

**OCCASIONAL REPORT ON VENEZUELA'S POLITICAL ELECTORAL
CONTEXT**

CARTER CENTER VENEZUELA

JULY 1 – JULY 31, 2015

Heading toward parliamentary elections

Electoral process faces obstacles and challenges

Executive Summary

With this report, the Carter Center concludes its monitoring of the political electoral process in Venezuela, which it began in August 2014. Besides addressing major developments on the political and electoral scene, the July 2015 report includes a section dealing with specific details of the parliamentary elections scheduled for December 6.

In the political context, security mechanisms activated by the national government called Operation Liberation of the People (referred to hereinafter as OLP) and the border dispute with Guyana set the tone for July's news in Venezuela.

The news agenda for electoral matters was rife with the disqualification of public figures from opposition parties, statements from the President dismissing the possibility of international electoral observation missions in Venezuela, the official announcement on districts drawn for parliamentary elections, and lastly the MUD agreement on use of one single ballot for the entire opposition coalition in the legislative elections.

Specific aspects pertaining to the 2015 parliamentary election process are presented in the final section of this report, such as the number of deputies up for election, a review of changes to districts, and an inventory of the current National Assembly's administration (2011-2016), and where enabling legislation to empower the president has made a significant impact.

I. CONTEXT OF THE COUNTRY

Operation Liberation of the People (Retaking the Peace Zones)

On July 13, the Venezuelan government set in motion a special mechanism dubbed "Operation Liberation of the People" (OLP) aimed at controlling the high levels of crime affecting the country. This special mechanism was spearheaded by Minister of the Interior, Justice, and Peace Gustavo González, who directed the operation's first action in one of the shantytown neighborhood areas of Caracas known as Cota 905. During the operation various police forces worked together to dismantle criminal gangs operating there ([see note](#)). President Nicolás Maduro stated that this public safety plan should be

expanded nationwide.¹ The president associated the criminal gangs with the “paramilitary groups,” pointing out that some sectors of the country wanted to “impose a model capable of undermining stability and peace in Venezuela” ([see note](#)).² The president also accused Miranda state governor Henrique Capriles of being the “coordinator of paramilitary groups” ([see note](#)). Capriles’ response was made by way of his Twitter account, accusing Maduro of being “irresponsible” while pointing out his failure to resolve the country’s economic and social problems ([see note](#)).

The public safety plan was given a mixed reception by various political and social sectors. The (pro-government) Bolivarian Council of Venezuelan Mayors expressed its “full support and backing of the OLP” in confronting those it referred to as “the country’s criminals” and “enemies of the fatherland” ([see note](#)). Meanwhile groups referring to themselves as “The Brave People,” acting on behalf of the “Community Councils of the Pan American Axis,” and the “*El Sueño de un Gigante*” commune located in the Cota 905 neighborhood, raised their voices against what they termed an “outrage.” In an open letter to President Maduro, residents of the area commandeered stated that the operation was tantamount to an “eviction of the people,” shearing off “all of Chávez’s plans for the country involving its citizens.” In the letter, the residents of Cota 905 requested the support of the Ombudsman, the Attorney General’s Office, among other government agencies, to see to it that justice is done regarding what they consider an action that “has violated the rights of the child, the right to decent housing, and the rights of women” ([see letter](#)). The Venezuelan pro-human rights NGO, PROVEA, criticized the operation deployed in Cota 905, noting in a statement that it was opening “the door to the legitimization of police executions” and that it legitimized an “excess of force and the indiscriminate use of lethal measures by the police” ([see note](#)).

National Assembly President Diosdado Cabello reacted to the stance taken by PROVEA in his weekly television program “Con el Mazo Dando,” accusing the NGO of attempting to “discredit the public safety plans” being deployed by the government and of having had little interest in poor areas until the advent of the pro Chávez movement ([see note](#)). Meanwhile, the Interior Minister for Justice and Peace said that “human rights were never violated” during the actions implemented by the OLP ([see note](#)).

