

Strategies and tactics in the venezuelan electoral chess

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"I will not leave South Africa, nor will I surrender. Only through hardship, sacrifice, and militant action can freedom be won. The struggle is my life. I will continue fighting for freedom until the end of my days." – Nelson Mandela

The announcement that Ambassador Edmundo González Urrutia would be the presidential candidate for the Democratic Unity Platform (DUP) caused an unexpected stir in the shadow of the Miraflores Palace. Nicolás Maduro & Co. did not anticipate this move. Unanimously selected, a career diplomat with a generous profile and an impeccable reputation, he is the type of opponent who achieves perfect unity among democratic forces and, with the support of María Corina Machado, brings hope to a nation tired of Maduro's regimen.

Venezuela's National Electoral Council, controlled by Maduro's allies, announces a 72-hour extension for candidate substitutions in response. Officially, this measure accommodates the regime's request to destabilize the opposition parties' support for Ambassador González Urrutia.

People meet the news of the extension on the streets with skepticism and hope. The ambassador's followers see it as confirmation of their fears: the Gang of Five (Diosdado Cabello, Cilia Flores, Vladimir Padrino López, Nicolás Maduro, and Jorge Rodríguez) will do whatever it takes to stay in power.

Meanwhile, in a modest building that serves as the headquarters for the DUP meeting, the decision to support González Urrutia revitalizes the democratic forces. The disqualification of María Corina Machado and the impossibility of registering Dr. Corina Yoris have been a severe blow, but the perfect union around González Urrutia promises a new chapter. However, Manuel Rosales's New Time party faces bureaucratic obstacles in consolidating its support for González Urrutia, indicating that the electoral body will not make things easy.

On the other hand, the CNE published the list of polling station members a month ago, supposedly selected at random, free from political affiliations. However, the manipulation of the registrations of the original 12 candidates, dubbed "scorpions"¹ — enabling their party cards for registration — suggests that many of those named in voting centers prioritized by the United

¹ Members of an opposition political party make agreements with the government behind the party's back to conspire against it.

Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV) are sympathizers of the “revolution”. It will allow the Gang of Five to flip the election results, turning the electoral process into a mere facade.

In an atmosphere charged with distrust and underhanded dealings, Luis Ratti, a politician serving the regime and labeled as a “scorpion,” engaged in an action that could profoundly alter the political course of Venezuela. A month ago, before the Supreme Court of Justice (TSJ), he filed a legal motion to annul the Democratic Unity Roundtable’s (DUR) voting card, the party nominating Edmundo González Urrutia.

His claim is based on the alleged “double militancy”, a legal ploy that questions the party’s legitimacy and transparency before the electorate.

This maneuver by Ratti is not trivial; it strategically facilitates a risky political play for Nicolás Maduro’s regime to dismiss the candidacy of González Urrutia, thus blocking the participation of the MUD’s voting card in the next presidential election, should the Supreme Court of Justice agree to remove it from the process. His action challenges the legitimacy of the internationally recognized Unity Platform as the voice of the opposition. It stirs the already turbulent waters of Venezuelan politics, adding another layer of illegitimacy to a presidential election already shrouded in controversy.

With 94 days to the elections, we draw three scenarios. Each one offers a different situation, marked by maneuvers and strategies that could change the nation’s destiny.

The first scenario is one of transition, contemplating the possibility that the MUD’s candidate could participate in the elections on July 28th. Everything would revolve around a collaborative negotiation, seeking incentives that benefit all involved parties. Countries like Colombia, the United States, Brazil, and France could play crucial roles as facilitators in this process, attempting to guide Venezuela towards a stage of democratic political change.

In contrast, the second scenario presents a grim picture of electoral fraud. In this case, González Urrutia would also present himself at the elections, but on election day, the CNE would manipulate and control the results. The key to this scenario would lie in the polling station members strategically selected in voting centers prioritized by the regime, all inclined to favor Maduro’s candidacy under the operational shadow of the Plan República coordinated by the National Armed Forces.

The third and final scenario is one of entrenchment. Here, the nullity of the MUD card prevents its candidate from continuing in the presidential election. In this scenario, only the candidates the Maduro regime chose would participate in the polls. The key to this situation would be the

legal recourse requested to invalidate the MUD card, with the TSJ and the CNE acting as facilitators of a maneuver that closes the political game to any dissenting voice of the regime.

Each of these scenarios reveals the complexities and underlying tensions in the Venezuelan electoral process. Politics and power are inexorably intertwined, defining not only the present but also the future of the nation.

As Venezuela teeters on the edge of uncertainty, María Corina's determination, along with the PUD's and the international community's vigilance, will be crucial. However, the shadow of fraud and electoral manipulation by the Gang of Five looms ominously, threatening to squander a great opportunity to emerge from the crisis in an orderly and peaceful manner.

González Urrutia, María Corina, the members of the Unity Platform, and the people who want a change will continue the fight not only at the polls but in every street and every place in the country. The commandos and the 600K, under the umbrella of the National Grand Alliance, and direct contact with the people will be vital to winning the Venezuelan electoral chess.