



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on May 21, 2018

Fraudulent Election in Venezuela Guarantees More Suffering

To no one's surprise, the Marxist dictator running Venezuela into the ground [won a farcical reelection](#) to a third six-year term on Sunday. Exulted Nicolás Maduro, the former cab driver who learned his politics in Communist Cuba, "You have confided in me and I'm going to respond to that infinite confidence, that loving confidence. All Venezuela has triumphed. Legitimate elections, accompanied by the only one who can decide the future: the people."



He added: "We will be the most powerful and largest political force in Venezuela for a long time. It doesn't faze me when they say I'm a dictator."

Nearly every claim in those statements is a lie. Most of the voters stayed home on Sunday out of fear of reprisals for voting for one of Maduro's opponents. Others stayed home because they knew the election was rigged and boycotted it. The final tally indicated the lack of support for the tyrant: Less than half of those registered to vote showed up on Sunday. In the past, nearly 80 percent of Venezuelan voters participated in electing their leaders.

Private polls indicated that, far from having "loving confidence" in their dear leader, voters were on track to replace him on Sunday if the election had been honest.

Opposition candidate Henri Falcon said that his team of electoral monitors recorded some 90,000 incidents of voter fraud, including Maduro's Socialist Party workers accosting voters as they entered the voting booths and casting their ballots for Maduro for them. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo tweeted that the election was a "sham," while State Department spokeswoman Heather Nauert said the election wasn't legitimate.

Anticipating his victory last Thursday, Maduro told a crowd of supporters that he would "carry out an economic revolution that will shake the entire world." Instead, it is more than likely that he will be the one carried out before his term ends in 2024. The reason: The unwinding of this once-prosperous country will be complete long before then.

Consider that inflation is running at an estimated 13,000-percent annual rate, the country's economy has contracted by 50 percent since 2013, oil production at PdVSA — Maduro's only source of revenue — has been cut in half and is estimated to be cut in half once again by the end of the year.

The sanctions being applied to the Marxist regime are already having an impact. Many of Maduro's top officials have been sanctioned by the United States and have had their offshore accounts frozen. Sanctions placed on banks have made it impossible for the tyrant to renegotiate his more than \$150 billion of debt.

The world market for oil is also applying sanctions: Oil tankers headed for foreign ports are being held by creditors in lieu of lease and unloading payments that haven't been made. Other creditors are



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seeking restitution of loans that are in default through seizures of offshore assets.

The destruction of the price system (which can only be developed in a private free market between willing buyers and sellers) has led to shortages of food items such as milk, meat, coffee, rice, cooking oil, flour, and butter, not to mention necessities such as toilet paper, personal hygiene products, and medicines. This is leading an increasing percentage of the population to eat wild fruit, explore garbage dumps for something edible to eat, and wait in line for hours to purchase goods that do show up in stores. The latest statistics reveal that the average Venezuelan has lost 24 pounds over the last year.

New sanctions are being considered by neighboring countries as well as the United States in response to the accelerating catastrophe, which should hasten Maduro's departure. The Trump administration is developing additional sanctions to apply not only to more of Maduro's top people but to the export lifeline of crude oil that is still feeding the regime. Said Diego Moya-Ocampos, the chief political analyst for Latin America for the huge global information services company IHS Markit, "The next step is sanctions against the oil sector. This is crucial because [Maduro's] oil sector represents ... 97 percent of [his] revenue from foreign exchange ... so, obviously sanctions on the oil sector in Venezuela will be a game changer."

In the meantime, Maduro has promised to extend the program of Chavismo applied to the country's inhabitants under Hugo Chávez, with a vengeance. Maduro intends to continue to

- Conduct fraudulent and deceitful elections like the one just held on Sunday;
- Violate his citizens' civil liberties, including their right of association and expression;
- Infringe on the concept of separation of powers by replacing the legitimate congress with one he controls and removing opposition judges with those favorable to his regime;
- Exclude opposition political parties and their candidates either through intimidation or arrest; and
- Ignore any rule of law that might hinder his political, economic or military power.

Sunday's fraudulent reelection of Nicolás Maduro to a third six-year term guarantees more suffering, more privation, and more exodus until such time as forces, internal and/or external, remove the man and his cancer of collectivism from the country. As the economy continues to crater, it's more than likely that Maduro will never see the end of his third term simply because, as economist Herb Stein expressed it: "If something cannot go on forever, it will stop."

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