Conflict with Guyana: raising the pitch of bilateral relations

The ongoing border conflict between the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and the Cooperative Republic of Guyana, which began in 1970 but dates back to the nineteenth century, began escalating last March following the

¹ As part of OLP, President Maduro announced that the government will be working on the development of legislation within the Enabling Act to “protect the people,” expanding on its deployment as part of the “civic-military union” ([see note](#)).

² In one of his speeches, President Maduro accused Miranda state governor and former presidential candidate Henrique Capriles and the newspaper El Nacional of being in league with Venezuelan paramilitaries ([see note](#)).

Exxon Mobil's announcement of its discovery of an oilfield in a coastal area near the Essequibo, under the auspices of the Guyanese government. The Venezuelan government responded on May 26 by issuing Decree No. 1787, by which the national government created and activated the so-called "Operating Zones of Integral Maritime and Insular Defense" (ZODIMAIN) in territorial waters off the coast of the Essequibo region. The decree triggered spirited bilateral exchanges between Guyana and Venezuela, by means of press releases from their Ministries of Foreign Affairs ([see note](#)).

The Supreme Court of Venezuela (TSJ) recommended that the national government "improve on the decree through technical verification of its range in terms of coordinates, in the context of the periodic review of the territorial limits of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela." Consequently, on the July 6, 2015, the decree was repealed by President Maduro himself and replaced with Decree No. 1859, which he described as "bullet-proof" to guarantee the sovereignty of Venezuelan territorial waters ([see note](#)).³ Subsequently, on July 14 the law for Territorial Sovereignty and Peace was published in the Official Gazette, an instrument signed by President Maduro under the fast track authority of the enabling act conferred to him by the NA until its expiration in December 2015, whereby it aims to orchestrate actions to resolve the border conflict ([see note](#)).

While Venezuelan opposition parties supported Venezuela's claim of territorial rights over Essequibo, some spokespersons expressed that the reaction of the national government is due to the internal state of affairs in Venezuela. Miranda state governor Henrique Capriles Radonski said that Maduro was using the conflict with Guyana to divert attention away from the issues of greatest concern to Venezuelans, while opposition leader María Corina Machado stated that Maduro's stance on the Guyana issue is due to "the internal pressure... of the armed forces" ([see note](#)). *Marea Socialista* (Socialist Tide) representative Nicmer Evans considers increasing tensions with Guyana as a potential "card up the President's sleeve" to preclude holding elections. According to Evans, the president could declare a "State of Exception" under Article 236, paragraph 7 of the Constitution, whereby he could suspend elections with the pretext of an alleged crisis in the neighboring country ([see note](#)).⁴ Opposed to these opinions were the statements of President Maduro, who reiterated that "rain or shine, elections will be held in Venezuela on December 6 and the Revolution will again win a great popular victory" ([see note](#)).

³ Analysts pointed out that this modification in the decree was focused on the Atlantic ZODIMAIN, adding the following explanatory paragraph referring to the 1966 Geneva agreement. "However there is a maritime area that remains to be demarcated, which shall be determined once the pending dispute between the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and the Cooperative Republic of Guyana is resolved according to the 1966 Geneva agreement, which is defined by points 'T,' 'U,' and 'V.'"

⁴ The "State of Shock" is one of the "States of Exception" that the President of Venezuela can decree. Others include the "State of Alert" and "State of Emergency." The State of Shock is the most serious of these, lasting as long as ninety days and can be extended by the National Assembly for an additional ninety days. The Organic Law on States of Exception, adopted on December 14, 2000, governs these matters.

II. THE ELECTORAL CONTEXT

Recent Electoral Developments

Disqualification of political figures. In July, the Comptroller General of Venezuela barred four prominent leaders of the opposition coalition Democratic Unity Table (MUD) from holding public office. Among the leaders affected are María Corina Machado, former mayors Vincenzo Scarano and Daniel Ceballos, and former Zulia state governor Pablo Pérez. The administrative penalty issued by the Comptroller bars members of the MUD from holding public office for one year (in the case of Pablo Pérez, the disqualification remains in effect for 10 years). Machado, Scarano, and Ceballos alike were to have been selected by the MUD coalition to run in the December 2015 parliamentary elections.

