

Summary

In October 2023, Venezuela held its primary elections in eleven years, resulting in opposition candidate María Corina Machado winning the majority of the votes. Nonetheless, after a few days, the Supreme Justice Tribunal suspended the results at the request of Nicolás Maduro's government, which initially supported the primary. Tensions are expected to rise in the face of the upcoming presidential election in January 2024.

Recent events and developments

On October 22, opposition parties in Venezuela held primary elections for the first time in eleven years. María Corina Machado, the main figure of the Vente Venezuela party currently barred from assuming office, won the elections with more than 92% of the vote. Despite a lack of logistical support from the government, such as the availability of voting centers, Venezuela registered a strong turnout. Over 2.4 million Venezuelans, both domestically and abroad, participated, including citizens from former strongholds of Maduro's party, ruling since 2013. On October 30, the Supreme Justice Tribunal suspended the elections' results at the request of Maduro's government, further demanding organizers provide documents identifying millions of voters. The Venezuelan government allowed for the primary elections, which passed without violence, following a deal with the Biden administration. This was in exchange for the partial lifting of longstanding US sanctions on Venezuela's energy, gold, and financial sectors. The upcoming presidential election for the next six-year term is set for January 10, 2024.

Impact assessment

Maduro's rejection of election results highlights intentions to hold onto power, while the Biden-brokered deal is not showing promise. Besides, the government's demands for the identities of opposition voters further intensify existing repression efforts, which are likely to increase before the presidential elections to instill fear among citizens. Additionally, the court's suspension of election results is likely to escalate tensions, likely fueling protests particularly if the results are eventually nullified. Demonstrations could easily turn violent, with bystanders being at risk if protests spiral out of control and escalate into violent confrontations with the security forces, as in previous occasions. Political violence by regime-affiliated armed groups against opposition members before the primary is very likely to follow the same pattern in the months preceding the 2024 presidential elections. Machado herself, faced a road blockade to prevent her visit to a particular region. These attacks are likely expected to involve violent attacks against individuals, threats, and road blockages, among others, and could erupt at any time before, during, or after the 2024 presidential elections.

Advice from Forth Global

- Make sure all employees traveling to Venezuela undertake a three-day HEAT training prior to deployment.
- Advise staff to practice vigilance and avoid campaign stands and political party infrastructure, as well as voting stations and demonstrations of any kind.
- Advise staff to avoid expressing their personal views on the political situation known both in present and via social media, as well as avoid wearing clothing in colors affiliated with opposition parties, particularly the Vente Venezuela party.
- Continuously monitor local news and liaise with local partners to stay up to date with any developments in the region.

Customized advice

Please contact us for specific advice:

+31 (0) 35 543 04 37

christiaan@forthglobal.com

We provide a wide range of services to prepare your organization and employees for situations like these. More information on our website: www.forthglobal.com

[DISCLAIMER](#)