



By: TA | AP Brief

# Venezuela's opposition candidate calls for presidential elections



Venezuela 's former opposition candidate Edmundo González called on Saturday for presidential elections as the five-month mark of interim President Delcy Rodríguez's administration approaches in the wake of the U.S. military intervention that ousted **Nicolás Maduro** in early January.

The 76-year-old former diplomat was recognized by several countries as the legitimate winner of the July 2024 elections amid a post-election crisis and street protests as the opposition alleged fraud.

Electoral records that showed González's victory over Maduro were deemed credible by international observers.

In a message posted on social media, González stated that it is time to "build the conditions for holding presidential elections that serve as citizen instruments for change" and contribute to the re-institutionalization of the country and lay the foundations for a stable government.

His message comes just shy of the five-month anniversary of **Rodríguez assuming power** on Jan. 5, following the arrest of Maduro and his wife, who are being prosecuted in the United States.

Maduro's former ally Rodríguez was recognized as president by the administration of U.S. President Donald Trump, and the two countries have since made progress on a series of agreements that include the lifting of sanctions and negotiations in the oil and energy sectors, as well as the normalization of diplomatic relations.

## Independent referees

Neither Caracas nor Washington has given any indication that elections are imminent in Venezuela.

The U.S. has recognized Rodríguez as Venezuela's sole head of state, allowing her to reestablish ties with Western banks and more freely work with U.S. investors.

According to González, an electoral process must have "independent referees," national and international observation and political pluralism, among other conditions, with the release of political prisoners and "an end to the persecution" being non-negotiable.

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The opposition leader asserted that he is the "guardian" of the mandate of his constituents, who chose "freedom" for Venezuela in the 2024 election.

Since September that year, González has been in exile in Spain after Maduro's administration issued an arrest warrant for him on charges of conspiracy, usurpation and the falsification of public documents — charges that he has vehemently denied.

González gained prominence when he was named as the substitute candidate for opposition leader María Corina Machado, who was barred from participating in the elections.

Corina Machado recently met with opposition leaders in Panama, advocating for a democratic transition in Venezuela. She insisted she would return before the end of the year to run for president.