Reactions to the disqualifications. Machado challenged the decision and the authority of the Comptroller General to disqualify her and declared that she would run for deputy to the National Assembly despite the penalty “representing the democratic determination of the Venezuelan people.” Machado stated that she would take national and international action to counter this decision ([see note](#)). Meanwhile, former San Diego mayor Enzo Scarano also underscored his intention to continue on as a candidate in the parliamentary elections, and he would register as such on August 3, the first day to register as a candidate according to the electoral timetable. Scarano filed a suit in the political and administrative chamber of the Venezuelan Supreme Court to annul the comptroller’s decision, with his defense lawyers arguing that the CNE cannot prohibit him from registering because it concerns a parliamentary electoral process and not the holding of an executive public office. Since Ceballos is still incarcerated, his defense was assumed by the *Voluntad Popular* Party, through its national coordinator, Freddy Guevara, who challenged the fact that the administrative disqualification would preclude the possibility of Ceballos being elected, assuming that Ceballos would be nominated by the MUD and elected to the NA ([see note](#)). Finally, former Zulia state governor Pablo Pérez asserted that the government and the PSUV were both in the wrong if their aim is to prevent his efforts toward “winning the election” by disqualifying him ([see note](#)).

Meanwhile, on all levels the MUD “condemned,” “repudiated,” and “denounced” the “fierce persecution, cunning aggression, and cowardly disqualification perpetrated by the regime against María Corina Machado.” Moreover, the executive secretary of the opposition party coalition said that while demands from the MUD to hold elections to enable the country to emerge from the crisis, the government took measures that serve “...only to promote confrontation and violence.” At the same time, he expressed support for statements on behalf of Scarano and Ceballos ([see note](#)). The MUD announced it would take denunciations over the most recent disqualifications of three of its candidates for parliamentary elections to the OAS, UNASUR, and the European Union ([see note](#)). Subsequently, on July 23, Torrealba submitted a document to the Comptroller whereby the MUD categorically rejected the disqualifications, which it considers an attempt to “prevent a group of prominent leaders of the Democratic Unity from exercising their political rights” ([see note](#)). Expert

lawyers specializing in constitutional law termed the disqualifications as “constitutional fraud” since they believe that these measures “...violate the electoral and political rights laid down in the Constitution” and that the Comptroller has no legal authority to decree the political disqualification of an individual ([listen to statement](#)).

PSUV deputies to the National Assembly (currently the majority party) refused to debate these disqualifications in the legislature, arguing that separation of powers exists in Venezuela and that the Comptroller General has the legal authority to disqualify political stakeholders ([see note](#)). National Assembly President Diosdado Cabello delivered a political lecture on the disqualifications, pointing out that neither Machado nor Scarano have the support of the opposition coalition, In fact, “the MUD itself is happy to have finally gotten rid of them” ([see note](#)).

On the international scene, OAS Secretary General Luis Almagro expressed his position on the disqualifications in Venezuela, stating that “...the election must be open to all citizens in a juridical and legal position to participate... The only disqualifications are made by the people. Everything else forces the political situation” ([see note](#)). Meanwhile, United States Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs Roberta Jacobson expressed concern on her Twitter account over Machado’s disqualification, saying that “the inclusion of fair conditions for free and impartial elections in Venezuela is necessary.” In an even more critical tone, State Department spokesman John Kirby said that the disqualifications were attempts by the Venezuelan government to “intimidate political opponents, in some cases through the abuse of the legal process” ([see note](#)).

