



FREEDOM IN THE WORLD 2025

Venezuela

NOT FREE

13
/100

<u>Political Rights</u>	0 /40
<u>Civil Liberties</u>	13 /60

LAST YEAR'S SCORE & STATUS

15 /100 **Not Free**

A country or territory's Freedom in the World status depends on its aggregate Political Rights score, on a scale of 0–40, and its aggregate Civil Liberties score, on a scale of 0–60. See the methodology.



Overview

Venezuela's democratic institutions have been deteriorating since 1999, but conditions have grown sharply worse in recent years due to harsher government crackdowns on the opposition and the ruling party's use of thoroughly flawed elections to seize full control of state institutions. The authorities have closed off virtually all channels for political dissent, restricting civil liberties and prosecuting perceived opponents without regard for due process. Although the country's economy has returned to growth after years of recession, a severe, politically driven humanitarian crisis continues to cause hardship and stimulate mass emigration.

Key Developments in 2024

- Incumbent President Nicolás Maduro was awarded a third consecutive term following the July presidential election, which was marred by the incumbent's abuse of government resources to gain electoral advantages and serious irregularities in the vote count, among other things. Although electoral authorities failed to produce evidence supporting Maduro's claim to victory, the Supreme Tribunal of Justice (TSJ) certified his purported election win in August.
- The opposition denounced Maduro's victory as fraudulent, and in July, claimed to have published online more than 80 percent of the legitimate voting tallies. The voting tallies, which were deemed credible by numerous independent analysts, showed opposition candidate Edmundo González Urrutia as having won the presidency with 67 percent of the vote; González was forced to flee the country in September after Venezuelan authorities issued a warrant for his arrest.
- Mass protests disputing Maduro's unsubstantiated claim to victory following the July election were met with disproportionate force by security forces and progovernment armed groups, leading to the deaths of at least 24 people, according to Venezuelan rights groups. The number of political prisoners rose dramatically as the government violently cracked down on dissent during the postelection period; by mid-August, a reported 2,400 people had been arbitrarily arrested in connection with the protests.
- In the months following the election, the authorities encouraged citizens to report political protests and suspected dissidents through a government-backed app, and numerous people were arbitrarily detained for expressing

critical opinions about the election on social media and in WhatsApp conversations.

- In August, the National Assembly approved a law that enables the government to suspend nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) accused of promoting hate speech or fascism or engaging in political activities.

Political Rights

A. Electoral Process

A1 0-4 pts

Was the current head of government or other chief national authority elected through free and fair elections?

0 / 4

The president serves six-year terms and is not subject to term limits. Incumbent Nicolás Maduro was awarded a third consecutive term following the July 2024 presidential election. All major opposition candidates were barred from contesting the election. However, Venezuela's main opposition alliance, the Democratic Unitary Platform (PUD), was permitted to register retired diplomat Edmundo González Urrutia in late March, after several prominent opposition figures had been disqualified.

After the election, the National Electoral Council (CNE) announced Maduro's victory but refused to release the full results or the voting tallies—a paper count from each voting machine used to corroborate the CNE's digital results. In late July, the opposition coalition claimed to have published more than 80 percent of the voting tallies online. These voting tallies, which showed González winning the presidency with 67 percent of the vote, were legally collected by certified poll workers and volunteer election witnesses, and deemed credible by numerous independent analysts.

The government-aligned TSJ denounced the opposition-published voting tallies as forgeries and certified Maduro's victory in August, but failed to produce voting data to support either claim. In September, Venezuelan authorities issued an arrest warrant for González, accusing him of "conspiracy, usurpation of power,

and sabotage,” among other things. González was subsequently forced to sign a document conceding the election, then fled to Spain, where he was granted asylum.

A wide range of independent analysts and observers agree that the election was neither democratic nor credible. The election was marred by the incumbent’s abuse of government resources, excessive media coverage benefitting Maduro’s campaign, and serious irregularities in the vote count. Postelection reports by the United Nations and the Carter Center, the only international observers accredited by the CNE, characterized the polls as lacking transparency and integrity. In August, Juan Carlos Delpino, the only independent CNE official, publicly declared that there was no evidence to support Maduro’s claims of victory; Delpino was officially removed from the CNE in October. The governments of more than 30 countries and the European Union (EU) ultimately recognized González as having won the election.

