



By: TA | AP Insight

Could talks between the government and the opposition in Venezuela have a positive outcome?



Venezuelans are watching the start of a round of U.S.-backed talks between the ruling party and the opposition on Saturday with cautious optimism after several previous negotiations failed to bring reconciliation.

The latest talks follow the January **capture of then-President Nicolás Maduro** by U.S. forces, and will focus on strengthening democracy and restoring rights after nearly three decades of socialist rule.

The talks will be led by members of Venezuela's overwhelmingly **pro-government National Assembly** and a group of former opposition lawmakers who previously attempted to oust Maduro. U.S. officials say they will have a facilitating role.

"I hope these people (the government) finally understand that we won't move forward with the usual arbitrary actions; they must respect agreements," said Soraida Martínez, a 58-year-old homemaker. "Both sides need to make concessions for the good of the country."

Saturday's meeting comes nearly seven weeks after a gathering in Caracas between National Assembly chief Jorge Rodríguez — the brother of Acting President Delcy Rodríguez — and former lawmaker Dinorah Figuera, who briefly returned to Venezuela after nearly eight years in exile.

In 2023, Figuera was selected to represent opposition lawmakers from the 2015 National Assembly, which was widely regarded as Venezuela's last democratically elected institution.

She has said the priority is to develop an institutional agenda that transcends the interests of Venezuela's political groups, as proposed by the Trump administration.

US wants to facilitate process, not dictate

After U.S. forces captured Maduro and his wife, the Trump administration proposed a

three-phase plan for Venezuela comprising stabilization, recovery and democratic transition.

On Friday, the U.S. State Department said Washington had no intention of dictating how Venezuela's election would be run and that it understood the complications of trying to prepare for a vote while still recovering from **devastating earthquakes**.

We are there to help facilitate, not dictate - The U.S. State Department

"We are there to help facilitate, not dictate, a reconciliation process through which the will of the Venezuelan people can be expressed," the department said.

The department said it would encourage all political parties to transition from protest movements to political parties, promote a free and open media, an honest and transparent electoral council and the safety and security of polling places.

"This will take time and patience," it said.

National unity

Negotiators have said they will call for national unity in the aftermath of the two powerful earthquakes that struck the country on June 24, leaving more than 5,500 dead, 16,700 injured and over 20,000 homeless, according to the latest official report.

Despite the failure of four previous dialogue processes — between 2017 and 2024 — a large majority in Venezuela expect a positive outcome from these negotiations, given the country's unprecedented political situation following the ousting of Maduro and U.S. influence in the Rodríguez administration.



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Many believe that this time it may be possible to reach minimal agreements that could improve the country's situation.

However, analysts agree a transition to democracy still appears distant, warning that a free election would come at the end of a long process.

Establishing an electoral calendar and conditions for a fair vote does not seem likely in the immediate future, they say.

A transition to democracy “does not begin with the start of a dialogue process. It begins with the recognition and restoration of guarantees that have been violated,” said John Magdaleno, a political consultant and professor at Andrés Bello Catholic University.

According to Magdaleno, civil liberties and political rights must first be restored.

These rights include freedom of expression, freedom of the press, freedom of assembly and association, the inviolability of private communications and other guarantees that assure human rights.