The TSJ assigns new political party directors. While the Comptroller General of Venezuela announced administrative disqualifications for several opposition party candidates, the Supreme Court replaced the leadership of three political parties by appointing new ad hoc leaders.⁵ Parties affected were the People’s Electoral Movement (MEP), member of the Great Patriotic Pole (GPP), COPEI, and *Bandera Roja* (Red Flag), which all participate in the opposition. The new leaders of these parties will be entitled to nominate candidates for the 2015 parliamentary elections ([see note 1](#), [see note 2](#), and [note 3](#)). The TSJ’s decision sparked a reaction from the leaders being supplanted. Deposed MEP Secretary General Wilmer Nolasco announced that he will seek “annulment of the decision as unconstitutional and illegal” ([see note](#)). Ousted *Bandera Roja* party Secretary General Gabriel Puerta Aponte explained in a press release that this decision “is a desperate measure on the part of a government vanquished on all fronts and heading toward a resounding electoral defeat” ([see note](#)). On behalf of the former

⁵ In 2012, three months before the presidential elections, the Supreme Court appointed new leadership to the Podemos party following an internal dispute among its leaders. In the case of Podemos the dispute was mainly among the party’s various factions and it centered on the party’s choice of its presidential candidate. The Supreme Court assigned a provisional ad hoc Board comprised by the faction supporting President Chávez ([see note](#)). This decision triggered a strong reaction from the MUD opposition coalition, which called it a “blatant manipulation and abuse of power, whose undisguised purpose is to serve the political interests of the current government. The court is intervening in the electoral process, acting not just as a fair referee, but as an agent of a party” ([see note](#)).

COPEI leadership, Enrique Naime said “we must put an end in this country to the use of the courts to impose leaders on political parties” ([see note](#)). It should be noted that although MUD Executive Secretary Jesús Torrealba categorized the TSJ ruling on COPEI as an “assault on Venezuelan democracy” ([see note](#)), interim party chairman Pedro Urrieta Figueredo stated that the organization would continue participating in the MUD opposition coalition and announced that he had appointed Deputy and former Miranda state governor Enrique Mendoza, as liaison between the new COPEI leadership and the MUD ([see note](#)).

International observation. The presence of qualified international observation missions throughout the parliamentary electoral process has been a recurrent request made by opposition stakeholders in Venezuela. Representatives of the OAS and the EU have expressed their willingness to participate in these elections if the Venezuelan electoral management body sends them an invitation. While there has been no public response from the National Electoral Council denying these requests, recent statements issued by spokespersons of the national government indicate that it will preclude this possibility.

On July 28, Nicolás Maduro himself publicly ruled out the possibility of international “electoral monitoring” being conducted during the 2015 parliamentary elections. Maduro, in his meeting with UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon,⁶ made statements rejecting all possibility for international monitoring, pointing out that “Venezuela is not monitored, nor will it be monitored by anyone” ([see video](#)). Adding to these statements was National Assembly President Diosdado Cabello, who repudiated Venezuelan opposition party demands for an international presence in the December 6 elections, which he considered a “colonialist” endeavor ([see note](#)).

The Venezuelan government’s reactions were interpreted as a response to the meeting held the day before between Miranda state governor/former presidential candidate Henrique Capriles and OAS Secretary General Luis Almagro at OAS headquarters in Washington. Capriles came out in favor of an electoral observation presence in Venezuela with the participation of organizations such as the OAS and the EU, in addition to the electoral support of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR). After learning the national government’s reactions rejecting international supervision or monitoring, Capriles characterized Maduro’s statements as “unacceptable,” while noting that it was up to the Electoral Branch (CNE) to adopt a stance on international electoral observation. Capriles also reiterated that UNASUR lacks the “expertise” to perform technical support and that the UNASUR executive secretary was aware of this shortcoming ([see note](#)).

The MUD adopted use of single ballot for the parliamentary elections. After a long, arduous debate between the political organizations participating in the opposition coalition, on July 22 the MUD decided to use the single ballot to present their candidates running for the office of deputy to the National Assembly. MUD Executive Secretary Jesús “Chúo” Torrealba commented that

⁶ President Maduro went to the US to meet with the UN Secretary General to address the border dispute with Guyana.

