised voice for the return to democracy in Venezuela, the primary risk has always been and would continue to be the accommodation of a brutal, oppressive dictatorship that makes common cause with chaos actors like Cuba, Russia, China, and Iran, while suppressing democratic expression at home and exporting anti-democratic activities abroad, right in the heart of the Western Hemisphere.

Do you see María Corina Machado as someone who understands Venezuela not only as a national crisis, but as a strategic node in hemispheric security and democratic stability?

I do. Of course, her first loyalty and obligation is to Venezuela, as it should be. But in all our conversations she has been clear in understanding that the crisis is not just domestic but also has broader hemispheric and global implications.

As her name is mentioned in connection with the Nobel Peace Prize, do you see such recognition as having geopolitical weight, not just moral symbolism?

My rationale in initially proposing that Maria Corina Machado be nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize was multidimensional. As a friend of long-standing, since our first meeting some 20 years ago, I was very concerned for her personal safety in the immediate aftermath of the stolen July 2024 elections. Opposition leaders and laypersons alike were being rounded up, harassed, and imprisoned or worse, and I thought that raising her profile would offer greater international recognition and subsequently provide a modicum of protection from regime persecution. Second, it was important for the world to see that the opposition in Venezuela was unified behind an uncompromised leader of stature and authority, despite regime-promoted claims of disunity that analysts in the press incessantly amplified. Third, I saw it as a way to highlight the plight of Venezuelans before the international community, making it an issue that could no longer be ignored. This was an intentional strategy, playing a weak hand, to advance the cause of democracy in Venezuela despite the

lack of a "day after" agenda from Washington or anyone else who had promoted elections but had no plans to follow up with concrete actions in case the results were hijacked. In fact, it felt a bit like a "Hail Mary" at the time. Finally and most importantly, I thought that naming Maria Corina Machado as a Nobel Laureate, to complement her Andrei Sakharov, Vaclav Havel, and Ivan Allen prizes, would be the best way to honor and reward a true champion for democracy under the most unforgiving circumstances. I was immensely gratified that the Nobel committee saw things similarly.

In your experience, can moral authority—when backed by international recognition—shift calculations within authoritarian regimes or among their external allies?

In my experience, yes. I began my career with the State Department in South Africa in the summer of 1989. It was a tumultuous time. Though still in prison until 1990, Nelson Mandela carried true moral authority which the South African apartheid regime was forced to recognize and deal with. Continued minority governance proved untenable and the de Klerk government was compelled to chart a new course, leading to a joint Nobel Peace Prize for both Mandela and de Klerk in 1993. These two elements--moral authority and international recognition and support--are critically important, and mutually reinforcing. Venezuela now has the possibility of a similar scenario. But unless the regime in power voluntarily concedes, which it is highly unlikely to do, the need to use force to dislodge the Maduro regime becomes more likely.

Do you believe the international community is acting with sufficient strategic coherence, or do you see fragmentation that ultimately benefits the Maduro regime?

I would definitely like to see a stronger approach from others worldwide. Brazil and Colombia, in particular, have been disappointments, giving succor to the Maduro regime, as has Mexico. Others have offered little beyond rhetorical condemnation of Maduro's excesses but not very much concrete to dislodge him particularly after the stolen elections in 2024. This should have been an absolutely clear red line. In fact, for far too many observers it has just been one more data point on the road to a totalitarian Venezuela. If history is to be interrupted, now is the time to do it.

At this stage, what concrete geopolitical choices will determine whether Venezuela moves toward democratic reintegration or deeper alignment with authoritarian blocs?

It's an easy answer: whether or not the international community will compel the Maduro regime to depart.

Elsewhere in LATAM

 [José Antonio Kast](#), a 59-year-old conservative leader, was elected president of Chile following Sunday's elections, **securing close to 59%** of the vote with more than 83% of ballots counted, according to the electoral authority Servel, defeating left-wing candidate [Jeannette Jara](#), who obtained around 41%. His victory has been driven largely by voter concerns over rising crime, irregular migration, and economic management. Kast, who is the son of postwar German immigrants, will take office on 11 March and has pledged a "government of emergency" focused on strengthening security, tightening migration controls, and reducing taxes and public spending. Regionally, his win is seen as part of a broader political shift in Latin America, following recent electoral setbacks for the left in countries such as Argentina and Bolivia.