A2 0-4 pts

Were the current national legislative representatives elected through free and fair elections?

0 / 4

The unicameral National Assembly is popularly elected for five-year terms, using a mix of majoritarian and proportional-representation voting. The major opposition parties refused to participate in the 2020 National Assembly elections, citing the regime’s control over the CNE and recent attempts to replace the parties’ own leaders. A coalition led by the ruling United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV) won 253 of the assembly’s 277 seats according to official results.

Meanwhile, the opposition-controlled National Assembly that had been elected in 2015 continued to operate. In December 2024, the body once again voted to extend its term despite divisions among its members.

Regional and local elections held in 2021 were marred by the abuse of state resources and judicial interference in the government’s favor. EU observers were forced to leave the country and were not permitted to return for the release of their final report in 2022.

A3 0-4 pts

Are the electoral laws and framework fair, and are they implemented impartially by the relevant election management bodies?

0 / 4

The electoral system is heavily influenced by political manipulation and pro-PSUV institutional interference. During 2024, the government used its control of the state apparatus to gain an undue electoral advantage. Although the PSUV-controlled CNE quickly pronounced Maduro as the winner following the July polls—a claim supported by the TSJ in August—the authorities failed to produce evidence of Maduro’s purported victory, despite laws requiring the release of the full results. Venezuelan authorities have blamed the delay on an alleged cyberattack on the CNE’s website on election night.

A postelection report by poll observers from the Carter Center notes that the CNE “demonstrated a clear bias in favor of the incumbent” throughout the election period.

Although nearly five million Venezuelan citizens living abroad were eligible to vote in the July presidential election, the vast majority were prevented from registering. In March 2024, the CNE opened the registration process abroad for approximately one month. Venezuelans abroad had not been able to register to vote since 2018, and although many tried to register during the monthlong window, the CNE introduced onerous new restrictions and arbitrarily denied registration to potentially millions of people. Civil society-collected data indicates that during the registration window, only 508 eligible voters were able to register worldwide.

B. Political Pluralism and Participation

B1 0-4 pts

Do the people have the right to organize in different political parties or other competitive political groupings of their choice, and is the system free of undue obstacles to the rise and fall of these competing parties or groupings?

0 / 4

While opposition coalitions and parties exist, the ruling PSUV uses state resources as well as security forces and the judiciary to disrupt parties that directly challenge its dominant position. In recent years, the TSJ has suspended and replaced the leaders of opposition parties, including Acción Democrática (Democratic Action) and Voluntad Popular (Popular Will). Of the 34 political parties that were able to present candidates for the 2024 presidential election, just three belonged to the opposition.

Opposition leaders have long been harassed, attacked, imprisoned, and otherwise impeded from participating in political processes. Ahead of the July 2024 presidential election, hotels and restaurants that served the opposition team were closed after unexpected visits from financial officials; police created roadblocks to impede political leaders; and more than 100 members of the opposition's campaign team were detained. Political repression intensified after the polls, and many prominent opposition politicians were arbitrarily detained, including Freddy Superlano Salinas, Williams Dávila, Américo de Grazia, and Biagio Pilieri.

According to civil society group Foro Penal (Criminal Forum), there were 1,953 political prisoners in Venezuela as of late October 2024, a 745 percent increase from the same time in 2023. Following the disputed July 2024 presidential election, government forces conducted mass arrests of dissidents without legal orders in an initiative labeled “Operación Tun-Tun” (Operation Knock-Knock). Two jails were specially prepared to hold newly arrested political prisoners; according to Venezuelan authorities, more than 2,400 arrests were carried out in the two weeks following the election. Following the election, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) requested state protection for at least 40 political detainees whose rights the body considered to be at “risk of irreparable harm.” While some political prisoners were released late in the year, arrests of perceived dissidents continued, keeping the number of political prisoners high—nearly 1,800 at year's end, according to Foro Penal.