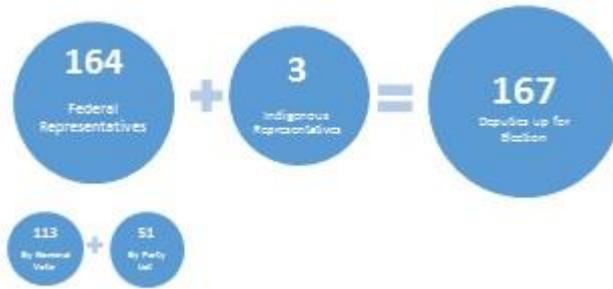
opposition political parties reached agreements needed to open the door to using the single ballot while working on a common strategy for the MUD in upcoming elections. Underscored in the strategy outlined by Torrealba is “pressure for qualified electoral observation and fair electoral conditions” and the agreement made to run one single set of candidates in the upcoming elections, pledging to select them in primary elections ([see note](#)).

Guaranteed gender parity. Approval last June of a CNE resolution guaranteeing the right to gender parity for political participation in the electoral race for deputies to the National Assembly has injected uncertainty into the process used by political blocs to nominate candidates in Venezuela ([see the Carter Center Political-Electoral Report for June 2015](#)). A month after the resolution’s adoption, the CNE presented details regarding its implementation to the political parties. CNE President Tibisay Lucena said that the resolution would not affect candidates chosen in the primaries, explaining that the resolution on gender parity would only apply to candidates chosen by consensus ([see note](#)). The “Operating Manual for the Process of Nominating Candidates for Elected Office” devised by the CNE and delivered to political party representatives stipulates that the formulas for calculating gender parity must adhere to a minimum of 40% and a maximum of 60% representation for each gender. The manual also stipulates that this formula does not apply to principal and alternate candidates (elected by party-list or nominal vote). In the case of party-list proportional candidates, the manual requires at least 20% of the top two places on each list to consist of female candidates.

The ruling PSUV party held primary elections nationwide while the MUD did so in just 33 districts. Consequently, the opposition party coalition would have to abide by the regulation’s provisions concerning most of candidates it will be nominating to run. Formulas submitted by political analysts following the primaries indicate that the ruling party coalition would need at least 85 female candidates (principal and alternate) whereas the opposition would need to run at least 98 female candidates ([see note](#)). Regarding candidate modifications and substitutions, the regulations also stipulate that “Nominations declared as admitted may be subject to substitution or modification only when new nominations are not in violation of formulas for equitable proportions provided for in Article 3 of the Special Regulations for Guaranteeing the Rights to Equitable Participation in the 2015 Elections for Deputies to the National Assembly.”

Keys to understanding the 2015 parliamentary elections

More deputies to the NA. The National Assembly elected in 2010 consisted of a total of 165 deputies in 87 districts, whereas in the 2015 elections 167 deputies will be elected to the National Assembly, consisting of 164 deputies nationwide (113 elected by nominal vote and 51 by party list) plus three indigenous representatives, also elected by nominal vote ([see note](#)).



Designing the slate of candidates. By this newsletter’s publication date, neither the MUD nor the Great Patriotic Pole (GPP) had announced their definitive list of candidates running for parliamentary elections. On July 23, National Assembly President Diosdado Cabello announced that the GPP had the slate of candidates more or less ready ([see note](#)). As for the MUD, on July 29 Zulia state deputy to the National Assembly Tomás Guanipa indicated that the MUD had its slate of candidates almost ready, and was only waiting on the *Un Nuevo Tiempo* party to announce its candidates in Zulia state.⁷ Guanipa stressed that the MUD will have its slate of candidates ready by August 3 and would register it on August 4 ([see note](#)).

