

Electoral fraud, unmasked: How it operated and how we confronted it

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Before July 28

For over two decades, Chavismo has entrenched a system of control rooted in censorship, persecution, harassment, and electoral manipulation. State violence and terrorism against dissent have become routine tools. Hundreds of opposition leaders have been imprisoned, independent media shut down, and any critical voice silenced. In this environment, electoral processes in Venezuela have been riddled with various levels of fraud. Since the democratic opposition won the National Assembly in 2015, Chavismo transitioned from competitive to hegemonic authoritarianism, and elections ceased to be even minimally free, democratic, or transparent. The majority's demand for freedom became clear, as they rejected the regime's slogans.

Faced with a progressively repressive system, Venezuelans, led by María Corina Machado, along with the candidacy of Edmundo González Urrutia and a robust local organization like the "Comanditos" and the Red 600K, not only went to the polls on July 28 but actively defended their votes. Organized through social media and viral messages, they bypassed the regime's communication controls to mobilize.

July 28 marked a pivotal day in Venezuela's contemporary history. It was the irrevocable decision of a society that refuses to bow down but also a clear demonstration of fraud that laid the system bare. But why did this happen just now? How is it that something we have denounced for years was now evident to the entire world?

The grand masters of deception have always shown that evading justice requires meticulous planning and flawless execution, with the clear objective of erasing any trace pointing to the culprit or revealing the deceit. However, Nicolás Maduro's announcement as the "winner" starkly deviated from these principles. The signs of blatant fraud are undeniable: results defying all mathematical logic, refusal to disclose disaggregated data by voting centers, absence of mandatory audits as per electoral regulations, narrative inconsistencies, and an alleged cyberattack with no evidence. Yet what exposed the farce the most was the actual proof they could not get rid of: the actas or ballots collected by opposition witnesses who defied the entire terror apparatus and made it clear that the true victor was Edmundo González Urrutia, with a margin that left no room for debate.

How did this happen? Let's take it step by step

As we've suggested, the events took place under a non-democratic regime, thus, it was a non-democratic election. Despite certain irregularities, election day seemed to proceed normally. However, by nightfall, Nicolás Maduro's regime unveiled an outcome many had already suspected: manipulated results to remain in power. Throughout the electoral process and the subsequent days, various technical analyses, electoral experts, and even social media users exposed how the fraud was executed

and demonstrated through tools and techniques revealing an irreversible trend towards Edmundo González Urrutia's victory.

Venezuelan laws prohibit showing results before the National Electoral Council (CNE) bulletin, but during election day, the opposition, led by Machado and González Urrutia, shared data pointing to approximately 42.1% turnout by 1 p.m., with over 9.3 million votes cast. Throughout the day, surveys, like Edison Research's, suggested González Urrutia was leading the tally with over 65% of the votes, while Maduro had around 30%. The atmosphere at polling stations and preliminary reports reflected a massive desire for political change in the country, a desire also visible in Venezuela's streets during an atypical yet historic campaign.

At the CNE headquarters, tensions grew by the minute. Without an official explanation, the first results bulletin was evidently delayed. The councilors, who traditionally announce polling station closures around 6 p.m., had withdrawn from the media, nowhere to be seen. Delsa Solórzano, the opposition representative in the CNE, tried to access the tallying room but was barred by electoral authorities. Despite her insistence, she could not fulfill her accredited role. Later, from the opposition headquarters elsewhere in Caracas, Solórzano denounced various irregularities, including CNE officials and Plan República personnel preventing opposition witnesses from accessing ballots.

The worst scenario was confirmed near midnight (five hours after polling stations closed): the CNE leaders, excluding one councilor, and led by the notoriously biased Elvis Amoroso, held a press conference where they announced figures drastically different from expectations. According to the first bulletin, which

supposedly included the results of 80% of polling stations, Maduro had allegedly won with 51.2% of the votes, while González Urrutia received 44.2%. These figures were quickly challenged by several experts, not only for mathematical inconsistencies but also for the delay and opacity of the process.

The next day, both Machado and González Urrutia voiced that the opposition had obtained 73.2% of the ballots and that results did not match the CNE's report. At a press conference, Machado stated, "The elected president is Edmundo González Urrutia, because even if the CNE gave 100% of the remaining ballots to Maduro, it would not be enough for him to win."

Meanwhile, the country witnessed a wave of protests that spread nationwide: from neighborhoods to towns, citizens' demonstrations created unforgettable images, such as the destruction of monuments of Hugo Chávez. The regime responded brutally, with detentions, killings, and violent street repression. Meanwhile, the CNE, again without councilor Delpino, hastily declared Maduro as the re-elected president, despite the lack of definitive results.

In the following days, the opposition gathered 83.5% of the ballots as protests continued. The first week after the elections ended with violent crackdowns, over 2,000 arrests, and 25 deaths. It also saw the launch of an open-access website¹ where the opposition uploaded all collected and scanned ballots, each with verification codes proving their authenticity. For the first time, the opposition had irrefutable evidence of their results and

1 <https://resultadosconvzla.com/>

demonstrated unprecedented transparency by publishing the ballots. The fraud was now verifiable.