B2 0-4 pts

Is there a realistic opportunity for the opposition to increase its support or gain power through elections?

0 / 4

Discontent with the Maduro regime remains widespread, but the government has cut off virtually all avenues for political change at a national level, and it has used a variety of tactics to create divisions within the opposition movement. Numerous prominent opposition leaders were subject to arbitrary bans on their participation in elections in 2024.

In June 2023, opposition leader María Corina Machado was banned from participating in elections on spurious grounds, including purported irregularities in a declaration of assets she made in 2015 while a member of the National Assembly. Machado, who won the opposition's October 2023 primaries, appealed the ban that December, but it was upheld by the TSJ in January 2024, preventing her from contesting the July presidential election. Machado designated Corina Yoris as her replacement in March, but the government prevented Yoris from registering; the PUD was ultimately able to register retired diplomat Edmundo González Urrutia later that month.

Opposition figures in exile sometimes face continued harassment from the Maduro government. In March 2024, the attorney general requested new international arrest warrants for opposition figures Leopoldo López and Julio Borges, who were forced into exile years ago.

B3 0-4 pts

Are the people's political choices free from domination by forces that are external to the political sphere, or by political forces that employ extrapolitical means?

0 / 4

The Maduro regime relies on the military, paramilitary forces, and opaque support from foreign states to retain political power. Military leaders have taken control of numerous offices, and Maduro has continued to strengthen the Bolivarian Militia, a millions-strong civilian militia group established in 2008 to support the military.

Separately, irregular, state-affiliated armed groups known as *colectivos* routinely commit acts of violence against civilians and carry out government-backed intimidation efforts. In 2024, *colectivos* reportedly carried out numerous violent attacks against dissidents and members of the opposition in the run-up to the July

presidential election, on election day itself, and as part of the regime’s postelection crackdown on its perceived opponents.

In August, a United Nations (UN) fact-finding mission to Venezuela issued a statement demanding that the government stop its escalating repression of the opposition and anti-Maduro protesters. The mission had previously warned in 2023 that the government was routinely committing human rights abuses against dissidents, constituting a “policy of repression” against the opposition, and appeared unwilling to change.

In February 2024, former military officer and political dissident Ronald Ojeda, who fled Venezuela in 2017, was kidnapped and killed in Chile. Chilean officials said that the crime had been organized from within Venezuela and carried out with the help of criminal gangs. In recent years, some independent news reports have suggested that the Maduro regime may have worked with international criminal organizations like the National Liberation Army (ELN) and Tren de Aragua to attack and detain political dissidents.

B4 0-4 pts

Do various segments of the population (including ethnic, racial, religious, gender, LGBT+, and other relevant groups) have full political rights and electoral opportunities?	0 / 4
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The PSUV’s political dominance leaves little opportunity for ethnic and other groups to advocate independently for their interests. The regime’s increasing suppression of dissent in recent years, particularly in the lead-up to the July 2024 presidential election, as well as in the months after, has significantly reduced the ability of minority and marginalized groups—even those nominally represented in the government—to meaningfully advocate for their interests outside of the PSUV’s electoral and political goals.

Though several women hold senior positions in government, there is a lack of policy discussion regarding issues that primarily affect women. Almost no openly LGBT+ people hold senior political or government positions in Venezuela. The first openly transgender member of the National Assembly, Voluntad Popular member Tamara Adrián, held a seat in the assembly elected in 2015, and contested the 2023 opposition primaries. Indigenous people in Venezuela are poorly represented in

politics, and members of these groups struggle to bring government attention to their concerns.

Score Change: The score declined from 1 to 0 because a general increase in the suppression of dissent has reduced the ability of women, LGBT+ people, and ethnic and racial minority groups to advocate independently for their political interests, even if these segments of the population retain some nominal representation in the government or legislature.

C. Functioning of Government

C1 0-4 pts

Do the freely elected head of government and national legislative representatives determine the policies of the government?