Districts published. On July 13, 2015, the National Electoral Council approved and published the districts to be used in the December 6 parliamentary election in the official Gazette. News of the districting was received with skepticism by several electoral NGOs in the country. Luis Lander of the Venezuelan Electoral Observatory denounced a lack of transparency in the statistics used to map out the districts along with the untimely nature of the CNE’s announcements since both the MUD as the PSUV had held their primaries based on the previous electoral map ([see note](#)).

The civil society organization known as SÚMATE presented the main changes in the new map of voting districts. It reported that the states of Aragua, Guárico and Nueva Esparta, based on growth in population projections, acquire a new seat for the parliamentary elections, while the Capital District list loses one of the three party-list proportional seats that it had in the previous elections in 2010. SÚMATE characterized the distribution of seats in each district as “manipulation.” According to this organization, the changes made were for purely political reasons ([see note](#)).⁸

⁷ Sources close to the Carter Center explained that, in the MUD, candidates are not negotiated according to name and surname, but rather each party would have space quotas depending on the results of the 2012 elections.

⁸ In Miranda state, district 2 (the municipalities of Baruta, Chacao, El Hatillo and the Leoncio Martínez parish in Sucre Municipality), located in the metropolitan area of Caracas, loses one deputy elected by nominal vote, which is moved to district 6 of the same state (the municipalities of Lander, Urdaneta, Simón Bolívar and Cristóbal Rojas), located in Tuy Valleys, where PSUV won in 2010.

Comparative Table of Deputies in Districts for 2010- 2015⁹

DEPUTIES UP FOR ELECTION IN 2010					DEPUTIES UP FOR ELECTION IN 2015				
STATE	DISTRICTS	NOMINAL VOTE DEP	PARTY LIST DEP	TOTAL DEP	STATE	DISTRICTS	NOMINAL VOTE DEP	PARTY LIST DEP	TOTAL DEP
Amazonas	1	1	2	3	Amazonas	1	1	2	3
Anzoátegui	4	6	2	8	Anzoátegui	4	6	2	8
Apure	3	3	2	5	Apure	3	3	2	5
Aragua	4	6	2	8	Aragua	4	7(+1)	2	9
Barinas	2	4	2	6	Barinas	2	4	2	6
Bolívar	3	6	2	8	Bolívar	3	6	2	8
Carabobo	5	7	3	10	Carabobo	5	7	3	10
Cojedes	2	2	2	4	Cojedes	2	2	2	4
Delta Amacuro	2	2	2	4	Delta Amacuro	2	2	2	4
Falcón	4	4	2	6	Falcón	4	4	2	6
Guárico	3	3	2	5	Guárico	3	4(+1)	2	6
Lara	3	7	2	9	Lara	3	7	2	9
Mérida	4	4	2	6	Mérida	4	4	2	6
Miranda	7	9	3	12	Miranda (1 new district)	7	9	3	12
Monagas	2	4	2	6	Monagas	2	4	2	6
Nueva Esparta	2	2	2	4	Nueva Esparta	2	3(+1)	2	5
Portuguesa	4	4	2	6	Portuguesa	4	4	2	6
Sucre	3	4	2	6	Sucre	3	4	2	6
Táchira	5	5	2	7	Táchira	5	5	2	7
Trujillo	3	3	2	5	Trujillo	3	3	2	5
Vargas	1	2	2	4	Vargas	1	2	2	4
Yaracuy	3	3	2	5	Yaracuy	3	3	2	5
Zulia	12	12	3	15	Zulia	12	12	3	15
Capital District	5	7	3	10	Capital District	5	7	2(-1)	9
(Indigenous)				3	(Indigenous)				3
TOTAL	87	110	52	165	TOTAL	87	113	51	167