 The 2025 Honduran general election, held on November 30, remains undecided and highly contested nearly two weeks later, with no official president-elect declared as of mid-December. The National Electoral Council (CNE) is conducting a special recount of thousands of tally sheets after preliminary results showed [Nasry "Tito" Asfura](#) of the conservative **National Party** narrowly leading [Salvador Nasralla](#) of the **Liberal Party** by tens of thousands of votes, but with about 15 percent of votes flagged for inconsistencies and not yet counted. Both leading candidates have accused each other of irregularities, while outgoing President Xiomara Castro and opposition figures have denounced the process, with some calling it an "electoral coup" and alleging foreign interference. International observers, including the European Union, are urging respect for the democratic process and patience as the CNE proceeds. The deadline for final certification of results is December 30, and political tensions remain high amid concerns over institutional trust and electoral transparency.

 [IDB report](#) says **boosting competition could raise growth and cut inequality** in Latin America and the Caribbean. Weak competition is cited as a key structural constraint, with policy recommendations for infrastructure and regulatory reform.

 President **Javier Milei's** [newly elected Congress](#) begins **special session** to debate major economic reforms including tax and labor laws aimed at boosting growth and competitiveness.

 **37.7 Billion USD:** The approximate amount that TikTok will spend to build a data center in Brazil, marking its first project in Latin America. The project will be developed near the industrial port of Pecém and will fully rely on clean energy from wind energy parks. The investment in Brazil will be spread over 10 years and create some 4,000 jobs, according to TikTok.

 The Argentinian government approved [Decree 864/2025](#), establishing Argentina's first formal National Intelligence Policy in more than 20 years. The measure aims to modernize the intelligence system, strengthen cyber defense, protect strategic resources, and reorganize the State Intelligence Secretariat (SIDE).

 [José Medina Mora](#) is elected president of Mexico's main business chamber [-CCE-](#) and vows to “unlock investment” and support reforms to improve certainty, energy access, and water supplies to attract investor while [internal disputes in Mexico's business](#) elite intensify amid slow economic growth and disagreements with the government's investment strategy, potentially impacting investor confidence.

 U.S. removes Brazilian [Supreme Court Justice Alexandre de Moraes](#) and his wife from the sanctions list—reversing July sanctions and signaling a diplomatic thaw after talks between Presidents Trump and Lula.

 Mexico has approved tariffs of up to **50% on around 1,400 imported goods** from countries without free-trade agreements, including **China** and **Brazil**. The Senate-backed measure will hit Chinese cars hardest but will also penalise Brazilian exports such as food and manufactured goods. President Claudia Sheinbaum said the move is aimed at strengthening domestic industry rather than targeting any single country. The tariffs align with US protectionist pressure and come ahead of a planned review of the [US-Mexico-Canada](#) trade pact next year.

La Cita

“The future isn't something to predict—it's something you learn to price.”

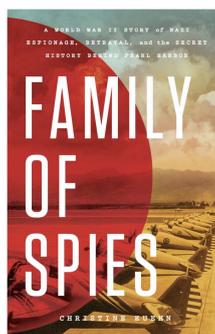
[Luana Lopes Lara](#), Co-Founder Kalshi

El Evento



After the incredible success of the 2025 edition, we are thrilled to announce that the 2nd edition of the [Digital Summit LATAM](#) will take place once again in Madrid – at the iconic [Casa de América](#) – on 26 and 27 February 2026. This new edition will be even bigger and bolder counting on world-class speakers from Latin America, Europe, the Middle East, and the United States; new strategic partnerships and sponsor; cutting-edge discussions on AI, connectivity, regulation, inclusion, and digital transformation. Together with our partners [DPL News](#), we will continue building the platform where Latin America meets the world – including Europe, the Middle East, and beyond – to shape the future of our digital society.

La Lectura



You should read [Christine Kuen's](#) *Family of Spies* because it reveals a shocking, true story behind World War II that most people have never heard. Blending family memoir with fast-paced history, the book uncovers how one German family's secrets and choices helped shape the attack on Pearl Harbor. It's gripping, emotional, and challenges everything you think you know about December 7, 1941.



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