0 / 4

Venezuela does not function as a representative democracy and the Maduro regime has become increasingly dependent on economic, medical, military, and other assistance from foreign allies, particularly the governments of Russia, Cuba, Turkey, and Iran. In addition, leftist guerrilla groups from Colombia have increased their influence in Venezuelan cities near the border. According to UN investigators, the ELN guerrilla group operates in the state of Bolívar and has an agreement with the government to control illegal mining activity.

C2 0-4 pts

Are safeguards against official corruption strong and effective?

0 / 4

Corruption is rampant in Venezuela. The government's economic policies—particularly its currency and price controls—offer significant opportunities for illicit market activity and collusion between public officials and organized crime networks. Authorities in jurisdictions including the United States, Canada, Panama, and the EU have imposed sanctions on Venezuelan officials for corruption and other offenses that go uninvestigated in Venezuela.

In April 2024, former oil minister Tareck El Aissami was arrested as part of a corruption investigation into the state oil company, Petróleos de Venezuela SA

(PDVSA). Prior to his resignation, El Aissami was a high-ranking member of the Maduro regime who had reportedly amassed his own power base; some analysts believe that this case is not a genuine effort to bolster anticorruption mechanisms but rather a pretext for the Maduro regime to go after political opponents. At least three people detained in corruption cases involving state-owned companies died under unclear or suspicious circumstances between April 2023 and April 2024.

Independent journalists have faced persecution after reporting about corruption.

C3 0-4 pts

Does the government operate with openness and transparency?

0 / 4

There is virtually no transparency regarding government spending. The Maduro regime has consistently failed to publish reliable crime and economic data. Some civil society leaders have argued that the lack of transparency surrounding official data makes it impossible to create effective policies to combat and prevent issues like domestic violence and child abuse.

The CNE has failed to publish the vote tallies for the July 2024 election. CNE officials have claimed that they are unable to publish this data, blaming an alleged “hack” of the CNE’s website, which has been inaccessible since it went offline late on election night.

Civil Liberties

D. Freedom of Expression and Belief

D1 0-4 pts

Are there free and independent media?

1 / 4

The media operate within a highly restrictive regulatory and legal environment. In mid-June 2024, the National College of Journalists reported that at least 405 media outlets had closed in the preceding 20 years. At least 14 radio stations were forced to cease operations during 2024, and as of August, over 60 digital media outlets had been arbitrarily blocked, along with at least 9 sites discussing human rights issues. The Maduro regime maintains a state-controlled media infrastructure that promotes its political and ideological program.

Independent journalists are at risk of government pressure, arbitrary arrest, and physical violence. Many journalists faced persecution or had to self-censor following the 2024 presidential elections. Eight journalists were jailed for covering postelection protests; five were released in December. Journalist Carlos Julio Rojas was detained in April and accused of plotting to kill Maduro. Independent reports from international organizations indicate that Rojas had been denied access to a lawyer and was being held incommunicado as of year's end. Foreign journalists were also targeted, especially during the presidential election campaign and in the postelection period. In March, the Spanish-language channel of German media outlet Deutsche Welle (DW) was removed from cable providers after reporting about a corruption case.

NGO Public Space (Espacio Público) documented more than 400 violations of freedom of expression, including censorship and intimidation, during the first eight months of 2024, with most violations recorded in July and August. Another media freedom group, the Press and Society Institute (IPYS), reported in August that in a survey of 181 journalists who had emigrated from Venezuela, almost 86 percent said that they had left because of restrictions on free reporting.

D2 0-4 pts

Are individuals free to practice and express their religious faith or nonbelief in public and private?

3/4

Constitutional guarantees of religious freedom are generally respected, though relations between the government and the Roman Catholic Church remain tense. According to the 2023 edition of the US State Department's *Report on International Religious Freedom*, there is a pattern of antisemitic content in regime-affiliated media outlets and social media posts. The report also noted that

Roman Catholic and evangelical Christian groups have alleged government harassment, intimidation, and retaliation against their members, including members of the clergy. However, in recent years, Maduro has strengthened ties with evangelical groups, and in 2024, devoted significant resources to gaining the electoral support of evangelical voters.