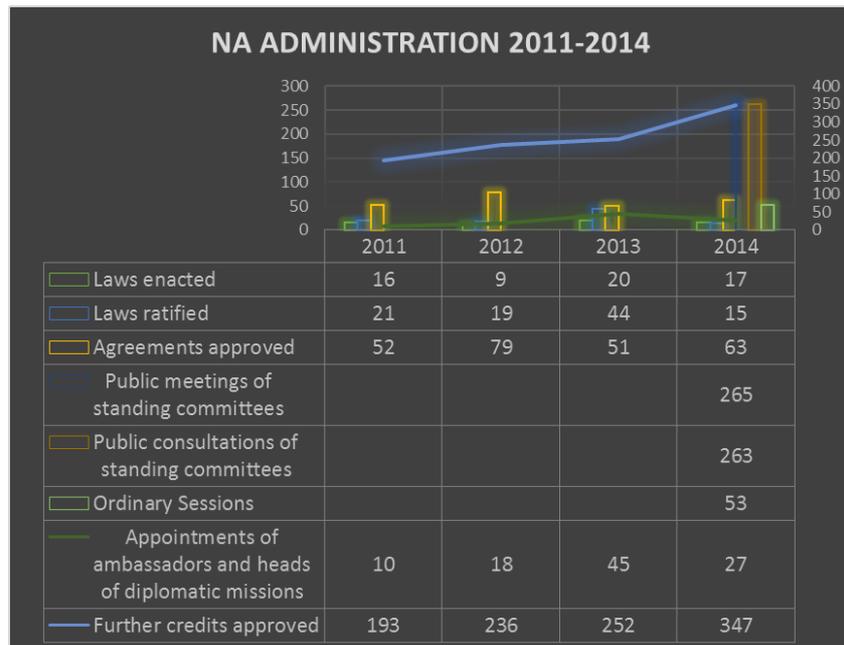
NA administration and enabling laws. The current National Assembly was inaugurated on January 5, 2011 and must continue to perform its duties until January 5, 2016. During the current administration, 163 laws have been passed (64 enacted and 99 ratifications).¹⁰ According to information posted on the National Assembly portal between 2011 and 2014, 245 agreements were approved, 100 ambassadors and diplomatic corps representatives were appointed, and 1028 additional credits were approved.¹¹

⁹ CNE source data, prepared by author

¹⁰ Unlike laws enacted, those passed by ratification do not undergo the process of debate in parliament, but their content is learned and approved within the NA, and they usually concern agreements or conventions signed by the executive branch.

¹¹ There are no official reports so far regarding administration in 2015; however, two laws are known to have been adopted, including the enabling act passed last March.

NA administration in numbers¹²



Laws passed under the enabling act played an important role in the current administration's inventory.¹³ The NA taking the oath of office in 2011 inherited an enabling act furnished to President Hugo Chávez for 18 months (2010-2012). During the late President's administration, 54 decree laws were passed. In 2014, the National Assembly passed a new enabling act for President Nicolás Maduro with a duration of twelve months, and during this period 56 laws were passed under the fast track authority of the enabling act.¹⁴ A third enabling act was passed by the National Assembly for a period ranging from March 16 to December 31, 2015.¹⁵ To date the number of laws that will be approved in this manner is unknown; however, if the number of laws passed by the NA through ordinary procedures (excluding approving) is compared with those adopted through the enabling act, the latter would outweigh the former.