Mathematical improbabilities and analysis methods

One of the first fraud indicators was the exact percentages announced by the CNE: 51.2% for Maduro, 44.2% for González Urrutia, and 4.6% for other candidates. This precision raised suspicions among academics and mathematicians who analyzed the figures, highlighting the high improbability of these three percentages coinciding, as it left no room for null votes and suggested the results were fabricated from desired percentages rather than actual vote counts.

This hypothesis was reinforced by the second bulletin's analysis, published on August 2, which presented similarly unlikely statistical coincidences. In this case, the percentage of transmitted ballots reflected the exact percentage of counted voters. Given the variation in polling station size and voter numbers, this coincidence was nearly impossible.

The role of electoral ballots and independent verification

The key to demonstrating the fraud lay in the electoral ballots. The opposition managed to gather and digitize 25,073 of the 30,026 voting ballots, representing 83.5% of stations. These documents contained detailed results from each polling center, with security elements like QR codes, digital signatures, and alphanumeric verifications. Various academics, including Dorothy Kronick from the University of Berkeley and José Morales-Arilla from Monterrey Institute of Technology, validated the authenticity of

the ballots and concluded that the true results gave a significant lead to González Urrutia.

Kronick emphasized the reliability of the verification mechanisms in Venezuela's electoral system, such as manual tallying from a sample of stations, and concluded that the ballots published by the opposition reflected the true results. Morales-Arilla published an analysis based on the print times of 24,102 ballots released by the opposition, showing they were printed before 7:30 p.m. on election day. Since voting station ballots are printed after results are tallied and submitted, by that time –when the supposed cyberattack occurred– 61% of the ballots had already been transmitted. Until then, the results indicated González Urrutia had 68.1% of the votes, and Maduro 29.6%. For Maduro to win, he would have needed at least 79.3% of the votes in all remaining stations. In other words, the election results were “irreversible” early on.

An independent initiative led by Giuseppe Gangi downloaded all the ballots published by the opposition, organized and analyzed the results, confirming the opposition's published data. Additionally, they gathered videos from social media showing the moments after the ballots were printed at polling stations and read publicly. They verified and linked each video to the corresponding record from the same polling station, confirming they matched. Many weeks have passed since the elections, and on the website macedoniadelnorte.com, there are over 800 videos of opposition witnesses shouting the overwhelming difference in favor of Edmundo González at their polling stations, but Chavismo... Chavismo keeps searching.

Ballots around the world

The technical report presented by the Comando ConVzla to the OAS and later to several congressional bodies in different countries provided a comprehensive and verifiable analysis of the votes cast on July 28. This report, based on 25,073 official ballots issued by the CNE, demonstrated that Edmundo González Urrutia had a clear victory over Nicolás Maduro, bringing about a mandate for democratic change in Venezuela.

The Comando ConVzla documented that González received at least 7,303,480 votes, representing 67.08% of the votes, compared to Maduro's 3,316,142 votes, or 30.43%. These results are drawn from a pool of 10,888,475 voters, and with 83.5% of the ballots digitized and tallied, González's victory was mathematically irreversible. The 3,987,338 vote difference between the two candidates made it impossible for the remaining 16.5% of ballots to alter the outcome, even if Maduro received 100% of the uncounted votes, even assuming there was no voter abstention.

The final projected figure, following the electoral trend, was approximately 8.7 million votes for González, surpassing the opposition's 2015 parliamentary election support by one million and exceeding Hugo Chávez's 2012 maximum support by over half a million. These results occurred despite voting restrictions in Venezuela, where at least five million expatriate Venezuelans were barred from voting, and nearly two million youths were prevented from registering.

The Comando ConVzla gathered and published ballots covering 98.8% of the country's municipalities and 95.8% of parishes, spanning results in 24 states and 331 of 335 municipalities.

This coverage demonstrated González's victory was broad-based, surpassing the official party in 24 states and 89% of municipalities, in both urban and rural areas. This election marked the first defeat of Chavismo across all socioeconomic strata, showing widespread and diverse support for change.

International response and technical impact

The fraud did not go unnoticed by the international community. Outlets like The Associated Press and The New York Times conducted their analyses of the ballots published by the opposition, corroborating the researchers' conclusions. The New York Times estimated the vote difference between González Urrutia and Maduro was so vast that reversing it, as suggested by the CNE, was virtually impossible without fraudulent intervention.

Political and mathematical analyses of the July 28 results exposed not only the technical flaws of the Chavista regime but also the growing sophistication of the opposition in defending the vote and revealing the process's irregularities. Electoral ballots, statistical analyses, and civic mobilization exposed the fraud irrefutably, showing that Chavismo persists solely through force and terror. The country is not "polarized"; there is an overwhelming, clear, and emphatic majority desiring change and a minority seeking to prevent it through fraud and repression.

For now...

The evidence gathered by the opposition, the independent analyses, and international pressure have exposed the cracks in the authoritarian system. The fraudulent techniques employed by

the regime, though advanced, failed to entirely conceal the truth: the Venezuelan people voted for change, and the results were manipulated to prevent that change from materializing. That desire, despite state terrorism's efforts to silence it, remains intact.

We all know what occurred before, during, and after July 28, within and outside the country: from the electoral outcome to the number of political prisoners in various torture centers, including many children.

Numbers do not lie. Neither do the desperate cries of mothers. Nor does the desire for freedom. The fraud, like the emperor, was laid bare. Democracy is still on the horizon.