D3 0-4 pts

Is there academic freedom, and is the educational system free from extensive political indoctrination?

1 / 4

Academic freedom has come under mounting pressure in recent years, as budget cuts and other funding problems have led to a decline in research capabilities within Venezuela, undermined universities' autonomy, and prompted an exodus of academics from the country.

The regime continues to exert political influence over university leadership. In recent years, the TSJ has suspended the elections for leadership positions within at least two universities. In 2022, the TSJ partially suspended the results of internal elections held by the Universidad Central de Venezuela (UCV), the largest institution of higher education in the country, after progovernment candidates lost in all the faculties and in 44 of the 49 schools.

D4 0-4 pts

Are individuals free to express their personal views on political or other sensitive topics without fear of surveillance or retribution?

0 / 4

The freedom of personal expression is severely constrained in Venezuela, due in part to the deterrent effect of extensive government surveillance. The situation worsened considerably during 2024, as the Maduro regime cracked down on any perceived dissent both before and after the July presidential election.

International human rights organizations warned that the government had increased "its digital surveillance and censorship measures" in the postelection period, and numerous people were arbitrarily detained for expressing critical opinions about the election on social media. In August, the government transformed the regime-backed VenApp, created in 2022 to report public services

problems, to allow the public to report political protests and dissidents to the authorities.

The same month, Maduro denounced WhatsApp, saying that the application was being used to threaten the government, and urged citizens to stop using it. Venezuelan authorities subsequently announced an investigation into people who had allegedly sent antigovernment “hate messages” on the app. Certain public institutions and employers have reportedly begun monitoring WhatsApp groups for political dissent, leading to the dismissal or forced resignation of individuals alleged to have criticized the government.

After the presidential election, government institutions reportedly launched an intimidation campaign intended to show the public the consequences of criticizing the government on social media. The tactic included publishing videos of arrests and of detainees publicly apologizing for criticizing Maduro. A different intimidation tactic reportedly used in some areas saw regime supporters mark the houses of people that had voted for the opposition or criticized the government with a black “X.”

The government also blocked several websites after the election, including social media platform X for 10 days in August, as well as a number of popular streaming services.

Score Change: The score declined from 1 to 0 because arrests, intimidation, and other reprisals for expressing dissent increased dramatically after the presidential election, often prompted by state surveillance of social media activity or accusations from neighbors.

E. Associational and Organizational Rights

E1 0-4 pts

Is there freedom of assembly?

0 / 4

While guaranteed by the constitution, freedom of assembly is severely restricted in practice, and violent clashes between protesters and security forces are known to occur.

Mass protests broke out across Venezuela following the July 2024 presidential election, with thousands of people taking to the streets to dispute incumbent President Maduro's unsubstantiated claim to victory. Security forces and progovernment armed groups responded to the mostly peaceful protests with disproportionate force, carrying out arbitrary arrests and using tear gas and live ammunition to disperse crowds. According to Venezuelan authorities, by mid-August, more than 2,400 people had been arrested in connection with the protests. Venezuelan rights groups have reported that 24 people were killed during the protests; a September report by Human Rights Watch found the reports to be credible, and presented evidence that implicated state security officials in many of the killings.

Venezuelan authorities also encouraged people to report anyone who had participated in the protests, arresting alleged protesters in their homes in the weeks and months after the election. Many protesters and those accused of participating in antigovernment demonstrations were arbitrarily charged with serious crimes, including terrorism, and remained in state custody at year's end.

International human rights organizations have denounced the repression of the postelection protests as "shockingly brutal."

E2 0-4 pts

Is there freedom for nongovernmental organizations, particularly those that are engaged in human rights– and governance-related work?

1 / 4

Harassment, threats, and legal and administrative sanctions against human rights activists and NGOs have generally increased over the past several years. According to the Center for Defenders and Justice (CDJ), 782 attacks on human rights defenders and organizations were recorded during the first eight months of 2024.