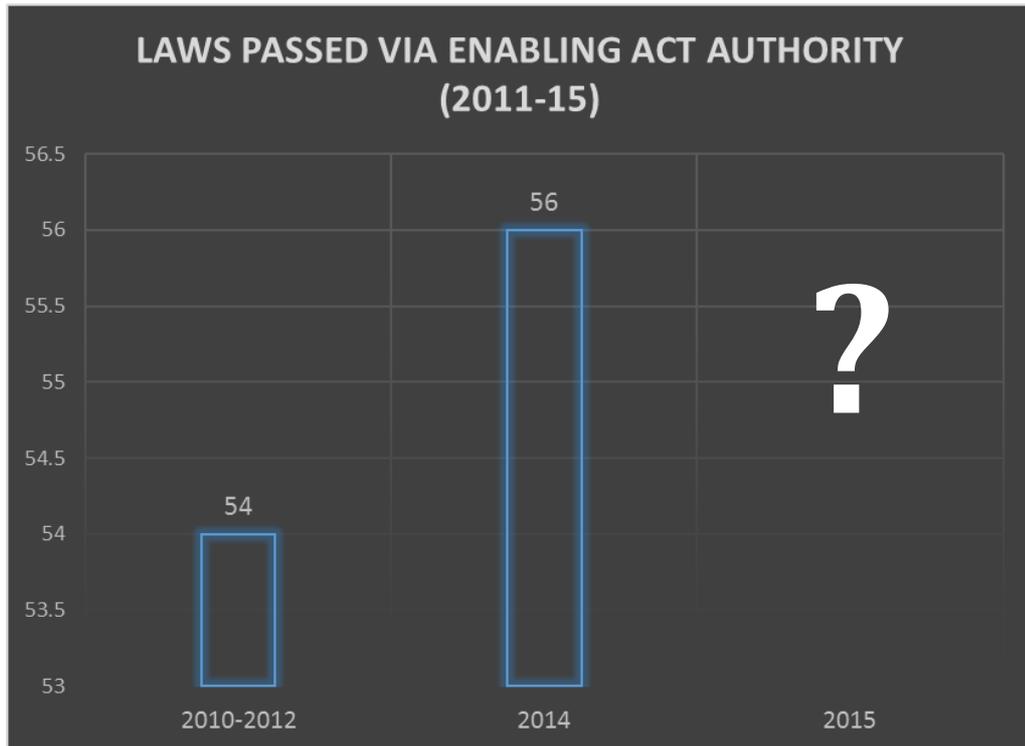
The legal framework in Venezuela requires passage of an enabling act by a three fifths' majority vote of the deputies. The new National Assembly will consist of 167 deputies, raising the number of votes needed to pass a new enabling law from 99 to 100 deputies. This suggests that the new NA will need to reach agreements between the two opposing political blocs.

¹² Data taken from reports on the official administration of the NA. Graphic prepared by author.

¹³ Article 203 of the Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela stipulates that "Enabling laws are those enacted by the National Assembly by three-fifths of its members, for the purpose of establishing the guidelines, purposes and framework for matters delegated to the President of the Republic with the status and force of law. Enabling legislation must have set time limits on how long it is to remain in effect."

¹⁴ On November 19, 2014, the NA conferred special powers to the head of State to fight corruption, speculation, and hoarding ([see enabling act](#)).

¹⁵ To legislate on matters of defense and sovereignty for over nine months to address the US decree declaring Venezuela a security threat.



Conclusion of Carter Center political-electoral monitoring

With this report, the Carter Center concludes monitoring of the political-electoral process in Venezuela that it has been engaging in since August 2014. The Carter Center is taking this opportunity to report its decision to cease operations in Venezuela and focus its limited resources on other countries that have requested its support. The Carter Center will continue monitoring developments in the current political process from its headquarters in Atlanta.

With the closure of its offices in Venezuela last May 31, the Carter Center wishes to express its thanks for the work and dedication of the staff and team of consultants there, and for the many Venezuelans who have furnished their advice and participated in activities at the Center over the last 13 years.

TEAM OF EXPERTS AND CARTER CENTER STAFF

JENNIE LINCOLN, DIRECTOR,
AMERICAS PROGRAM, THE CARTER CENTER

JENNIFER MCCOY, SENIOR CONSULTANT,
AMERICAS PROGRAM, THE CARTER CENTER

GRISelda COLINA, PROGRAM COORDINATOR,
THE CARTER CENTER, VENEZUELA

DIMITRIS PANTOULAS, POLITICAL ANALYST,
THE CARTER CENTER, VENEZUELA

FRANCISCO ALFARO PAREJA, POLITICAL ANALYST,
THE CARTER CENTER, VENEZUELA