In January 2024, the government ordered the arrest of 14 people, including human rights activist Tamara Sujú and journalist María Sebastiana Barráez, for

their alleged involvement in a plot to kill the president. In February, Rocío San Miguel, president of NGO Control Ciudadano (Citizen Control), which advocates for civilian oversight of the military and security forces, and members of her family were arrested on spurious charges of treason. San Miguel, who was arrested just before boarding a flight to the United States, remained in state custody at year's end. Also in February, 13 officials from the UN's Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) that had been stationed in Venezuela since 2019 were expelled from the country. In August, the coordinator of civil organization Súmate (Join In), Nélide Sánchez, was also arrested; she remained in detention at year's end.

In August, the National Assembly approved a law allowing the government to dissolve NGOs if they promote hate speech or fascism or get involved in political activity. Amnesty International condemned the law, known as the anti-NGO law, saying its ambiguous provisions would allow authorities to arbitrarily target and “disproportionately sanction” human rights organizations.

E3 0-4 pts

Is there freedom for trade unions and similar professional or labor organizations?	1 / 4
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Workers are legally entitled to form unions, bargain collectively, and strike, with some restrictions on public-sector workers' ability to strike. Control of unions has shifted from traditional opposition-allied labor leaders to new workers' organizations that are often aligned with the government. The competition has contributed to a substantial increase in labor violence.

Between 2013 and 2023, 120 union leaders were arrested, according to Venezuelan human rights NGO Provea (Venezuelan Program of Education–Action in Human Rights), and a 2022 report from the Observatory for the Defense of Life (Odevida) recorded the assassinations of at least 44 union leaders between 2015 and 2020. In January 2024, Víctor Venegas, president of a teacher's union in the state of Barinas, was arrested on spurious charges of plotting against the government. He was released in March.

F. Rule of Law

F1 0-4 pts

Is there an independent judiciary?

0 / 4

The politicization of the judicial branch, which increased dramatically under former president Hugo Chávez, has progressed further under Maduro. In 2022, the PSUV-controlled National Assembly chose 20 new judges for the TSJ under legislation that reduced the court's size from 32 judges. Of those selected, several were already serving on the old court, raising concerns that they would violate a constitutionally limited term of 12 years. The TSJ has issued numerous decisions that favored the Maduro regime in recent years, and UN experts have repeatedly criticized the judiciary's lack of independence.

In August 2024, the TSJ certified the CNE's electoral results, which identified Maduro as the victor of July's fraudulent presidential election. In September, a UN fact-finding mission to Venezuela issued a report asserting that the judiciary "serves as a key instrument" in the regime's plan to silence political and societal dissent.

F2 0-4 pts

Does due process prevail in civil and criminal matters?

0 / 4

Perceived opponents of the government and the PSUV are routinely detained and prosecuted without regard for due process, including civilians and service members who are brought before military courts. Victims of violence at the hands of the state have no realistic avenue for redress.

In August 2024, a UN fact-finding mission to Venezuela reported that the authorities had gravely violated the due process rights of people who were arbitrarily detained following the July presidential election. The violations documented in the report include charging individuals with serious crimes without evidence and preventing detainees from choosing their own legal representation, among other things. In September, the mission reported that

detainees' due process rights were being "systematically" violated at an "unprecedented level."

F3 0-4 pts

Is there protection from the illegitimate use of physical force and freedom from war and insurgencies?

0 / 4

Venezuelans face physical insecurity and violence from several sources, including irregular armed groups, security forces, and organized gangs. In April 2024, Venezuelan human rights NGOs Provea and Foro Penal reported that at least 10,085 executions, 1,652 cases of torture, and 15,000 arrests had been carried out by police and military forces between 2013 and 2023.

Colombian guerrilla groups and criminal organizations continued to operate on the Venezuelan side of the border in 2024. According to a June press release by NGO Fundaredes (Foundations), more than 1,000 Venezuelans have disappeared along the border since 2019.

Prisons in Venezuela are among the worst in the region. Detention facilities suffer from severe overcrowding, as well as poor sanitation and security conditions. *Pranes*, or gang leaders who operate from prisons, freely coordinate criminal networks throughout Venezuela. In June 2024, prisoners in 51 detention centers engaged in a dayslong hunger strike to protest poor prison conditions and judicial delays; the strike ended after prisoners and their families reached an agreement with the Ministry of Penitentiary Services.

F4 0-4 pts

Do laws, policies, and practices guarantee equal treatment of various segments of the population?

1 / 4

Constitutional protections against discrimination based on sex, race, and other characteristics are not well enforced in practice. Women continue to face significant disparities in education, compensation, and employment.

The rights of Indigenous people, who make up 2.5 percent of the population, are guaranteed by the constitution but poorly protected. Indigenous groups often

experience discrimination, labor exploitation, extortion by military and paramilitary groups, sex trafficking, and land grabs related to illegal mining which has resulted in the destruction of forests and other natural resources on which Indigenous residents depend. Indigenous Venezuelans also experience disproportionately high poverty rates and often face obstacles in accessing government services.

Although discrimination based on sexual orientation is prohibited, LGBT+ Venezuelans face widespread intolerance and violence. According to a recent report by the Venezuelan Observatory of Prisons (OVP), LGBT+ individuals are especially vulnerable to discrimination and sexual abuse in Venezuelan prisons.

G. Personal Autonomy and Individual Rights

G1 0-4 pts

Do individuals enjoy freedom of movement, including the ability to change their place of residence, employment, or education?

2/4

Internal movement is limited by threats to physical security in some parts of the country, and Venezuelans continue to flee abroad to escape political persecution, insecurity, and overlapping social and economic crises. According to the Inter-Agency Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela (R4V), a total of more than 7.8 million Venezuelan migrants and refugees had left the country as of November 2024.

After the July presidential election, the government began canceling the passports of Venezuelan journalists, human rights activists, political leaders, and others without notice or reason, affecting their ability to travel into or out of Venezuela. As of September, Venezuelans arriving in the country by air are no longer permitted to enter the country using a Venezuelan national identity card or an expired passport, but are required to have a valid Venezuelan passport or special travel documents. Flights from Venezuela to Panama, the Dominican Republic, Peru, and Chile were suspended through at least September after those countries refused to recognize Maduro's purported electoral victory.

G2 0-4 pts

Are individuals able to exercise the right to own property and establish private businesses without undue interference from state or nonstate actors?

1 / 4

Property rights have been damaged by years of price controls, nationalization, overregulation, and corruption. Illegal land seizures and extortion by armed groups also continue to undermine property rights and private business activity.

G3 0-4 pts

Do individuals enjoy personal social freedoms, including choice of marriage partner and size of family, protection from domestic violence, and control over appearance?

2 / 4

Personal social freedoms pertaining to marriage, divorce, and child custody are generally upheld, but members of the LGBT+ community still lack equal access to fundamental rights like legal marriage, child adoption, and recognition of one's gender identity.

The maternal mortality rate has dramatically increased in recent years. Abortion is illegal unless the patient's life is at risk, resulting in many women and girls resorting to unsafe and unsanitary clandestine abortions or seeking abortions abroad.

A 2007 law was designed to combat violence against women, but domestic violence and rape remain common. Utopix, a Venezuelan women's rights NGO, recorded 201 femicides in 2023. Women who have been political prisoners have reported abuses by security forces including sexual violence, threats of rape, and forced nudity.

G4 0-4 pts

Do individuals enjoy equality of opportunity and freedom from economic exploitation?

0 / 4

The country's prolonged economic crisis has left the population extremely vulnerable to human trafficking and labor exploitation. Women and children are also subjected to sex trafficking within Venezuela and abroad.



On Venezuela

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Country Facts

Population

28,300,000

Global Freedom Score

13/100 **Not Free**

Internet Freedom Score

30/100 **Not Free**

Other Years

2024

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GENERAL INQUIRIES

info@freedomhouse.org

1850 M St. NW Floor 11
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 296-5101

PRESS & MEDIA
press@freedomhouse.org

@2025 FreedomHouse